

**SPOTLIGHT:
LAWYERS**



Staff photo by Chuck McGowen

Partners (from left) Robert Pasquale, Eric Doroshow and Gary Linarducci head a successful firm.

A firm's grasp

Offering legal advice for middle class, attorney finds his niche

By MAUREEN MILFORD

Staff reporter

Ten years ago, when a Wilmington attorney opened his substantial-sounding "Legal Clinic of Eric M. Doroshow" in a strip shopping center, he actually had just one case involving a traffic ticket.

But Doroshow was convinced there was a market for the kind of legal service he was going to sell. While working as a young lawyer for Community Legal Aid Society Inc., he came to the conclusion that legal help was readily available for lower-income families through government-subsidized programs and also to upper-income consumers, who could afford to hire the best law firm in town.

The segment that hadn't been reached by the legal industry was the broad middle class, Doroshow said. Studies showed that 70 percent of the middle-income families were not being reached, he said.

So he opened his legal clinic with the idea of assisting middle-income families with their most common problems: personal injury, real estate, traffic problems, divorce, and wills. The word "clinic" was used to break down the barriers between the consumer and lawyer, he said.

"It's worked out real, real well," said Doroshow of his six-office firm, now called Doroshow, Pasquale and Linarducci. "We're not going to get T. Boone Pickens Jr. in here asking us to handle a corporate takeover, but that's not the kind of client we serve."

The law firm goes where the customer is. All the offices are on major highways in suburban settings — with plenty of parking. The firm has never had a center-city office.

"Most lawyers have offices downtown because it's easy to walk to court. Suburban offices are not convenient for us, but they're convenient for our clients," said Doroshow, 38.

The main office still is on Kirkwood Highway in Elsmere, and the other offices are in Bellefonte, Talleyville, New Castle, Dover and Pennsville, N.J. The offices are open Saturdays and evenings.

In keeping with Doroshow's consumer-oriented approach, he was one of the first attorneys to advertise in 1978 after the Delaware Supreme Court spelled out rules for lawyer advertising.

The move didn't endear Doroshow to other lawyers, he said. Some felt advertising could result in unsophisticated clients falling prey to inferior legal work. Others felt any reputable lawyer would not advertise, Doroshow said.

"I was investigated by various members of the bar to make sure I could provide the services I said I could," said Doroshow, who graduated from John Marshall Law School in Chicago.

Although Doroshow still serves the same market, in many ways his firm has grown more like traditional law firms. Advertising is limited to small display ads in the Yellow Pages and TView magazine — something that many firms do today. "Legal clinic" was dropped from the firm's name. For "uncomplicated" cases, the firm's fee is \$90 an hour.

Doroshow, Pasquale and Linarducci employs 62 people, 14 of whom are attorneys. Future expansion could include an office in Sussex County, Doroshow said.