

Adorno and Yoss stands out in the legal crowd by its commitment to diversity

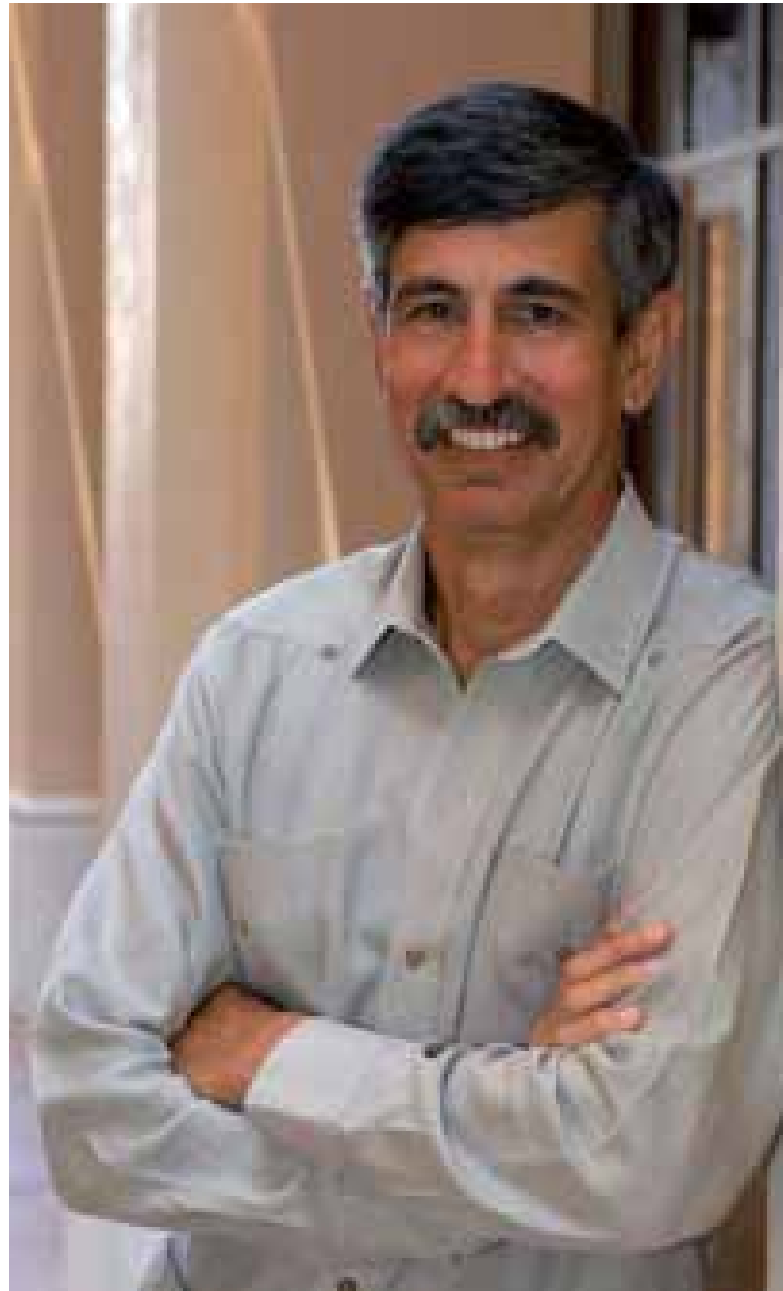
When Henry “Hank” Adorno started his own law firm in 1986, little did he know that the Miami-based shop of three would evolve to a staff of 400. Motivated by independence, yet lacking a solid business plan, his company struggled to survive. Almost 20 years later, Adorno & Yoss LLC boasts a global presence in 10 states (Florida, Georgia, Washington, DC, New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Texas, California, Florida, Missouri) and in Latin America. It is the largest certified minority-owned law firm in the United States and is very active in three networks: The National Minority Law Group, the Law Firm of the Americas, and the State Capital Global Law Firm Group.

Adorno & Yoss sets itself apart from the competition through its diversity initiatives. He states, “We’re probably the most diverse firm in the country. Twenty-one percent of our lawyers are Hispanic, 17% are African American, and 40% of all of our lawyers are women. We do match the demographics of this country in the communities that we serve.”

A practicing attorney for over 30 years, Hank Adorno is the founder, president and CEO of Adorno & Yoss. He came to the United States from Cuba at age five and received both his undergraduate and law degrees with honors at the University of Florida. Previous to founding Adorno & Yoss, Hank worked in the major crimes division at the Dade County State Attorney’s Office. He also held a post as Chief Assistant State Attorney to Janet Reno.

Despite its current status and accolades, Adorno & Yoss did not become a successful firm overnight. Some challenges it faced were misconceptions about being a minority firm in terms of size, capability, and experience. The firm overcame these challenges by demonstrating an ability to compete with the larger firms. “I think in many cases there’s a misconception that a minority owned firm is necessarily small, undercapitalized, and doesn’t have much resources, none of which are true,” Adorno says, pointing out that his firm employs 250 lawyers along with 150 support staff, and also has offices worldwide. He continues, “On the one hand you have to get in the door and be prepared say to them, ‘Gee, it’s great we have an opportunity to present our qualifications. Let’s look at our qualifications and compare them to everybody else.’ We stack up pretty well. We’re value added.”

What Adorno attributes to the firm’s success is focus on the client. He says the firm had the ability to attract clients from the beginning and everything from that point had been client driven. “It’s typical supply and demand. There appeared to be a demand for the services we had. We supplied the services that required us to grow organically first in Florida. Then we saw the demand for our services nationally and had to grow geographically.”



Plans for growth include continuing its diversity initiatives and expanding geographic reach. “It’s going to be demand driven. There is a significant demand for corporate America today to diversify its client base including professional services such as law and so we’re going to take advantage of that demand and continue to supply that if it allows us to continue to grow organically. But it also requires us to go into new markets. We are looking at opportunities at other markets such as the Boston and Houston area.”

Adorno & Yoss is recipient of numerous recognitions and awards. It received the 2005 “Regional Supplier of the Year” award by the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC). It is the only law firm member of NMSDC’s



Corporate Plus Group, a membership program for the highest caliber minority business enterprises which has successfully handled national contracts for major corporations. Adorno & Yoss ranked in the top 300 law firms in the country according to American Lawyer's rankings. The firm is the 106th largest Hispanic-owned business in the nation according to Hispanic Magazine.

Adorno's biggest success was receiving the prestigious Thomas L. Sager Award for the South/Southwest Region in February 2005. The Minority Corporate Counsel Association presents this award annually to the firms committed to improving the hiring, retention and promotion of minority attorneys. Through a very rigorous process, Adorno & Yoss has been selected to be national council for some very large corporations. The firm was chosen as one of All State's premier law firms and has also been chosen for the Pfizer 3 (or P3). He says proudly, "We're in what I consider a very exclusive club. We've been able to convince major corporations that we're up to the task equal to the national law firms."

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