

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE
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PROFILES IN POWER

L. Londell McMillan named one of the 50 Most Influential Minority Lawyers in America

First, a reality check: At last count, a mere 5.4% of partners at U.S. law firms were members of minority groups. For women of color, the figure was fewer than 1.7%, according to the legal placement organization NALP.

But what an amazing group of people those numbers represent, and what a payoff for the firms, law schools and corporations that invested in diversity.

We wanted to get a feeling for how well the legal profession was integrating attorneys who not that long ago were rarely considered the right sort to practice at the elite level. We asked our readers to nominate candidates who have had a national impact in their legal fields and beyond during the past five years. Merely holding a high office or position of authority was not enough; we wanted to identify attorneys who have demonstrated the power to change the law, shape public affairs, launch industries and get big things done. Law professors and in-house counsel were eligible; judges and nonpracticing lawyers were not.

We were met with an avalanche of nominations, which we supplemented with our own research. Editors in our newsroom evaluated great drifts of paperwork to arrive at the list of 50 attorneys that you'll find here. The thumbnail biographies were written by staff reporters Leigh Jones, Vesna Jaksic and Peter Page, and by contributing writers June Bell and Emily Heller.

We freely concede that the results are subjective. Frankly, we could publish a list twice as long and only begin to recognize all of the attorneys making important contributions to the law.

That said, there's no question that the attorneys listed here truly represent important movers and shakers. They direct the legal affairs of mighty corporations; they invent new practice areas; they move the gears of the nation's political machinery. And some will be in a position to become even more influential, depending on how the presidential campaign ends — they also happen to be advisers to Senator Barack Obama.

— *Michael Moline, Associate editor*

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L. Londell McMillan

41, Dewey & LeBoeuf, New York

L. Londell McMillan began his career as a corporate lawyer in the New York office of the former LeBoeuf Lamb, then founded his own firm, The McMillan Firm, which became one of the largest minority-owned law firms in New York state. He now heads Dewey & LeBoeuf's entertainment, media and sports group. He has represented such high-profile clients as Prince (relieving the client of an unwanted contract with Warner Bros. and then negotiating a fresh \$120 million recording deal), Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, Spike Lee and the Reverend Jesse Jackson. Other clients include TIAA-CREF and Sony/ATV Music Publishing LLC. He helped lobby the National Basketball Association to launch the Women's National Basketball Association. He is a co-founder of the Artist Empowerment Coalition, which aims through pressure from the government, artists and public to reshape an entertainment industry business model that he accuses of exploiting artists. His sideline interests include real estate development and an entertainment company, NorthStar Business Enterprises, which fosters African-American artists.