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Rising Star: Cahill Gordon's Adam Zurofsky

By **Ben James**

Law360, New York (April 01, 2010) -- Serving as a senior member of a team of Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP lawyers that represents The McGraw-Hill Cos.' Standard & Poor's division in numerous cases over tens of billions of dollars in securities helped land Adam Zurofsky on Law360's list of 10 securities lawyers under 40 to watch.

In a lawsuit over mortgage-backed securities underwritten by Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., Zurofsky, 38, was one of the authors of a motion to dismiss that got all the claims leveled against S&P thrown out in January. That case, which is still pending against other defendants, involves about \$93 billion worth of securities.

Zurofsky, who has been representing S&P since he was an associate, helped get a case against S&P over its ratings of collapsed energy giant Enron dismissed. He also represented a witness who testified in the criminal trials of Ken Lay and Jeffrey Skilling.

Zurofsky still spends a lot of his time working on matters for S&P, which have given him a chance to deal with probes by state attorneys general, a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission examination, international regulatory initiatives and more than 40 civil suits.

He also worked on an environmental arbitration for a client other than S&P, Zurofsky noted.

The ability to switch gears, and get acquainted with new industries and issues, has added to Zurofsky's skills as an attorney, he said.

"That broad exposure makes you a better lawyer in my opinion, and that is something our firm promotes," Zurofsky said.

Zurofsky also touted the encouragement and support he had received from senior Cahill Gordon lawyers. That support, he said, gave him a level of comfort that helped him tackle major responsibilities even as a relatively young lawyer.

The firm's willingness to trust him has been an extremely meaningful part of his job, Zurofsky said.

Zurofsky, who graduated from law school in 1997, hadn't been on the job long when he represented Homestore.com Inc.'s audit committee in an internal investigation into accounting improprieties. That representation entailed interviewing dozens of people, reviewing documents and dealing with the authorities.

In 2002, three former Homestore executives were charged with fraudulently inflating the company's revenues. Prosecutors said ex-Chief Operating Officer John Giesecke and others were part of a scheme to defraud investors between March 2001 and December 2001.

The company itself, however, was never charged, and then-Attorney General John Ashcroft praised the cooperation of Homestore's new management and board, and their "efforts to uncover and prosecute the illegal conduct of the defendants."

Zurofsky, who is married with a young son, said it could be a challenge to balance the requirements of his job and his obligations to his family. The key is to prioritize, and make sure that the most important demands — on both the family and professional fronts — don't get short shrift, he said.

Zurofsky said he made up his mind to become a lawyer during his undergraduate years at Stanford. But after two and half years as an associate at Cahill, he took time some time out for a foray into the business world, helping start a technology company called Harmonic Communications.

That company eventually became a casualty of the dot-com bust, but the experience reaffirmed Zurofsky's passion for practicing law, he said.