



Chadbourne & Parke

[by Adam Feder]

Having celebrated its centennial two years ago, Chadbourne & Parke enters its next hundred years with two new offices, one in Kyiv and another in Warsaw. This follows the firm's history of strategic international growth. Chadbourne & Parke was one of the first U.S. law firms to open an office in the former Soviet Union. The firm's reach has now extended to nine locations worldwide, including Moscow, Beijing, and London, in addition to the aforementioned two. Its flagship is in New York at Rockefeller Plaza, providing the firm a prominent location in midtown Manhattan.

The firm's founder, Thomas Chadbourne, relocated his practice to New York in 1902. Prior to that, he had been practicing in Milwaukee and Chicago. His practice dealt solely with business law and branched out from there. In fact, the firm represented pilot brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright. Over time, the firm's name has gone through various iterations as a result of a series of mergers, finally becoming Chadbourne & Parke in 1985.

Chadbourne & Parke counts among its clients those who may bring negative publicity to the firm. They include tobacco giant Brown & Williamson and hard-liquor heavyweight Jim Beam. The firm has served as counsel for the former in product liability cases and the latter in the first-ever fetal alcohol syndrome lawsuit. Nonetheless, every entity has the right to the best litigation team it can afford, and those who represent such entities should not be looked down upon.

The firm's major practice areas are corporate, litigation, project finance, intellectual property, and bankruptcy. The project finance group has been lauded for its being one of the finest. They have handled projects in Brazil, Argentina, India, and Nepal, as well as numerous others in the republics that made up the former Soviet Union.

Getting hired at Chadbourne & Parke requires one to be from a top-15 law school with good grades, but the firm will also consider those who have stellar grades from a less than stellar law school. While grades do carry significant importance, they are no

substitute for personality. The firm will not seek to employ those whom they feel will not be able to coexist amicably with the rest of the attorneys. Consequently, intangibles are factored into the decision and may often be the determining factors.

The firm has been described as friendly and laid back. Junior associates tend to become friends and socialize outside of the office. The partners are known to be kind and respectful to those junior associates, providing valuable insight and sharing relevant experiences. Generally, partners seem to have a vested interest in the success of associates. On the other hand, some associates have complained that their training has been inadequate. The initial training is sufficient, but there is no source of ongoing training. It may sound contradictory to previous statements, but most partners shy away from actually engaging in the nitty-gritty and training associates on various procedures. The exception is the litigation department. It seems the training utilized in that department is more thorough.

The hours might be erratic at Chadbourne & Parke, but attorneys are not pressured into putting in face time. Attorneys feel no shame in leaving early if their work is done. Conversely, there are obviously other days that can stretch into the wee hours of the morning. This is the exception, however, not the rule.

Like many other firms, efforts are underway to actively recruit and hire women and minority attorneys, as they are few and far

between at Chadbourne & Parke. Something that may encourage more women to consider working for the firm are the monthly meetings held by women for women to discuss issues that are particularly relevant to women. Furthermore, the firm is flexible when dealing with part-time work schedules. This creates a more equitable family-work balance.

Chadbourne & Parke is not the largest, nor the smallest law firm. It is a firm with a collegial and open work environment and a fair amount of prestige. Attorneys are not slaves to consistently long hours, and thus they are generally upbeat going about their business. Chadbourne & Parke is anything but a pressure cooker, and that is precisely what makes it attractive to many attorneys.