

# GLENN WEINSTEIN

## Using Public Finance to Improve Quality of Life for Communities

by Elizabeth Davies

From the outside, Glenn E. Weinstein's work at Pugh, Jones & Johnson, P.C. seems heavy on paperwork.

But what he accomplishes with those documents is nothing short of amazing.

A public finance lawyer, Weinstein specializes in helping the government boost economic development while launching projects that improve the overall quality of life.

"Everything we do is for a good cause," he says. "It's really all about finding ways the government can finance economic development and the infrastructure people need in their daily lives. It's about the education and the water pipes, but it's also about the colleges and the hospitals."

Case in point? Weinstein worked on the Navy Pier Ferris Wheel project, now a staple of Chicago's tourism and skyline.

"I think of that every time we go by," Weinstein says. "That's a nice feeling."

He also worked on the financing for Midway Airport's redevelopment. He has flown out from Midway on vacation since then and enjoyed doing so with the extra knowledge he had about the airport.

"The first few times we flew somewhere, my wife would say, 'I don't think the bus goes here,'" Weinstein recalls. "And I would say, 'Oh, yes it does. I worked on this project!'"

So, as Weinstein traverses the city, it's a bit like touring his own career. He finds deep satisfaction in the role he plays in this stage of Chicago's history.

"I'm not building anything," he says. "But to know you had a hand at something going up, that's pretty satisfying."

### LAUNCHING HIS LEGAL CAREER

Weinstein grew up in Maryland, an only child. His mother stayed home, and his father worked for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Starting out, Weinstein headed to Brown University with plans of studying engineering. However, with a passion for the past, he became a history major. He also met his wife, Lindsey Arenberg, at Brown then followed her to Chicago while she completed a master's



degree at Northwestern University. Later, Weinstein took his turn, securing his law degree from Northwestern.

He couldn't have dreamed, however, what his career would look like today.

"Public finance is one of those things you have no idea exists when you go to law school," he says.

So, Weinstein left law school and began clerking for the Honorable John A. Nordberg of the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. He moved on to Schiff Hardin LLP, where he says associates had the opportunity to spend some time trying out different fields before choosing the department they wanted to practice in.

"As luck would have it, they had a public finance department," he recalls. "The practice really appealed to me. Transactional practice as a general rule is a little more collegial than litigation. But public finance is even more so. It's a pretty tight-knit group. Most of the interactions I have are not particularly antagonistic."

Weinstein furthered his practice in public finance as senior counsel with Chapman and Cutler LLP before moving to Pugh, Jones & Johnson, P.C. in 2009. With that change, Weinstein was proud to join a firm that dates back to 1991 and remains one of the largest minority-owned firms in the Midwest. Pugh, Jones & Johnson P.C. also provides legal counsel in the areas of commercial litigation, investigations, medical malpractice defense, civil rights, labor and employment, and products liability, among others.

Sometimes, smaller firms such as Weinstein's need an astute advantage when securing roles as lead counsel. According to Ivan Samstein, vice president and chief financial officer at the University of Chicago, Weinstein brings exactly that to the table.

"When you're a small firm, you have to be not just broad, but you have to be deep as a lead counsel," he says. "Glenn's ability to be both broad and deep have led us to repeatedly choose his firm."

Before he was with the University of Chicago, Samstein was chief financial officer for Cook County. He was impressed with Weinstein's handling of an affordable housing project that developed senior citizen housing in the western suburbs.

"It was a complicated transaction," he says. "It inherently had a complicated and extended closing period. Glenn was willing to engage throughout the project and kept the transaction moving along."

But what Samstein most appreciates is that Weinstein doesn't tell him what he can't do. Rather, he focuses on opportunities.

"Glenn doesn't like to close a door, but he gives you a range of options to achieve your goals," he says.

### TODAY'S PRACTICE

By the time he arrived at Pugh, Jones & Johnson, Weinstein had established himself in the world of public finance law. He now works as bond counsel, disclosure counsel, underwriter's counsel, trustee's counsel and credit enhancement provider's counsel. He has worked for clients across the country, including Alaska, California, Texas, Florida and New Hampshire.

His work has encompassed multi-family housing, single family housing, universities, hospitals, industrial parks, air cargo facilities and solid waste disposal facilities. He has extensive experience with 501(c)(3) organizations.

Weinstein has found that the public officials he works with are both bright and committed to improving their communities.

"Most are really, really dedicated," he says. "I've really enjoyed working with them."

The challenge in working with government bodies, of course, is that work often happens around their meeting schedules.

"The things we do are often punctuated by when a public body is going to meet," Weinstein says. "As a result, there are times we have to work very hard and very late to draft the documents we need before that meeting happens."

And some cases can get particularly "thorny," he says, if proper documentation wasn't done in the past. Then, it can be up to him to trace the history of a bond being refunded so he can properly document it for tax purposes.

Still, Weinstein is at the top of his game in doing that and is well-respected within his community.

"Glenn is one of the best public finance attorneys I have had the pleasure of working with," says former co-worker Lorraine Tyson, now a shareholder at Greenberg Traurig, LLP. "He is a trusted counselor to his clients and is very practical in applying municipal finance law to a public finance transaction."

What sets him apart from others, Tyson explains, is that his knowledge base extends far beyond his niche.

"He is a municipal securities law expert but also has a great knowledge of 103 tax law and general Illinois governmental law, which is a very rare combination in the public finance field," she says. "He has applied this unique combination of skills to the over 200 public finance transactions he has worked on for the benefit of his clients."

### ENJOYING THE NEXT GENERATION

At 54, Weinstein has found himself in a sweet spot, both professionally and personally. His two sons are 23 and 21 now. The younger son is a philosophy major. The older son is considering a legal career and, for now, he actually works as a paralegal in the same building as his dad. It gives Weinstein special memories of blending the love of his family with his passion for the law when he meets his son for a quick lunch during work.

For years, Weinstein's free time was spent coaching or watching his sons play sports. Now, he has more time for some of his own interests, such as international travel. Last year, it was Cuba. This year, he is heading to Europe.

He also stays involved professionally, as part of the National Association of Bond Lawyers. He speaks as a panelist at their conferences, offers commentary on proposed legislation, and offers professional education through the group. In the past, he served as NABL's Securities Law Committee chairman.

"It's a wonderful organization to be part of," he says. "It's nice to meet with like-minded individuals."

That's where he met Carol McCoog, a

partner at Hawkins, Delafield & Wood, LLP.

"Glenn is a very knowledgeable and thoughtful lawyer," she says. "Based on our discussions of various securities law issues, I know Glenn practices at the highest standards."

McCoog and Weinstein have spoken on panel discussions and served on NABL's Securities Law and Disclosure Committee together. Additionally, Weinstein was co-editor of an edition of NABL's *Federal Securities Laws of Municipal Bonds Deskbook*.

"He was helpful to me in moving along a number of projects during that time," McCoog says. "In particular, he contributed a great deal on NABL's Model Letter of Underwriter's Counsel 2nd Edition, a project I led."

There's little doubt he added substance and depth to those projects, shaping his knowledge with the history of finance in a way few other experts can do.

That's because, even in his quietest moments, Weinstein can't help but be drawn to the issues that define his practice. He spends a lot of his down time reading, heavily leaning toward non-fiction books about American history. Most of them have a bent toward the government's role in economic development. Most give Weinstein the context he needs to have a bird's-eye view of his projects, while remaining detail-oriented.

"I'm eating, sleeping and breathing this stuff," Weinstein says. "To me, it's always fascinating how you can use a government or legal system to affect the general welfare of the people."

"Your legal system really is a natural resource. How you shape your laws really decides what your society will be like and whether your economy will grow." ■



In Havana, Cuba, from left: son Willis, wife Lindsey, son Duncan, Weinstein