

Personalities of Pittsburgh: Manoj Jegasothy with Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani



Manoj Jegasothy is managing partner of the Pittsburgh Office of Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani LLP.

By [Patty Tascarella](#) – Senior Reporter, Pittsburgh Business Times
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In five-and-a-half years, [Manoj Jegasothy](#) has grown [Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani's](#) Pittsburgh office almost six-fold from seven lawyers to 41, taken on a greater role in recruiting, and helped the firm add four offices within driving distance – Harrisburg, Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio, and Wheeling, W.Va. – where he additionally serves as co-managing partner for all four. He talked about his first big case and what he learned from mentor [Tom VanKirk](#).

Why did you decide to become a lawyer?

I come from a family full of doctors. My father, my mother, my sister, my aunt, my grandfather – almost everyone in the family is a health care professional. My first job was working in one of my dad's labs. I started out pre-med, but it didn't come to me like it did to everyone else. The summer after my sophomore year, I worked for a law firm in town, for an old-line lawyer

named [Sam Kamin](#) whose son was a close friend of mine. It was the first time I was associated with the law, and I absolutely loved it. Sam's son John now runs that firm, by the way.

Is there a case that was your aha moment?

As a second-year lawyer, I got to handle some of [country western singer] [Tammy Wynette](#)'s wrongful death litigation, and my boss at the time let me take a very active role. For a young lawyer, I was involved in high-stakes litigation in a big way, and it solidified me in terms of knowing I was doing what I wanted to do. I was defending a doctor I'm still close with to this day.

What attracted you to Gordon Rees?

I was in pretty serious talks about managing some other satellite offices in Pittsburgh and then I happened to meet some Gordon Rees guys in a bar in Las Vegas and started talking to them. I told them I was interested in starting an office or running one, and they said, "You should talk to us." Within a very short amount of time, I did. I was attracted to the geographic footprint, national footprint and the rate structure — we have a much more flexible rate structure than a lot of large firms because of our ability to handle the business. But the biggest thing was the entrepreneurial nature at Gordon Rees. They were willing to invest in a region where they'd never been and in a guy named Manoj who they didn't know.

Where do you want to take this office?

It's funny, we had over 80 RSVPs for our Christmas party (in 2017), and I remember the first one where there were eight of us sitting around at a bar. I never thought we'd be (this size) five years ago. But I don't want to put any numbers or labels or constraints on us. We'll do whatever financially makes sense with people we like who have good clients, are good lawyers and good people.

What do you like about recruiting?

I really believe in the product I'm selling, which is the law firm. My experiences have been so good. The other thing is I love our city and know a lot of people in our city and like to meet them and talk to them. It's the best method of recruiting. And it's not necessarily a recruitment, usually it's a merger. These are really great lawyers with books of business, and it has to be a conversation. It's not a pure pitch.

If you weren't practicing law and leading an office, what would you be doing?

Maybe I'd be an actor. In college, I did a little of it and if I hadn't gone to law school, would have given acting a shot.

What's your best tip for time management?

There's no substitute for preparation. And you have to commit full-time if you're going to take things on. If you can't commit, you shouldn't do it. I've found it's gotten easier as my kids have gotten older.

Have you had a mentor?

[Tom VanKirk](#) [former CEO of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, now chief legal officer at Highmark Health], was and is a friend, but I learned so much from him about managing, about relationships and about this city from him. A lot of the management and client relationship skills I have, I learned from watching him.

What was your best lesson from him?

Not to dwell on the past and potential mistakes. There's always so much more to do.

What haven't you accomplished personally that you still want to do?

I want to travel more. I haven't been to Sri Lanka, where my parents are from, since I was four years old. It's a long trip, but I want to do that properly. And there are several places in the Far East that I want to visit.

If you could switch jobs for a day with anyone in the world, who would it be?

[Anthony Bourdain](#) [chef, author and TV personality] although I wasn't happy with his portrayal of Pittsburgh [on CNN series "Parts Unknown"]. He has my favorite job. He gets to travel the world, eat whatever he wants, meet different people, he's on TV and seems to be a great writer.

You're a foodie, so what's your best tip for dining on the road?

I stumble into the best places. When you're traveling, it's important to get into the culture as opposed to doing the stuff everyone tells you to do.

Title: Managing partner, Pittsburgh office, [Gordon Rees Scully Mansukhani](#) LLP

Age: 46

Education: B.A., English, University of Pennsylvania; J.D., University of Pittsburgh School of Law

Experience: Jegasothy joined Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote PC as an associate, then moved to Klett Rooney, later [Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC](#), as a partner in 2005. He led a seven-lawyer team to open the Pittsburgh office of a San Francisco-based firm then known as Gordon & Rees in April 2012.