

FAST TRACKERS

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CLASSES OF 2003



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The Pittsburgh Business Times looks back at our inaugural list of the 50 people under 45 who significantly impacted the growth of their organizations



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Ron Schuler

■ **Age:** 49

■ **Current title:** Managing member, Pittsburgh office, Spilman Thomas & Battle PLLC

■ **10 years ago, he was ...** partner, McGuireWoods LLP

■ **What's changed in your career over the past decade?**

"I took some time off from the law to help run an oil and gas company just before the renewed interest in oil and gas in Pittsburgh with the Marcellus Shale industry. We spent two years operating and building value in the company, and we successfully sold it to Exco Resources in 2006. After the sale, I joined the Pittsburgh office of Spilman, and now I am running the office as managing member. As a lawyer serving entrepreneurs — not just in the oil and gas industry, but in areas where I have traditionally been active, such as software, IT and biotechnology — I know that my experience as an entrepreneur gives me a heightened sense of practicality in approaching a corporate finance, governance or merger and acquisition project. I am very conscious of the value that I'm being called upon to provide in any given engagement, and I know how important it is for an entrepreneur to feel like he or she is getting value out of my work as a lawyer. I believe the experience of helping to run an oil and gas business has also helped me to be a better manager when it comes to the business of my firm and the business of the Pittsburgh office. Except that managing lawyers is really nothing like managing normal, sane people."

■ **Over the past 10 years, have you accomplished what you hoped to?**

"At the beginning of those 10 years, I would have had no way of predicting

the twists and turns that my career has taken. I feel very fortunate to have so easily found an outlet for my interests through my career, for the opportunity to build and run a couple of businesses and to see my vision come to fruition."

■ **What advice would you have for young professionals looking to move up in their careers?**

"People around your career will continually try to pigeonhole you — and that's their job, to find the thing you do best and to make sure you do it. If you feel you have more to offer,

however, don't let them pigeonhole you. I have always found the most job satisfaction where I have played an active role in defining, or rather, broadening, the scope of my responsibilities."

■ **In terms of your career, where do you hope to be in 10 more years?**

"Whether it is in my current role or otherwise, my interest continues to be in helping new businesses grow in Pittsburgh — as an adviser, an investor and an entrepreneur. Pittsburgh has such a rich cultural heritage, and I want to continue to play a role in developing and maintaining the city's cultural gifts. I am very excited about a project I've been working on since 2008: writing a full-length history of the legal profession in Pittsburgh, from 1788 to the present, entitled 'The Steel Bar: Pittsburgh Lawyers and the Making of Modern America.' I am also involved with the Silk Screen Film Festival, a Pittsburgh Asian-American film festival that has been around since 2006, and with community-supported radio, and I hope to continue to find ways to support these efforts."

"If you feel you have more to offer ... don't let them pigeonhole you."