



► PROFILE Michael Behn '87

King of *Qui Tam*

Michael Behn prosecuted his first white-collar criminal case as part of a fifth-grade class assignment in Albany, New York. He lost but hasn't done much losing since.

For the past 25 years, Behn has specialized in *qui tam* whistleblower cases in which clients sue on behalf of the government and share in any eventual recovery. "There's no greater privilege in law in my experience than representing the United States of America," says Behn, a former prosecutor for the US Commodity Futures Trading Commission and the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York. "Once you do that, it's hard to give it up."

Behn and the firm he co-founded with law school classmate Linda Wyetzner '87 have

helped claw back hundreds of millions of dollars for the government and their clients. One of Behn's highest profile matters — a False Claims Act case against defense contractor Northrop Grumman Corporation that Behn says resulted in a total recovery of \$134 million — was recently featured on "Whistleblower," a new CBS series. The case was settled in 2005, more than 16 years after it began, but continues to exemplify the risks and rewards of *qui tam* actions (Behn's client was homeless for a time because of his efforts).

"I love my clients," Behn says. In some cases, "they lost their jobs for standing up for what's right. To serve those kinds of clients, to have their trust when their trust has been so fundamentally violated, is an honor." — *Rebecca Beyer*