

## Legal Insights

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Gianfranco A. Pietrafesa, Hackensack “Lawyer of the Year” for Corporate Law 2018



*Nicole Ortiz / New Jersey's Best Lawyers 2018  
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**Highlighting Gianfranco A. Pietrafesa** (<https://www.bestlawyers.com/lawyers/gianfranco-a-pietrafesa/59337>) of **Archer & Greiner** (<https://www.bestlawyers.com/firms/archer-greiner-p-c/2174/US>) and his achievements in corporate law.

**How did you get into your practice area?**

When I was with a smaller firm, my partners asked me to consider focusing on corporate law. I did, and I handled corporate and litigation matters for years before I decided to dedicate myself solely to corporate law. Now my

practice is 90 percent corporate and business transactions, such as M&A, and 10 percent corporate and business litigation, such as business divorces.

**Were there any particular inspirations (people or events) that spurred your interest?**

I studied accounting in college and went to law school with the intent of becoming a tax lawyer. However, I got sidetracked into litigation. I was the first person in my family to go to law school. I didn't know any lawyers so I thought a judicial clerkship would be a good introduction to the profession. It was a great opportunity, which led to my first job at a litigation firm. Now my corporate practice blends with my interest in tax law, because a lot of what I do as a corporate lawyer involves tax issues.

**Who are your typical clients?**

My typical clients are family-owned and closely-held businesses in the small- and middle-markets. They are involved in many types of industries so I do not have one industry focus.

**What is your ultimate goal in your practice?**

My goal is to continue to help clients as long as I can. Although the practice of law has changed in the last 28 years, I still enjoy the mental stimulation of working through legal issues and helping clients develop and implement legal and business strategies, such as the best deal structure from corporate and tax perspectives to acquire a business.

**Describe one of your most interesting or memorable cases.**

One interesting and memorable event does not involve a transaction or case. It involves getting New Jersey to adopt the Revised Uniform Limited Liability Company Act. It was an eye-opening experience learning about the legislative process and how legislation actually becomes law. Drafting great legislation is one thing, getting it passed into law is another. It's especially hard with business entity legislation because LLCs are not sexy.

**What qualities do you possess that you find particularly relevant/necessary for practicing your area of law?**

A working knowledge of accounting and tax law certainly helps me in my corporate practice, as does a litigation background. But patience, an open mind, and a good sense of humor are important qualities in any practice area.

**What lessons have you learned along the way?**

It's a small world, so treat people the way you want to be treated. And be honest and responsive to clients, adversaries, and others. We all have families, personal lives, busy schedules, etc. Most people will understand if you need a few more days to do something.

**What other passions/interests do you have?**

I like to write articles on legal topics. I know I have a book or two in me, but finding the time for such a project is a challenge. I also like to golf and I enjoy baseball.