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Corporate law — and all that jazz

Managing his firm by day, Tecson spends spare time playing the sax with the band he formed in 1982

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When Andrew P. Tecson was 10, he started playing the saxophone. Nearly five decades later, he still enjoys it.

And he enjoys it so much that Tecson, president of Chuhak & Tecson P.C., created the ChurchJazz Band in 1982 and continues to serve as its leader.

"It's like the human voice," Tecson said. "You can express all kinds of different emotions with a saxophone."

He gravitated to jazz "because you get to improvise. So every time you perform, you are creating a new work of art."

Tecson composes most of the band's music. He also has produced five CDs of their recordings with sales benefiting St. Luke Church, a Lutheran congregation in Chicago.

The band, which includes between six and 12 musicians and at least one singer, brings jazz to worship services across the country and holds concerts to raise money for charities.

In the 1970s, Tecson played with folk singer Steve Goodman and harmonica and piano player Howard Levy.

"I moved from the concert halls and night clubs to the sanctuary because that's where my heart is," Tecson said. "I'm really excited about bringing the power of jazz into a worship setting where the people are in the presence of God."

Tecson is passionate about playing music and also performs at firm holiday events, said shareholder Mitchell D. Weinstein.

"He may be more passionate about that than being a lawyer and running a law firm," Weinstein said.

In his day job, Tecson oversees the 66-lawyer firm that has main practice areas in aviation litigation and transactions, banking, probate and

estate trust litigation, commercial litigation, corporate transactions and health-care matters.

Tecson represents hospitals, health-care systems, senior living facilities and closely held family businesses on corporate matters.

Chuhak & Tecson opened in 1987 with 10 lawyers, including Tecson and his father, Joseph A. Tecson, who is now retired.

The younger Tecson has served as firm president since 2008. In that capacity, he works with the firm's chief operating officer and heads its six-member management committee. The firm also has a four-lawyer committee that sets attorney compensation rates.

The firm holds monthly meetings with its 15 shareholders and quarterly meetings with its 41 principals. Its lawyers also attend two meetings away from the office annually to discuss industry trends and for consensus building.

After Tecson became the firm's president, he and its management committee decided to create video interviews with various attorneys and post them on its website. There are 22 currently available on chuhak.com.

Chuhak & Tecson was one of the first firms to use videos rather than just posting photos and biographical information online, Tecson said.

"Clients and prospective clients get to hear about our practices and who we are," he said. "You learn a lot when you hear a person talk and see their body language."

The average hourly billing rate for the firm's principals is \$350.

"We want to create a great client experience at a reasonable price," Tecson said.

One of the main reasons Tecson went to work with his father was so he could become the successor attorney for many of his father's clients.

"I met the CEO of one of our



Andrew P. Tecson
President, Chuhak & Tecson P.C.

- **Location:** Chicago
- **Revenue:** Declined to provide 2013 figure
- **Lawyers:** 66
- **Age:** 58
- **Law school:** University of Chicago Law School, 1980
- **Organizations:** Member, Advocate Christ Medical Center's Development Council
- **Interests:** Spending time with his wife and their two adult sons, playing saxophone, sailing his 30-foot sailboat on Lake Michigan, running and relaxing at his family's farm in Bureau County

largest clients when we were in kindergarten together," Tecson said, referring to Lyell Clarke, CEO of Roselle-based Clarke, a global environmental products and services company.

"That client passed from my father and his father to the current CEO and myself"

Tecson's goals for the firm include ramping up the respective practice groups' marketing plans.

"Practice group leaders are now responsible for developing their own plans and marketing activities," Tecson said.

As the firm's leader, Tecson "is the president of a democracy," Weinstein said.

"He's very good at helping us, as a group, come to good, sound business decisions," Weinstein said.

An example was convincing lawyers at the firm to be flexible in the deal to attract a lateral principal, Stephen A. Wood, this year, Weinstein said.

During the economic downturn, Chuhak & Tecson flourished because its lawyers could work with banks handling non-performing or underperforming loans, Tecson said.

Other corporate clients "could expand during the downturn through acquisitions of other companies," he said.

In his practice, Tecson said he's "evolved from strictly providing help with a specific transaction to becoming a trusted adviser for senior management and boards of directors.

"I routinely attend their board meetings and strategic planning sessions and facilitate planning sessions for some of my clients," he said.

Michael K. Renetzky, a Locke, Lord LLP partner, has known Tecson for about a decade. Renetzky is vice chairman of the Lutheran Life Communities Board of Directors, which provides independent, assisted nursing and dementia care to senior citizens at six facilities in Illinois, Indiana and Florida.

Tecson is the agency's primary outside lawyer and advises its board of directors. He offers advice about the agency's issuing of public bonds and its growth strategy.

Renetzky values Tecson's judgment and the work he puts in to understand his clients and their needs.

"I also value the fact that he brings to his advice and counseling for his clients the experience that he has in the leadership of his own firm," he said.

Tecson grew up in Riverside as the oldest of the three children of Joseph Tecson and Caroline Rees Tecson, also a retired lawyer. Tecson's brother, David J. Tecson, is a Chuhak & Tecson principal.

After graduating from the University of Chicago Law School in 1980, Tecson worked at Winston & Strawn LLP for three years before joining his father's practice.

Tecson also wants to continue the firm's gradual growth. Chuhak & Tecson hired two lateral principals this year and plans to hire between one and three more lawyers by year's end.

"We fully intend to remain independent," Tecson said. "We do not want to be part of a global firm.

The lawyers at our firm are entrepreneurs, and we encourage all of our attorneys to contribute to its success."

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