

Legal eagle

Tom Ajamie '82 B.A.

Internationally recognized trial lawyer Tom Ajamie is at the top of his game. In fact, there's hardly a legal accolade that Ajamie, founder of the Houston and New York-based business litigation firm, Ajamie LLP, hasn't amassed recently: The Scottsdale native is one of The National Law Journal's "Top 50 Litigation Trailblazers," has been included in the Lawdragon 500 (an annual guide featuring the best of the legal profession) for seven consecutive years, and has won two of the largest awards ever handed down by an arbitration panel for investors, including a \$429.5 million award. His cases have been covered by the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Fortune and Forbes, and he appears regularly on television including ABC and CNBC.

Ajamie's legal ambitions were inspired by his uncle, an attorney whom Ajamie, 54, wanted to emulate. "I was drawn to his intellect, his ability to speak clearly and logically, and his knowledge of all issues and subjects. He was intelligent and articulate, and I wanted to become like him," Ajamie says.

As the eldest of five children and the first in his immediate family to attend college, Ajamie was drawn to ASU because, he says, "I wanted to have the 'live on campus' experience while also being close to my family." With both an academic tuition waiver and a Leadership Scholarship in tow, he excelled quickly at ASU; at 19, Ajamie was elected the youngest student body president in ASU's history. The university left a lasting impression. "ASU taught me to ask questions, manage my schedule, and seek to learn. That has helped propel me in my legal career," Ajamie notes.

He maintains a scholarship endowment at ASU which awards student scholarships to "students with good academics, promising leadership potential, and a willingness to promote tolerance and diversity in society," and who participate in the Leadership Scholarship Program.

Today, Ajamie splits his time between his Houston and New York offices, working on complex business litigation cases that span the globe. He's also written a successful book, "Financial Serial Killers: Inside the World of Wall Street Money Hustlers, Swindlers and Con Men." One thing he doesn't do much of is relax. Asked how he fits it all in, Ajamie replies, "I work most weekends and don't sleep too much!"

By Amy Partridge, a freelance writer based in Thornwood, N.Y.

A man in a dark suit and blue tie stands next to a large, textured stone column. He is looking upwards and to the right with a slight smile. The background is a light-colored, textured wall.

The official publication of Arizona State University
May 2015, Vol. 18, No. 4