

CHAMBERS & PARTNERS USA RANKINGS

Bartlit Beck counts on teamwork

BY LISA WIRTHMAN

SPECIAL TO THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Lettered on the 20-foot wall outside Fred Bartlit Jr.'s office is an excerpt from President Theodore Roosevelt's "Man in the Arena" speech: "The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena ... who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

"That is the model of our firm," said Bartlit, a partner and founder of Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP, in Denver and Chicago. "We honor people who try like hell and lose, because all you can do is your best."

The firm offers small teams of highly skilled trial lawyers, Bartlit said. To emphasize that point, Bartlit Beck charges clients based on the value and results delivered, rather than hourly fees.

"We believe that quality in law is not that scalable," Bartlit said. That emphasis on quality made Bartlit and Beck a Chambers Law Band 1 pick in General Commercial Litigation this year.

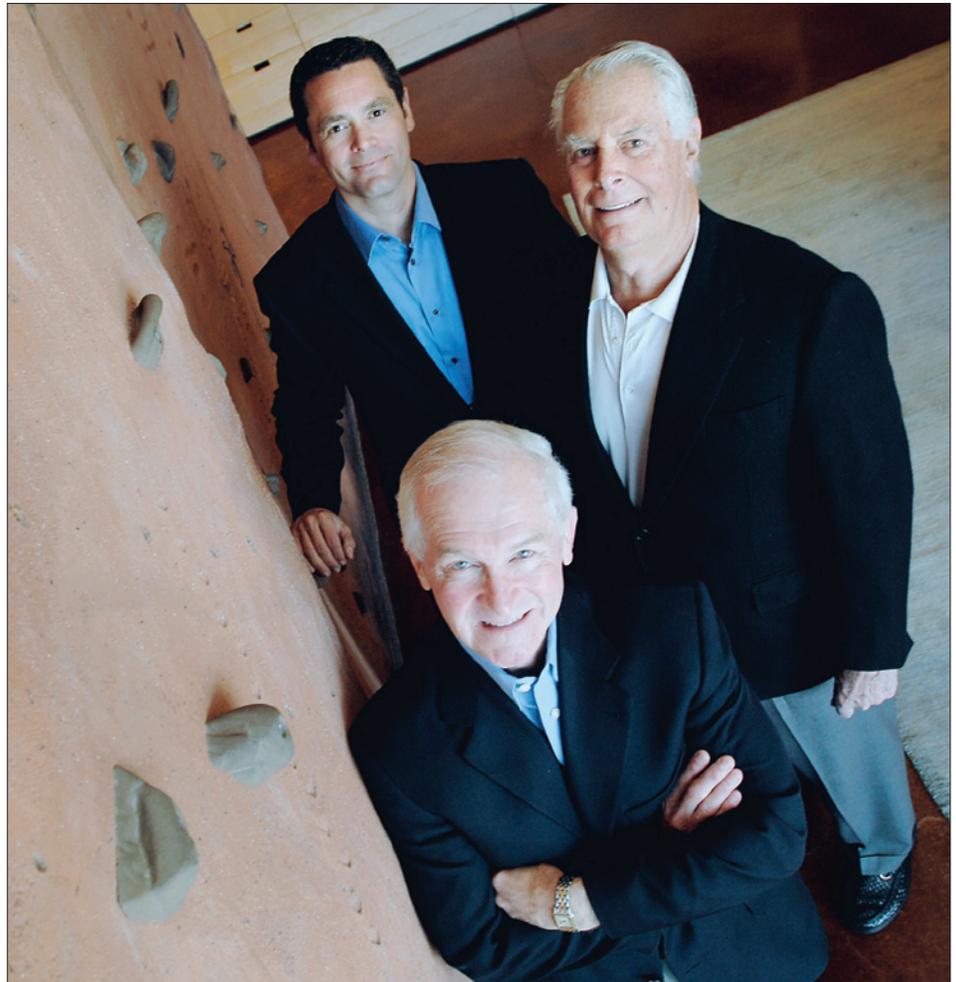
In order to stay small, Bartlit Beck hires just two to four new lawyers each year, and works to give each new hire "in-the-arena" training.

Younger lawyers often try smaller cases for free and attend Bartlit Beck University for training. Last year, 85 percent of the firm's lawyers also interviewed a witness at a trial.

The small-team approach is symbolized in Bartlit Beck's Chicago office in a basketball court that serves as a central meeting room. "Basketball is about small teams, where anybody can win a game," Bartlit said.

In Denver, the firm's reception room includes a climbing wall. The message: There is more than one way to get to the top.

The firm's model depends on hiring the best lawyers in the country. "Recruiting is everything with us," Bartlit said. Offices are located in Chicago and Denver, he said, because they're attractive places to live.



KATHLEEN LAVINE | BUSINESS JOURNAL

Clockwise starting at bottom left, Don Scott, founding partner; Glen Summers, partner; and Fred Bartlit, founding partner, at Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP, which has offices in Denver and Chicago.

BARTLIT BECK HERMAN PALENCHAR & SCOTT LLP

Band 1: Litigation - General Commercial

Bartlit Beck specializes in high-stakes cases. Bartlit acted as chief counsel to President Barack Obama's oil spill commission, overseeing the investigation into the

Deepwater Horizon disaster. He also successfully represented Republican President George W. Bush in the 2000 Florida election's "hanging chads" trial.

"To be a good trial lawyer, you don't have to be any political belief," he said.

Bartlit points out that another president, John Adams, once represented British officers who killed Americans in the Boston Tea Party incident. "That's the way the law is supposed to be," he said.