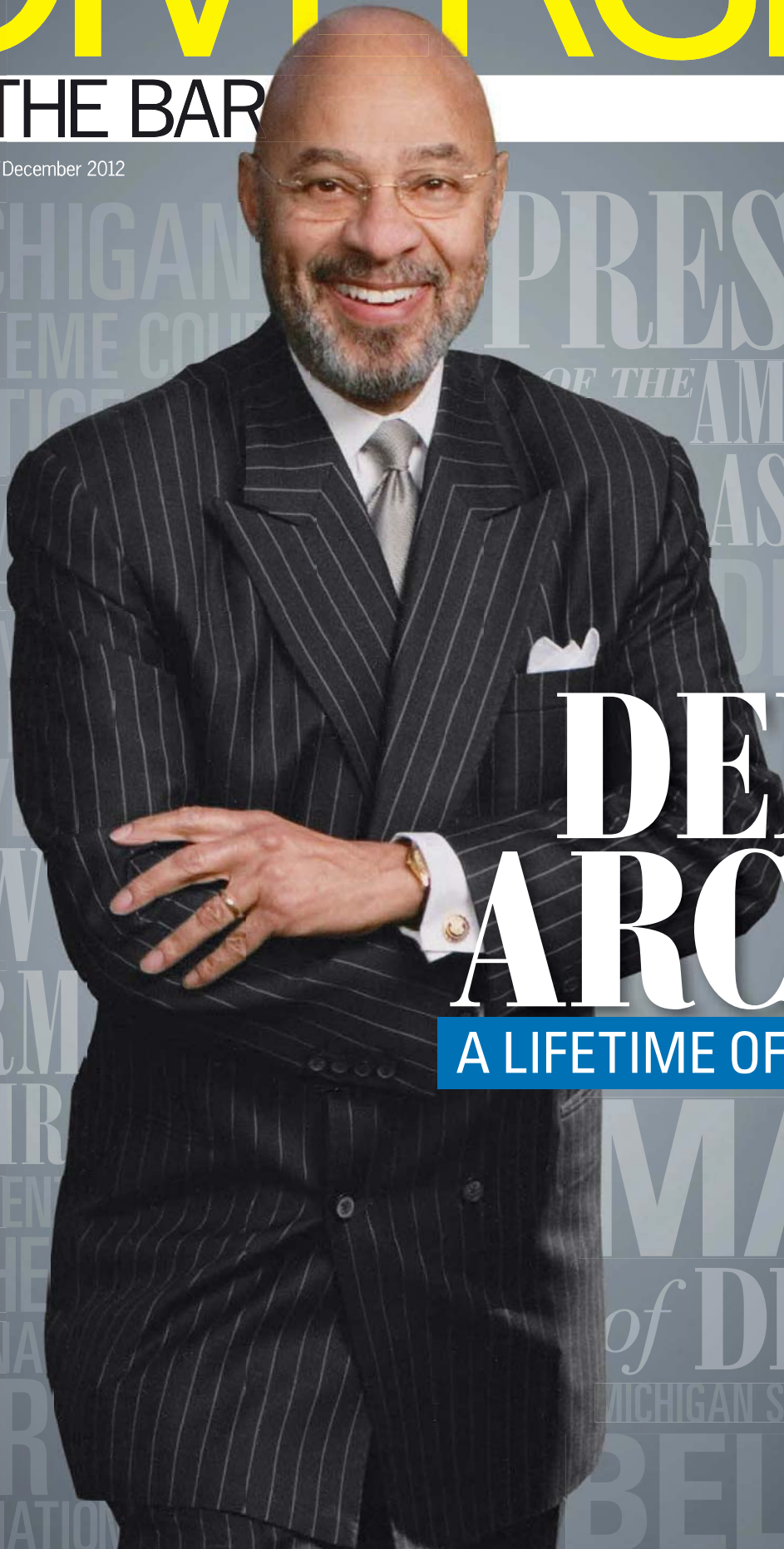


DIVERSITY

& THE BAR

November/December 2012



DENNIS ARCHER

A LIFETIME OF ACHIEVEMENT

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MCCA
MINORITY CORPORATE COUNSEL ASSOCIATION

BANKING

on

RAINMAKERS



SELECTED FROM A POOL OF NOMINEES suggested by leading firms nationwide, each attorney maintains a book of business of \$2 million or more a year. In the following pages, 17 diverse partners and principals are profiled, and each shares their take on what it means to be a rainmaker.

by

**PATRICK
FOLIARD**



EKWAN E. RHOW

PARTNER,
BIRD, MARELLA,
BOXER, WOLPERT,
NESSIM, DROOKS &
LINCENBERG, P.C.

LOS ANGELES, CA

YEARS

PRACTICING: 18

PRACTICE AREA:
CIVIL LITIGATION

“THINGS HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE COMPETITIVE,”

says Ekwon Rhow, a partner at Bird Marella, a boutique firm with 35 lawyers specializing exclusively in trial work and business litigation. “In areas where boutiques did not face competition from larger firms they do now—in terms of work and rates. Partners at larger firms are facing increased pressure to generate business.”

Still, Rhow says, boutique firms prevail for a variety of reasons: They focus on one area of practice. In Bird Marella’s case, trial work and complex litigation. As such, they are perceived as having superiority in that area. In addition, boutique firms can ultimately offer better service and competitive rates. Finally, because the partners at boutique firms often have individualized relationships with the GCs of the companies they represent, the client relationships are stronger.

Rhow says, “Our corporate clients are looking for superior lawyering, responsiveness, an understanding of clients’ business goals and timely execution. Boutiques are often better at achieving that.”

For Rhow, a lot of business development is organic: “Most of my clients are headed up by GCs that I have personally worked with and known for many years. These relationships are built on great work, friendship, and trust on a one-to-one basis. New work also comes from word-of-mouth referrals.” A Korean American who does not speak Korean, Rhow took on a handful of cases for Korean companies several years ago, and due to good reviews, Korean clients now make up 25 percent of his practice.

“Despite the competition, I find the cases are getting bigger and more challenging.”