

SAN DIEGO BUSINESS JOURNAL

EXECUTIVE PROFILE

GUY HALGREN

■ BY PAT BRODERICK

Going global is Guy Halgren's goal.

Halgren is the San Diego-based chairman of Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP, a top 100 law firm with more than 425 attorneys in nine offices throughout California, New York and Washington, D.C. But, he said, there is more room to grow.

"If you look at the big firms, you'll see them increasingly becoming global," he said. "Even the smaller firms have overseas offices. There is a school of thought that there are a limited number of truly global law firms. I don't believe that. I don't think there will be a group of survivor worldwide firms."

Survival, said Halgren, will depend on a firm's quality of service, being in the right place geographically, and having the right people on board.

In the next year or two, he said he plans to open overseas offices, possibly in Europe, the Pacific or south of the border.

"We've grown very quickly over the last four years, and I want to solidify that growth," said Halgren.

BUSINESS PHILOSOPHY

Essential business philosophy: Providing our clients with top-quality legal work and superior client service at a fair price.

Best way to keep a competitive edge: Stay focused and disciplined.

Guiding principles: First, it's all about the people. Get the right people on the bus, and then put them in a position to excel. Second, remember our business exists only to serve our clients.

Yardstick for success: Client satisfaction, hopefully leading to repeat and new business. The biggest rush a lawyer gets is when a client asks that you represent them.

Goals yet to be achieved: Full integration of our offices across the country, and the opening of offices overseas.

JUDGMENT CALLS

Best business decision: Starting our entertainment and media practice in Century City and opening our Washington, D.C., and New York offices.

Worst business decision: Failing to take the risks to acquire a particular unnamed group of attorneys we had been courting.

Toughest business decision: Any time I need to talk to an attorney about leaving the firm because it is not working out.

Mentors: My dad, a man of stellar work eth-



Resumé

Name: Guy Halgren.

Title: Chairman.

Company: Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP.

Revenue: \$232 million in 2004.

Education: Bachelor's degree from UC Davis, 1977; law degree from UCLA, 1984.

Residence: Mount Helix.

Age: 48.

Family: Wife, the Hon. Laura Halgren, judge, San Diego Superior Court; sons, Matthew, 18, and Sam, 13.

Melissa Jacobs

ic, honesty, courage and humor; the Rev. Mark Trotter from First United Methodist Church in San Diego, the world's greatest preacher and a man of great wisdom; and John Collins, who raised me as an attorney.

TRUE CONFESSIONS

What you like best about your job: Growing the firm; I love to build things.

What you like least about your job: Travel. I need to regularly visit our nine offices around the country, but it takes its toll. I was out of my San Diego office 122 days last year.

Pet peeves: Intolerance, whiners.

Most important lesson learned: It is much easier and more effective to hire the right people in the first place than to try to change someone.

Person most interested in meeting: I think it would be a hoot to play a round of golf with Bill Clinton.

Most-respected competitor: Morrison & Foerster.

Three greatest passions: Family, garden-

ing, Padres.

First choice for a new career: Creating and operating a botanical garden. (I owned a nursery before law school.)

PREDILECTIONS

Favorite quote: "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing" — Theodore Roosevelt.

Most influential book: The Bible and "From Good to Great."

Favorite status symbol: My favorite material possession is my garden.

Favorite movie: "North By Northwest." Cary Grant is so cool.

Favorite restaurant: Anthony's Fish Grotto in La Mesa. I have been going there since I was a little boy. Each visit is a new memory.

Favorite place for business meetings: Rainwater's.

Favorite vacation spot: The East Cape of Baja.

Favorite way to spend time: Fishing.

Favorite automobile: 1956 Lincoln Mark II.