



Vault 2008 Law Rankings

Quinn Emanuel Urquhart Oliver & Hedges LLP

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#8 - Litigation

LOCATIONS

Los Angeles, CA (HQ)
New York, NY • Silicon Valley, CA • San Francisco, CA

MAJOR DEPARTMENTS & PRACTICES

Antitrust & Trade Regulation • Appellate Practice •
Banking & Financial Institutions • Bankruptcy Litigation
• Construction • Domestic and International Arbitration
& Mediation • Employment • Entertainment •
Government Contracts • Health Care • Intellectual
Property • Internet Litigation • Media • Real Estate •
Securities • White Collar Crime

THE STATS

No. of attorneys
Firmwide: 350
Los Angeles: 195
No. of offices: 4
Summer associate offers firmwide: 54 out of 55 (2006)
Managing Partner: John B. Quinn
Hiring Partner: A. William Urquhart

RANKING METHODOLOGY

In spring 2007, Vault surveyed over 18,800 associates at 167 law firms and asked them to rank the top law firms. We took these scores to calculate our prestige rankings. For our quality of life rankings, we asked associates to rate their own firms on issues such as treatment by partners, training, selectivity, etc., and then scored the firms against each other.

Quinn for the Win

Quinn wins. A lot. And they want to make damn sure you know it. It's only been 21 years since John Quinn and Eric Emanuel set up shop in Los Angeles, and the firm has already rocketed into the stratosphere of boutique litigation. So confident is Quinn of its record that the firm can afford to tout its success with some exceedingly unusual quantification. For example, "our attorneys have won 1066 of 1160 cases, or an astounding 92 percent." The firm took out a full-page ad in The Wall Street Journal September of 2005, informing readers that it has "won more nine-figure verdicts than any other law firm in America." At that point, the business and legal world started to take notice of the bold Quinn Emanuel as something more than a plucky little niche California firm where the partners show up to the office in flipflops. The American Lawyer sealed the deal with a detailed profile in the summer of 2006, touting Quinn as American business's dream equation: unique vision + hard work = the little guys climb to the top of the heap.

Look out, it's a big win

German media giant Bertelsmann AG has Jan Henric Muettner and Andreas von Blottnitz to thank for their 2000 sale of half their stake in AOL Europe to Time Warner for \$6.75 billion. And as of 2004, the two internet rainmakers have Quinn Emanuel to thank for the record-setting verdict of approximately \$250 million in recompensed equity. Bertelsmann was found to have reneged on its oral and contractual agreements to cut Muettner and Blottnitz a piece of the pie. After all, they did introduce Bertelsmann executives to Bill Gates and Steve Case...that's gotta be worth something.

Cash and Prizes

"The mighty Quinn" might have been flying under the public's radar, but there's no fooling the accountants. Average partner compensation in 2005 was \$1.65 million, making it the most lucrative firm outside of New York. In 2006, Quinn leaped to 78th on the AmLaw 100, posting a 54% increase in gross revenue to \$298,000,000. What did they do with all that money? Set off a round of associate pay raises. Base pay for first-year associates got bumped to \$135,000, back when (was it only two years ago?) even the New York firm rate started at \$125,000. Of course, Bill Urquhart's dreams of being alone at the top were quickly dashed as others raced to meet the challenge.

They'd like to thank the Academy

The ballots are in, and the winner is...Quinn Emanuel! The firm has been general counsel to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for over a decade. These overachievers work in other mediums too. Clients also include the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (purveyors of the Grammy Awards)

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and the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences (home of prime time Emmy Awards).

A not-so-arbitrary win

In February of 2007, Quinn Emanuel secured one of the largest damages ever awarded by an arbitration panel: \$76 million to a limited partnership hedge fund from its general partner and his sister, who was a stockbroker to the fund. The two had engaged in post-trade allocation, taking the most lucrative trades for themselves after the fact, at the expense of the rest of the partnership. Quinn boasts that it was their hard-hitting cross examinations of the accused that led to such a favorable decision.

Biggest Loser - Apple?

It took Quinn Emanuel and corporate investigations partner John Potter three months to review Apple's extensive finance and trading records back in the spring of '06. When they were done (after reading 650,000 e-mails and conducting interviews with more than 40 people), what they had found was evidence tying at least two former executives to stock options backdating. So far CEO Steve Jobs has been spared any charges, or even serious accusations.

Quinns just wanna have fun

You don't have to be a USC linebacker to party in Pasadena style. Quinn Emanuel's annual Rose Bowl party takes place on the actual football field, and the firm pulls out all the stops: rides, games, food, a live band, prizes for the kids, psychics and an open bar for the adults ... even a game of touch for the "how cool would it be to play football at the Rose Bowl!?" crowd.

Another famous Quinn tradition is the annual firm hike, during which lawyers and summer associates must use all of their litigation and camping skills in order to avoid being eaten by bears. No slacking off, either-these hikes are personally led by managing partner (cum triathlete) John Quinn. This year, 65 attorneys (including 25 unsuspecting summer associates) from three offices spent 3 days hiking 30 miles in Durango, Colorado.

GETTING HIRED

"Only true litigators need apply"

They do one thing, and one thing well-litigation. So should you. Candidates "have to have an intensity and passion for litigation," as exemplified by "a lot of clerkships, a lot of law review or at least journal, and a lot of moot court experience." It's important to exhibit that certain Litigators' Character on top of your impeccable

resume. There is "equal emphasis on finding candidates whom the partners feel comfortable putting in front of a judge." "The kind of people you'd want to meet at a party. Almost everyone [here] has an interesting background beyond the law ... intelligent, personable, and easy to work with." The firm seeks out these sorts of traits as signs of "those who will make good advocates in the courtroom."

You won't find a sweet sugar-coating on Quinn's hiring expectations. They're "strict ... and getting stricter" about the school-snobbery. "Don't bother applying if you're not from a top 10 school" sniffs a Harvard grad. Ok, they might consider you if you're "1st in your class" somewhere else. Ivys like Harvard and Stanford remain the golden ticket.

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Raise the roof

Careful-don't give the Quinn Emanuel compensation committee a map, lest they figure out what coast they're on. Back in the winter of '07 salary wars Quinn was the only California-based firm "matching NY [salaries] nationwide." Associates noticed. "They treat us well. Damn well." How well? "The pay at QE borders on obscene." "I've had three raises since I signed on to join the firm after my clerkship" says a first-year litigator. Given the highest salaries around, Quinn associates aspire to nothing less than the stratosphere. "Though it would be nice to get paid like we're at Wachtell, I'm perfectly happy not working their hours."

Sharks in sandals

At Quinn Emanuel, an enclave of elite litigators, if you want court time, you better be willing to fight for it. The work assignment system is "free-market" and in Quinn's market, the competition is brutal. Ability to beat the other sharks to the choice morsels really affects job satisfaction. Some come out on top: "I came to this firm because I wanted to litigate tough cases and get responsibility early on. They've delivered in spades."

Welcome to the Hotel California

Fame changes people-and firms. The California Culture, however, remains alive and well. "The firm's culture is very relaxed and informal," from associate relations down through the dress code ("We wear jeans, flip-flops and t-shirts"). Most offices report that they are "very social," mostly in an informal kind of way which matches the overall culture. Spontaneous outings are preferred over planned functions.

Associates may spend much more time working than playing, but thanks to firm camaraderie, "the hours go by relatively quickly."

This "meritocracy" is also very egalitarian. "When recruiters said that 'work is all that matters' at QE, they weren't just spouting a line"- that is to say, "there is little concern about other superficial issues here like what you wear, what you look like, what color skin you have, what religion you are, your sexual preference, etc.." Quinn has "all types" and a "'come as you are' philosophy" which accepts those who don't quite fit the standard deviation. "There are some wacky people here, but I like that" says a San Franciscan. Wacky? One litigator tells us "I carry a football everywhere I go."

A Spelling Lesson With Ms. Franklin

Throw away that org chart-Quinn Emanuel definitely does not subscribe to multi-layered management. "I regularly work under the direct supervision of partners. I have rarely worked through a senior associate." It might even approach an anti-hierarchy. Associates "work WITH the partners, not just for them," creating "less of a division between partners and associates," which our respondents "appreciate a lot." A close working relationship combines with an open-door culture to "encourage first-years to be open and candid about questions, concerns and ideas." "I find I learn a lot more that way," says an associate about this system "and it's also just more pleasant-to talk through problems together, rather than just get instructions, then edits."

Goin' Swimmin'

"Few things are formal at Quinn"-why should the training be any different? "The thing is, the firm has built its reputation on its informal aspect, and that is exactly how they handle training." When asked, one litigator said "[I'm] not sure we have 'formal training.' Not sure I'd want to...." To clear things up, both for this second-year and our readers, yes, Quinn does have a "formal training program all new associates are invited to attend, where partners teach associates about issues like service of process, taking depositions, etc." and "a one-week trial advocacy program given to young associates every couple years." Small potatoes, but no one seems to care. "Our trial advocacy program is going to a real trial."

"Jumping in feet first ... can be somewhat harrowing at first," but for this second-year, "it's a style that has quickly made me into an actual litigator and not just some doc reviewer with a six figure salary." In sum: If it ain't broke ... and other clichés ("sink or swim," "trial by fire," etc.). At least as far as trial skills go.