

NEW JERSEY LAWYER

Volume 13, Number 15

The Weekly Newspaper

April 12, 2004

\$5

At 37, Gibbons' new top guy

By Robert G. Seidenstein



It's not very often that a 37-year-old attorney becomes managing director of a major law firm, but at Gibbons, Del Deo, Patrick C. Dunican, Jr. is now the man.

At 37, Patrick C. Dunican, Jr. may seem, at least on paper, a tad young to be managing director of Gibbons, Del Deo, Dolan, Griffinger & Vecchione, P.C. one of New Jersey's largest, most prestigious and oldest law firms.

But his relative youth belies his experience. He's been around the block a few times and has the gold stars to back up his meteoric rise after just 13 years of practice.

Indeed, Dunican has been in the management trenches, running the New York office of Newark-based Gibbons, Del Deo six years and if he pulls off anything even remotely akin to his success in the Big Apple, the 78-year-old firm will remain rock-solid for decades.

What was his track record across the Hudson River? Well, that office grew in a half-dozen years from just him to some 35 lawyers.

And the New York laterals brought something very important with them – business.

Building the entire 170-lawyer firm is now Dunican's clearly stated objective.

As the new hands-on go-to guy, he exudes self-confidence.

Dunican, a Gibbons, Del Deo-grown talent, is used to high-ranking positions, having served as editor-in-chief of the *Seton Hall Law Review*.

The former clerk of U.S. District Judge Clarkson S. Fisher has been in his new role since January, although the changes at the firm's hierarchy were only recently announced.

For the previous 17 years, the managing director was David J. Sheehan. The firm has created the position of chairman which Sheehan, 60, fills.

He will play a key role in marketing the firm and in client relations. He will be the "external voice" of the firm, Dunican said.

This is Dunican's show now, but he's quick to say the firm under his direction will continue to nurture its reputation as a "nice place to work," filled with "good people" and be a key player in public-interest issues.

In that context, he noted the John J. Gibbons Fellowship is a "reflection of who we are." He said, "We care about the society in which we live."

Under that program, lawyer/fellows work full-time on public-interest matters. The funding, in effect, comes from the pockets of the firm's lawyers. The Fellowship is named for the firm's most recognizable lawyer. Gibbons is former chief judge of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Dunican touted the firm's recent hiring of Frank T. Cannone as chairman of its corporate department.

Cannone had been a partner in the New York office of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker.

Asked about possible mergers with smaller firms, Dunican, perhaps in a reflection of his eye on growth, said, "We're open to those types of possibilities."

And in that regard he noted that two years ago, Gibbons, Del Deo merged with an eight-lawyer New York intellectual property boutique.

Dunican is a member of the firm's litigation department and commercial-litigation and securities practice groups.

Not surprisingly, his vision for the firm emphasizes excellence in legal work, service for clients and efficiency.

Dunican, as personnel manager, likens himself to a coach trying to get the most from his players.

So how does a relatively young guy view taking command of one of the state's most venerable firms?

Unmistakably challenging.

As he put it, it offers a "relentless and difficult test."

But one for which he's ready.

GIBBONS

GIBBONS, DEL DEO, DOLAN, GRIFFINGER & VECCHIONE
A PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

One Riverfront Plaza
Newark, New Jersey 07102
973-596-4500 • Fax: 973-596-0545

One Pennsylvania Plaza
New York, New York 10119
212-649-4700 • Fax: 212-333-5980

The Lutine House
224 West State Street, Suite 1
Trenton, New Jersey 08608
609-394-5300 • Fax: 609-394-5301

e-mail: firm@gibbonslaw.com • web site: www.gibbonslaw.com

Reporter Robert G. Seidenstein can be reached at rseidenstein@njnews.com.