

# top Lawyers

522 lawyers in 67 areas of practice

profiles by **BROOKE SPRINGER**  
photographs by **BOB CAPAZZO**

**F**inding the right attorney to serve your personal and professional needs can be a challenging process, but a necessary decision to make when you need a lawyer on your side. With that in mind, we decided to provide you with a list of the most respected legal counsel in Fairfield County. To get it done, we invited the peer-review experts at LexisNexis Martindale-Hubbell, the legal network with a database of more than one million lawyers from 160 countries, to identify the local attorneys who have reached the highest levels of ethical standards and professional excellence.

This list is based on confidential surveys conducted by Martindale-Hubbell asking lawyers and members of the judiciary to rate the work of peers whose work they know well, using knowledge of the law and experience as criteria. The list that follows includes attorneys who have been rated "AV Preeminent," the highest peer review available.

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**MICHAEL J. CACACE**  
CACACE, TUSCH  
& SANTAGATA  
Stamford

Throughout his career, founding partner Michael Cacace has taken on unpopular, contentious zoning matters and applied the negotiation and advocacy skills he learned early in his career as a litigator to bring different parties to the table and arrive at creative solutions.

He's gone up against affordable housing projects in Greenwich, big development in Stamford and cell tower companies around the state. He's also been proud to help guide some of the development in downtown Stamford, the city that honored him with the Citizen of the Year award in 1995 and the place he calls home.

Inspired by John F. Kennedy's call to service, Cacace decided early on to pursue law with the intention of going into politics, but fell in love with the legal profession along the way. However, he has remained actively involved in the local political scene; he has served as campaign chairman for his good friend Richard Blumenthal.

It was during Cacace's first job at a small Manhattan firm headed up by the famously high-powered Roy Cohn that he honed his litigation skills. He worked on high profile cases involving Studio 54, represented mob bosses and got involved in the Ford and Casablancas model agency wars. But it was the landmark case representing Renée Richards, the transgender male who sought to compete in the Women's U.S. Tennis Open, that had the most lasting impact on him. With the help of John Money, a leading expert on human sexuality, his team used a newly adopted civil rights law meant to protect women against discrimination to argue and win Richards's right to compete in a women's sport. "The profound lesson I learned from that was that if you worked hard, did your research and presented a creative argument with strong advocacy, you could have a dramatic impact on public policy."

# 522 TOP

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