

## Miguel A. Pozo '98 – Accomplishments Bring New Honors to Top Litigator

This summer, Miguel Alexander Pozo '98, a partner with Roseland-based Lowenstein Sandler PC who practices in the firm's Litigation Department, was twice recognized for his accomplishments and contributions to the state's business, legal, and local communities. In July he was named to the 2009 *NJBIZ* "Forty Under 40" list of professionals under age 40 who exhibit exemplary commitment to business growth, professional excellence, and the community. In August, the *New Jersey Law Journal* included him on its 2009 "40 Under 40" list of lawyers under age 40 with demonstrated leadership within their firm; strong trial, appellate or transactional work; and involvement in pro bono and other volunteer activities.



Miguel Pozo '98

Pozo joined Lowenstein Sandler in 1999 after a clerkship with Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Lawrence M. Lawson. His practice ranges from *Fortune 500* corporations to companies of all sizes to non-profit organizations, with every day offering a new experience. "One day I am counseling clients in the media and entertainment industry, while the next day I am advising clients in the pharmaceutical industry or in the fashion industry. Even though the litigation process remains largely the same, each case and each client presents unique complexities." Challenged to develop creative solutions to his clients' complex and varied business issues "makes it very rewarding to come to work every day," he adds.

As demonstrated by his recent awards and by his earlier recognitions as a "Rising Star" by *New Jersey Super Lawyers* magazine and as one of "50 Leading Women and Minority Attorneys" by the *New Jersey Law Journal*, Pozo has achieved a prominent position at a relatively early stage in his career. Asked to share career path advice, he emphasizes the value of building relationships with mentors, both inside and outside of the legal profession. "Finding mentors – sometimes a person who is doing what you aspire to do – is critical." In the law firm setting, he adds, an attorney's success in a particular firm environment is determined, in part, by whether that attorney has a mentor to help

guide his or her development. "Having a mentor to direct you to certain opportunities and important cases, to get you client exposure, and to assist you in navigating the political landscape of the law firm is indispensable."

One of Pozo's most influential mentors has been Theodore V. Wells, Esq., former Lowenstein Sandler partner who recruited him to the firm more than 10 years ago. "Few people have his unparalleled intelligence, people skills, grace and temperament," says Pozo. Regarded as one of the most prominent white-collar criminal defense lawyers in the country, Wells, he adds, "is truly one of a kind."

Pozo cautions that having the right mentor, though important, is not a roadmap to success – a goal that means different things to different people. To Pozo, success means "doing what I enjoy and helping others to realize their dreams and goals. I believe you can shape the world around you by being passionate about your pursuits and about your work – lead by example." To be successful at any pursuit, it's necessary to make a conscious decision not to be afraid of success. "Someone once told me," he explains, "that no one truly succeeds by accident. I believe that. You may get lucky along the way, but at some point you have to 'decide' to be successful."

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As a leader within Lowenstein Sandler and in various professional and civic organizations, Pozo tries to inspire others to be the best that they can be and challenges them to move out of their comfort zone. "I think it is important to understand people – their strengths, weaknesses, and motivations – and to

encourage your team to look for solutions, not just to identify problems.”

First in his family to graduate from college, Pozo describes himself as indebted to the law school and the Minority Student Program for making it possible to realize a childhood career dream and for achieving a level of success that enables him to provide for family members. He is the son of parents who emigrated from the Dominican Republic and made many sacrifices so their children would have access to quality education.

Pozo believes that the many aspects of his “top-notch education” at Rutgers School of Law–Newark included access to “an endless list” of mentors and colleagues who helped shape his career; the focus on both “teaching students how to become effective advocates, and on empowering them to become agents for social change (in the public or private sectors)”; an academic environment “in which open debate and discussion were encouraged by the faculty and the administration alike”; and a student body “from all walks of life and economic and social backgrounds.” That diversity, he adds, “created a vibrancy that tremendously enriched my legal education.”

Pozo participated in the [Minority Student Program](#) and praises then MSP Dean Janice Robinson and Associate Dean Fran Bouchoux for the effectiveness of the program. “They care about their work and about the people whose lives they touch. It was not just a job to them. They, and the MSP, gave me an opportunity – they opened the door. Ultimately, I had to walk through the door and make the most of the opportunity, but I cannot say enough about their vision and leadership. In an age when it is fashionable or *en vogue* to give lip service to creating opportunities, the MSP is shaping the lives of its students, their families, and of the New Jersey legal community.”

Pozo finds it “no coincidence that so many of New Jersey’s most prominent minority lawyers – a very talented group – all trace their formative years in the practice of law to MSP. Rutgers Law School graduates who participated in the MSP can be found in all areas of the legal profession, from institutions of higher learning, to local, state, and national government including the U.S. Senate, to the halls of many of the most prestigious law firms and corporations. It is an honor to be a part of the family and I remain committed to continuing to do my part to keep the doors open.”

That commitment to diversity and opportunity is further evident in his leadership of DiversityisNatural.com, a new Lowenstein Sandler website dedicated to fostering the advancement of women and minorities in the legal profession. As Pozo notes, “One need only consider the attrition rates of women and diverse attorneys at major law firms, the lack of ethnic and gender diversity on the judicial bench, and the relatively low number of women general counsels at *Fortune 500* corporations to see that the legal profession still has work to do.”

Launched in February 2009, Pozo and his team intend for the website to be a resource for corporations, law firms, government agencies, academic institutions, companies, and individuals who want to cultivate and maintain diverse working environments. As editor-in-chief, Pozo shapes the site’s strategic vision and content. “Our goal is to encourage meaningful dialogue on topics such as mentoring, work-life balance, gender equality, career advancement, recruitment, retention, promotion and other issues – dialogue that leads to action and results. One of the questions we plan to address, which is of particular interest to me as a law firm partner, is: what happens to minority and women attorneys once they join a law firm? Why is it that a greater number of these attorneys do not ascend into the partnership ranks?”

While Pozo knows that there is no quick fix to achieving true diversity in the profession, he believes that answering those kinds of questions may help remove some of the barriers that hinder individuals from achieving their true potential. He also counsels in favor of following your convictions and your dreams. “It is important to stay grounded,” he says. “Keep your family and friends close, and avoid getting too excited in the face of success or getting depressed in the presence of failure.” In sum, he says, “I have come to appreciate that a career in the law – much like one’s life – is a marathon, not a sprint.”