

EXTRA

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to the practice of law.

Published by the Los Angeles Daily Journal
and San Francisco Daily Journal

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Patent litigator leaves O'Melvey for Aischuler Grossman. Page 6

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Panel OKs verdict for "crimes against humanity." Page 8

Business Center

Disney, Miramax creators work months on their divorce. Page 12

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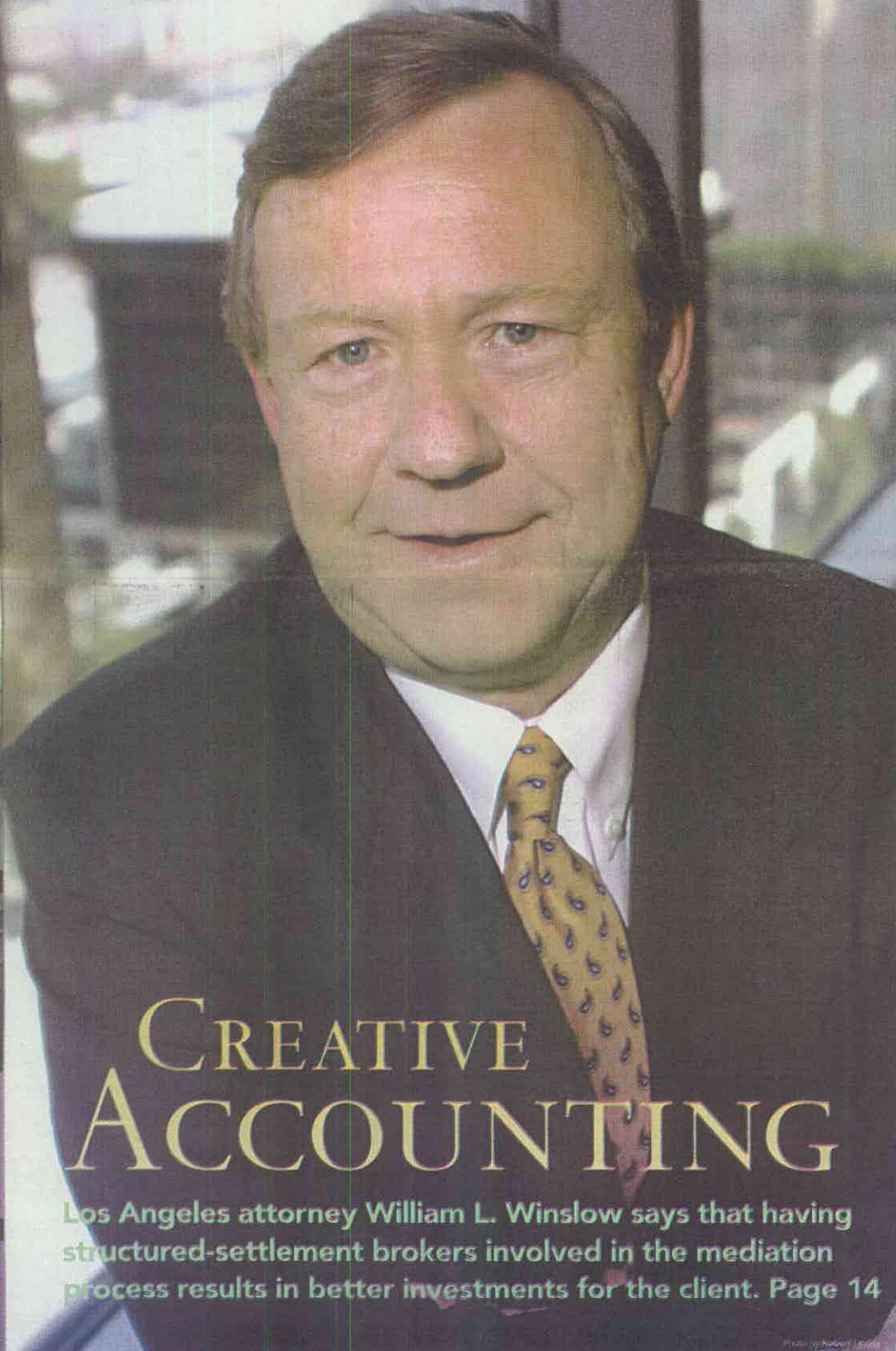


Free Time

Thanks to a Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights program, corporate attorneys get the rare opportunity to handle small-business deals pro bono. Page 16

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CREATIVE ACCOUNTING

Los Angeles attorney William L. Winslow says that having structured-settlement brokers involved in the mediation process results in better investments for the client. Page 14

Photo by Robert Lewis



Photo by Ron Murray of Image Active

Longtime friends were reunited April 1 when Women Lawyers of Los Angeles President-elect Dominique Shelton, right, presented Dr. Nawal Nour, left, with the Pathfinder Award.

Women Attorneys Present Pathfinder Honor to Doctor

By Adrianna Khoo

Dominique Shelton says it's no surprise to her that college classmate and longtime friend of 20 years, Nawal Nour would have become the noted Dr. Nawal Nour, founder of the nation's only clinic for women who have been circumcised.

And it was no surprise to Nour that Shelton, a partner in the Los Angeles office of Folger Levin & Kahnand and the president-elect of the Women Lawyers of Los Angeles, would be the one to present her with the association's 15th annual Pathfinder Award, Nour says.

The association presented the award to Nour on April 1 for her excellence in community service and advocacy on behalf of women who have undergone female genital cutting or forms of circumcision.

Nour, who grew up in Egypt and Sudan, lectures across the nation about the cultural and aesthetic reasons behind cutting in many African nations and the medical problems that may result from such operations.

Though Nour says all of her cousins experienced cutting, her American mother and liberal Sudanese father opposed the practice on her.

"The spirit of the award is to honor someone who is a pathfinder, who has done something new and significant in the community," says Shelton, who met Nour at Brown University at 17. "It's about education, awareness and actually helping women with a culturally sensitive approach."

Nour was able to learn more about cultural reasons for circumcision when she received a 2003 MacArthur Foundation Fellow "genius grant" for \$500,000 and used it

to create the African Women's Health Center at Harvard University's Brigham and Women's Hospital.

The center provides prenatal care and treats women for bladder infections, scarring, deformities and other side effects of female genital cutting. Nour sees 25 patients a week.

"I have a mission: improving women's health, especially trying to stop the practice and alleviate the pain of women who have been circumcised," says Nour, an obstetrician and gynecologist.

But in advocating an end to the practice, Nour is known for her nonjudgmental way of dealing with patients' emotional stress and understanding their cultural backgrounds.

"It wasn't so much that I was doing something special but because I didn't do something special. I didn't treat patients as victims but as holistic people with problems, and I think they liked that," says Nour of opening the Boston clinic to a base of African immigrants.

"Parents do this because they love their children. Children look forward to this day that they become women," Nour says.

Two million women are circumcised around the world every year in nations such as Somalia, Ethiopia and Uganda for reasons of preserving virginity, ensuring marriageability and aesthetics, Nour says.

She says she hoped the audience of 30 women gathered at the Hilton Checkers in Los Angeles would add spreading awareness of female genital cutting to the work that the group does, such as providing legal services for female prisoners and victims of domestic violence.

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