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A Family Affair

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Torshi Girl



A Legacy of Counsel



From left: Ron Acho, Jewel Haji Boelstler and Ziyad Hermiz.

How Chaldean attorneys are shaping tomorrow

By Eemi Toma

The legal profession often reflects the world it serves. At its most honest, it mirrors evolving stories of identity, justice, and perseverance. For many Chaldean American attorneys, entering this world is about more than building a career. It means standing on the strength of tradition while creating something new for future generations.

This article highlights three attorneys who have not only found success in the legal field but also continue to shape the spaces around them. Their stories are rooted in experience and guided by a shared commitment to rise, serve and lead.

Each of them—Ziyad Hermiz, Jewel Haji Boelstler, and Ronald G. Acho—represent a different chapter in the Chaldean legal journey. Their experiences reflect where we are, where we are going, and where we have been.

Where Business Meets Legal Strategy

Ziyad Hermiz did not grow up dreaming of becoming a lawyer. The spark was lit in a business law class during his undergraduate studies at Michigan State University. He quickly realized how the legal system could shape, challenge, and empower business. That realization took him to University of Detroit Mercy School of Law, where he graduated in 2008.

Today, Hermiz is a partner at Varnum LLP in Birmingham. His legal work brings him to the intersection of business insight and legal precision, where decisions carry weight and strategy matters.

He did not begin as a litigator by design. A summer clerkship with federal Judge Avern Cohn altered his path. That experience helped him see the court not only as a place for argument but as a forum for leadership where trust, preparation, and clarity drive outcomes.

“I did not originally plan to start my career as a litigator,” he says. “But it just clicked.”

Much of what guides Hermiz today can be traced back to the values he grew up with. “My Chaldean upbringing shaped my path in many ways,” he says. “I was raised around a strong work ethic, resilience, and a deep sense of responsibility to family and community.”

Now, his focus includes mentoring young professionals and helping businesses navigate complexity. For him, success is no longer just about winning in court—it’s about being a trusted adviser who brings calm to pressure and structure to uncertainty.

To young Chaldeans thinking about law, his advice is simple but powerful. “Do not hold back. You do not have to wait to see someone exactly like you in a role before going after it.”

The Power of Poise and Purpose

When Jewel Haji Boelstler started college, she envisioned a career in medicine. But life, as it often does, nudged her in a different direction. A series of career assessments pointed her toward law, and she never looked back.

She sought out internships and hands-on opportunities to explore the field. The more she engaged, the more she saw law as a discipline that pushed her intellectually and gave her space to lead.

Boelstler graduated magna cum laude from the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law in 2019. Today, she is a partner at Honigman LLP in Detroit, practicing in commercial litigation and white-collar defense.

Without lawyers in her immediate family, she entered unfamiliar territory and turned it into an opportunity. That’s why mentorship is now central to her work. She helped establish a program at her alma mater pairing first-year law students with alumni. “As a 1L, I didn’t always have the answer,” she says. “Now I can help others find theirs.”

Boelstler’s strength is in her clarity. In a field that often values confrontation, she has learned that composure is not weakness. It is a strength in another form. “Effectiveness is sometimes measured by aggression,” she says. “But I am most effective when I am calm and collected.”

Her Chaldean roots gave her that perspective. “Growing up in a minority community reminded me that with grit and resilience, you can conquer anything.”

She believes Chaldean women entering law already carry what they need. “Challenge yourself every day,” she says. “You are capable of more than you know.”

A Foundation Of Faith, Counsel, and Community

If Ziyad Hermiz and Jewel Boelstler represent the next generation of Chaldean legal leadership, Ronald G. Acho stands as a pillar of its foundation.

Acho graduated from the Detroit College of Law in 1974 and joined Cummings, McClorey & Davis, where he added his name and remains an equity partner. His career spans over fifty years, and the values that guided him continue to guide him now.

He did not pursue law for prestige. The 1967 Detroit riots were a defining moment, showing him the urgency of stability. He sought a profession that would allow him to protect his family and make a meaningful difference.

“I see being a lawyer as something close to being a priest or a minister,” he says. “We are here to help people. But we must also build something that can sustain itself.”

Acho’s leadership has always been rooted in service. As a founder, he created space for others to rise. He mentored attorneys, cultivated diversity, and built trust by leading with consistency. That kind of leadership does not chase attention. It earns it.

Though he avoided overt discrimination, he has spent much of his career advocating for those who did not. Many of his clients have faced bias, and his deep understanding of their experiences drives his work.

“Chaldeans have faced discrimination both in the old country and here,” he says. “I have represented many people who were victims of discrimination. I relate to their experience deeply.”

To young attorneys, his message is direct and enduring. “Be the very best you can be, whatever your role. And when you do find success, extend a hand to the next person.”

Acho’s legacy is not only in the law firm that bears his name. It lives in the generations of attorneys he has encouraged, the clients he has stood beside, and the community that continues to benefit from his quiet example.

A Story Still Being Written

One found his way through business. Another pivoted from medicine. A third built the road decades ago so others would not have to walk alone. Their paths may differ, but they lead to the same truth. Leadership comes in many forms, and it always leaves something behind.

Hermiz, Boelstler, and Acho have each redefined what it means to practice law while staying rooted in Chaldean identity. Their stories are more than inspiration. They mark progress.

And to the young Chaldeans watching from a distance, wondering if there is a place for them in the courtroom, the office, or the negotiating table—the answer is already here.

Breaking barriers is not just about being first but making sure you are not the last.