



While National Black Golf Hall of Famer Lewis Horne acknowledges that he was encouraged to play golf by two senior partners in his firm more than 20 years ago, he admits that for him, deals haven't been miraculously cut on the links, as corporate legend would have it. Instead, one of the Schiff Hardin partner's game-changing pivots came in the form of a poignant letter.

"After becoming a public bond attorney in the late '70s, when Maynard Jackson took office as mayor, I wrote a letter to the National Association of Bond Lawyers and suggested that they spend more time focusing on the needs of lawyers in small firms and minority bond lawyers. There was an implicit assumption that public finance work could only be done in the context of large, big city firms. But the fact that you existed within a small or minority firm did not suggest that the quality of work may be less."

As a result of the letter, Horne was invited to meet with prominent bond lawyers from across the country, and was soon asked to become the first minority to join the association's board of directors. Years later, he was asked to serve as chairman of the association's diversity initiative.

Since then, he has remained in private legal practice with heavy involvement in Fulton County matters, took a hiatus to work in the golf industry in Arizona as president of the National Minority

Golf Foundation, and then returned to "civilian life" to eventually represent the Fulton-DeKalb Hospital Authority in connection with the review and implementation of the restructuring plan for Grady Memorial Hospital. The negotiations led to the leasing of the hospital facilities to a newly created 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation organized for the purpose of operating the hospital as a private non-profit facility.

Lewis Horne
Partner
Schiff Hardin LLP

Specialization: Public finance, taxable bonds, multi-family housing revenue bond transactions

"When it became clear that the hospital authority was not going to be able to access the additional monies needed, we came up with a unique structure which provided for new operational opportunities without villainizing or dispensing with authority members. We were able to avert catastrophe with Grady, but the fact of the matter is that public hospitals do die and go away because funding sources dry up."

As do amicable sentiments surrounding the subject of diversity. But in his 30 years of practice, Horne has always found the sweet spot.

"I've done many deals with people who didn't know who I was and what I look like. But, I'm sure it affords some decision makers some comfort knowing that there's a level of diversity and that the bond lawyers don't always come from the 'other side of town.' To the extent that there's a big deal done and a team is being introduced, I think it's important that the team reflects the diversity of the community." **AT**