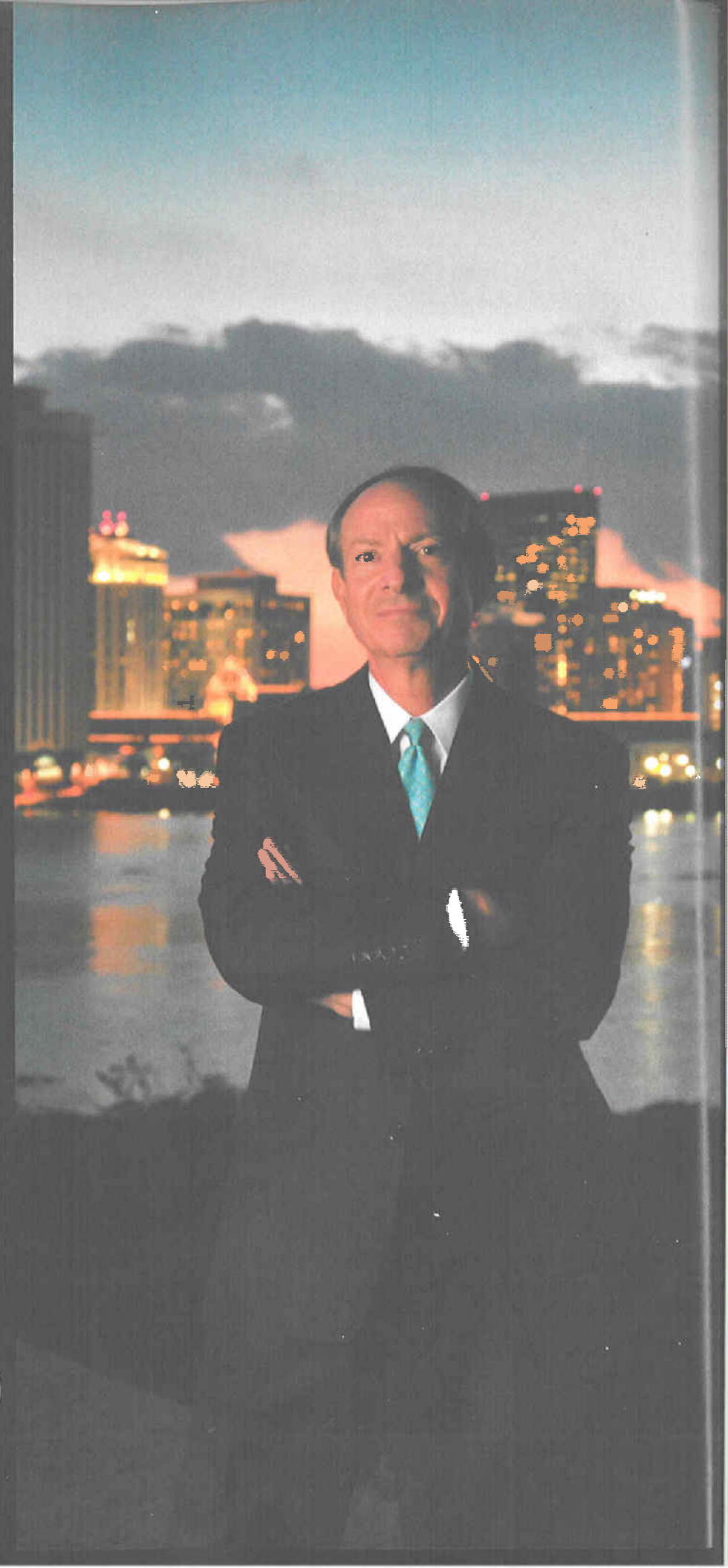
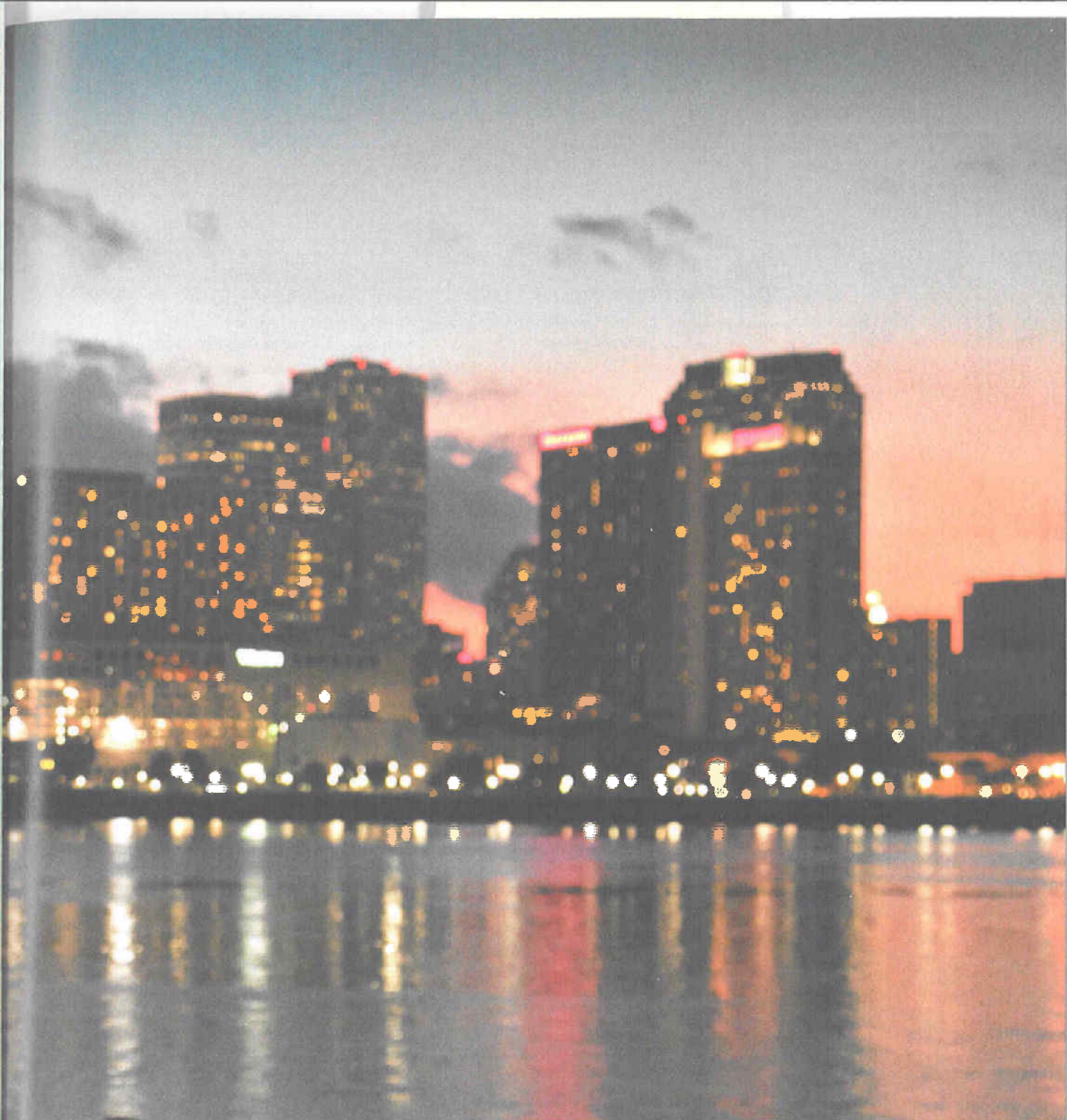


OIL
and
Water





Carl Rosenblum JD '83 has spent nearly three decades working as one of the country's top oil and gas attorneys. It was a professional framework that would prove crucial to the biggest case of his career: fighting for small-business interests in the wake of the BP oil spill off the coast of his adopted hometown. BY SUSAN FINCH / PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHY ANDERSON

GLIGHTLY MORE THAN A MONTH after an oil rig drilling a BP well exploded late last spring off the Louisiana coast, killing 11 crewmen and fouling the Gulf of Mexico with a seemingly unstoppable spew of crude oil, veteran New Orleans litigator Carl D. Rosenblum JD '83 began the highest-profile case of his career.

Serving as the lead plaintiff attorney in *Hornbeck Offshore Services v. Salazar*, Rosenblum represented nearly 40 Louisiana-based businesses in challenging the government's six-month offshore deepwater drilling moratorium. At a hearing in June, he told U.S. District Court Judge Martin L. C. Feldman that the ban was hastily and illegally adopted. What it amounted to, Rosenblum argued, was a complete shutdown of the Gulf of Mexico deepwater drilling industry.

"This was done with the stroke of a pen, without any rule-making, and it has far-, far-reaching implications," he said in laying out reasons why Feldman should stop the U.S. Department of the Interior from continuing to enforce the moratorium. Although the suspension was scheduled to last at least six months, Rosenblum said it had already prompted some owners of large, technically sophisticated drilling rigs to move their equipment to faraway oil fields.

That loss, he told Feldman, would be felt along the Gulf Coast by "an ecosystem of businesses" for far longer than six months.

"This is not a matter of being pro-oil and gas or anti environment," Rosenblum said. "This is a case where we are asking Your Honor to make sure that the government here, the defendants, follow the law... We are not asking you to write new rules."

Ruling a day after a hearing on the request for a preliminary injunction, Feldman said the government had gone too far. He issued a preliminary injunction that the government's move to suspend all deepwater drilling in the Gulf was "arbitrary and capricious" because it affected all drilling operations regardless of companies' individual efforts to operate safely. On October 12, the government announced an early end to the drilling moratorium it originally said would last until the

end of November (another related case is still pending).

Says the intensely confident Rosenblum, "Time will tell whether the saga continues."

A Destined Career Path

To hear Rosenblum tell it, his dream was always to be a litigator.

The middle of three brothers, Rosenblum grew up watching episodes of *Perry Mason*, finding he liked "the impromptu-ness of things that happen in court," and reading about the legal careers of real-life big-name lawyers like Clarence Darrow and F. Lee Bailey.

"I enjoyed the intellectual ping-pong of a debate," Rosenblum says. "I was strong-willed and would try to put my points forth pretty aggressively, intensely, passionately, emotionally"—including when he and his brothers tried to convince their parents to do something.

"I remember vaguely that my mother would say, 'You ought to be a lawyer when you grow up,'" he recalls. To the young Rosenblum, now 55, that sounded like a good fit on several fronts. "I knew I would work hard," he says. "I thought I could help people. It wouldn't be a boring career."

But law school was not Rosenblum's first stop after he earned his undergraduate degree in industrial and labor relations from Cornell University, where he met his future wife, Katie. (Their daughters, 22 and 20, are now enrolled there.)

Instead, Rosenblum spent his first three years out of college working in New York City, handling employee compensation matters for the Philip Morris Company.

There were several reasons behind Rosenblum's detour into the corporate world.

"One was money, candidly," he says. He managed to save enough from his Philip Morris days to help, with loans, cover the later costs of going to law school.

Rosenblum also felt a breather was in order: "I wanted to take some time off from academia," he says. "I thought I'd be a little older and more mature if I took a couple of years off."

In 1980, it was on to Suffolk Law. Rosenblum says he chose the institution because of its location in Boston, "a great college town," and its reputation of "having a very practice-oriented program—hands-on, not simply philosophical or theoretical."

Rosenblum's only paid employment during the school year was as a third-year research assistant. But he was heavily involved in activities related to his legal studies, serving on the law school's international moot court team, participating in moot court competitions, and writing for the *Suffolk Transnational Law Review*.

His former civil procedure professor, Russell Murphy, recalls Rosenblum as a potent academic force.

"He was mature and sophisticated beyond his years when he was my student, and he was able to absorb the teaching I tried to offer," Murphy says.

According to Rosenblum, it was Murphy who encouraged him to look for permanent job prospects outside the Northeast, which at the time suffered from a high concentration of lawyers and a poor economy.

But Murphy puts the credit back on his protégé: "He was willing to take the risk. I think the results are pretty obvious."

From the Big Apple to the Big Easy

Jones Walker, one of the largest law firms in New Orleans, first appeared on Rosenblum's radar screen when recruiters from the firm interviewed him in Boston and offered him a clerkship for the summer of 1982.

"What appealed to me was that Jones Walker was at the time one of the top 100 law firms in the country and it was based in New Orleans, which I had not had any exposure to," Rosenblum says.

Then there was the fact that in contrast to the then-flagging economy in the Northeast, "the

economy down here was booming," he says. Rosenblum was also intrigued by the prospect of working for a large firm with sophisticated clients and experiencing a different part of America. "If I went to clerk for a firm in Manhattan, it wouldn't have opened my eyes to different parts of the country and different cultures, and other things," he says.

After signing on as a lawyer at Jones Walker the following year, Rosenblum began preparing for exactly what he'd dreamed about—the chance to get an early start on fighting for clients in court.

A Man of Energy

How Rosenblum ended up representing energy companies like Freeport McMoRan, Anadarko Petroleum, Eland Energy, Sundown Energy, and Seismic Exchange, and earning a place in *The Best Lawyers in America* as one of the nation's top oil and gas attorneys, began with his initial assignment to a team of lawyers in Jones Walker's commercial and business litigation section.

"I guarantee two things: I'll be prepared, and I'll give it my best shot," says Rosenblum.

"One of the partners on the team was doing bankruptcy work, so I learned about it," he says.

That experience would later prove indelible. "When the oil bust happened in 1985 to 1987," he recalls, "every day, on the front page of the local newspaper, another oil and gas company was going bankrupt, so doing bankruptcy work and oil and gas work almost became synonymous."

Today Rosenblum's bread-and-butter cases are high dollar Oil Patch disputes, many of them contract-related, that don't usually make big headlines.

"I'm not a blood-and-guts lawyer," he says. "Dealing with personal injuries and explosions, that's not normally what I do."

The kinds of energy cases that keep Rosenblum busy—and interested—involve significant amounts of money at risk, and individuals who understand risk.

In one such case, a Dallas federal court jury this fall awarded Rosenblum's client Sundown Energy \$8.5 million, including \$4.7 million in punitive damages, against an insurance company. Sundown accused the insurer of engaging in unfair claims-handling and settlement practices in connection with damage allegedly done to neighboring property when Hurricane Katrina toppled oil storage tanks at Sundown's facility near Port Sulphur, Louisiana.

While Rosenblum doesn't toot his own horn, clients haven't hesitated to sing his praises in annual attorney-rating publications. They call him a go-to guy who's smart, aggressive, ready to do battle—and capable of driving the opposition crazy.

Dallas attorney Buff Harrison Jr., who has

"I guarantee two things: I'll be prepared, and I'll give it my best shot," he says.

Defending His Turf

While Rosenblum doesn't make it a practice to chat publicly about his cases, he doesn't hesitate to talk about how much he loves his adopted city.

"This is my home," he says. "I like the culture, the feel of New Orleans. It's not like living anywhere else. I like the music, I like the food, I like the architecture, I like the lifestyle."


The transplanted Northeasterner is as passionate about issues affecting New Orleans as anyone born and raised there.

"We didn't need the [BP] spill," he says. "We were just getting on our feet post-Katrina." When the storm forced them to evacuate in 2005, the Rosenblums went to Texas, where Carl worked out of the Houston office of Jones Walker and commuted to Dallas to visit his wife and daughters. They returned to their partially damaged home in the English Turn community of New Orleans at the end of that year.

While he's optimistic about the future of New Orleans, Rosenblum admits he's "frustrated that the federal government doesn't fully appreciate the national and international importance of a lot of issues down here.... Fighting over levees and Category 5 [storms] ... it shouldn't be that hard."

As he contemplates the ongoing court cases resulting from the spill—the Hornbeck suit and a related one are still alive—Rosenblum remains "outraged that with the stroke of a pen, government can disregard the law and shut down an industry" and was happy to defend the rule of law to protect the oil and gas industry and benefit the seafood industry, both deeply affected by the moratorium.

"The moratorium was more devastating to the economy than the [oil] spill—and still is," he says.

"The whole case was about putting people back to work. We've won, but I won't be fully satisfied...until we get people back to work." 

"We didn't need the BP spill. We were just getting on our feet post-Katrina."

worked alongside Rosenblum for 15 years, including on the Sundown Energy case, says Rosenblum's exhaustive work before his cases get to court makes him "the most thoroughly prepared lawyer I've ever seen."

"I've been practicing law for nearly 41 years, and I've been around a lot of good trial lawyers," Harrison says. "But he's intelligent; he knows the law and is the best-prepared. It's the preparation that distinguishes him."

Sundown vice president and general counsel Robin McGuire agrees. One of Rosenblum's great strengths, he says, is "his attention to detail, knowing the case better than anybody else does."

Rosenblum himself doesn't guarantee his clients results.