

Maximizing the Upside

Brouse McDowell LPA protects buyer or seller through the entire real estate process

By Doug Bardwell

Back in 1919, World War I had just concluded and the new firm of Brouse McDowell LPA was formed in Akron, Ohio. Now, approaching its 100th anniversary, the firm has grown to more than 70 attorneys with offices in Cleveland, Akron and Sheffield Village in Lorain County. Its practice represents clients active throughout Ohio, across the country and even into Canada.

Renowned among peers, the publication *Best Lawyers* recently named 17 of the firm's members to the 2015 roster of "Best Lawyers in America" and three were named "Lawyer of the Year" in their respective practices.

Members of Brouse McDowell's Real Estate Practice Group that were recognized as "Best Lawyers" include Tom Gatozzi and David Lum (Cleveland Office) in Real Estate Law, and Irving Sugarman (Akron Office) in Land Use and Zoning Law.

Tom Gatozzi is chair of the Real Estate Practice Group and has been with the firm since 2000. Gatozzi, together with the other Brouse McDowell lawyers in the Real Estate Practice Group, represents real estate owners, investors, developers, tenants and contractors.

For development of brownfield properties or those encumbered by environmental issues, Meagan Moore, also a partner in the Cleveland office, is available for consultation. Since joining Brouse McDowell, Moore has assisted owners and municipalities to limit their exposure to environmental entanglements, as well as negotiating settlements with state and federal agencies.

"Minimizing risk for our clients, while maximizing their investments, is what we do," says Gatozzi. "We are able to handle all aspects of the real estate deal cycle. For example, we represented a national firm in the sale of their existing headquarters and then



DRAWING RECOGNITION Three members of Brouse McDowell's Real Estate Practice Group were recognized as "Best Lawyers," including (from left) Tom Gatozzi and David Lum (Cleveland Office) in Real Estate Law, and Irving Sugarman (Akron Office) in Land Use and Zoning Law.

the development and leasing of their new headquarters."

With the size and experience of the firm, Brouse McDowell is poised to handle any size project.

"We represented a national retailer in the leasing, development and rollout of more than 100 free-standing retail locations across the country," recalls Gatozzi. "We also represented an international oil company in the sale and franchising of more than 200 sites in Ohio.

"Starting with acquisitions and divestitures, we often follow a project all the way through management and leasing. We've also developed considerable experience in financing, land use, planning and zoning; making sure that the property purchased can be used for its intended purpose."

When it comes time to actually construct the project, Brouse McDowell will help clients dealing with their architects and contractors; from contract preparation, to draw approvals, to dispute resolution issues.

With leasing projects, they very often help in lease preparation and negotiation – trying to avoid landlord and tenant disagreements, but able to assist its clients if disputes do arise.

Tax appeals, evaluation and exemptions are additional major phases of the firm's work, representing clients before both the Board of Revisions and the Board of Tax Appeals.

On the environmental front, Moore often advises clients how certain requirements or legislation will impact their ownership and use of a site. Compliance audits are often performed and if there is a state or federal enforcement matter, Brouse McDowell will advocate and negotiate a settlement.

"In the transactional phase, we always endeavor to protect our clients' interests, whether we are representing the seller or the buyer," says Gatozzi. "We also assist clients with insurance coverage issues, including both U.S. and foreign businesses, from closely held corporations to Fortune 100 companies." **P**

Photos courtesy of Brouse McDowell