



“Global trade is an enormous agent of change – it can be used in any pursuit to make the world better, safer, cleaner and more humane.”

Andrew Schroth

Partner, Grunfeld, Desiderio, Lebowitz, Silverman & Klestadt LLP

“Trade is the single most significant driver of economic, political and social change.”

For Andrew Schroth, an accomplished international trade lawyer, involvement in trade has allowed him to help small and large companies operating in growing economies gain access to larger markets, specifically the US market. His work on nonprofit boards has helped him bring awareness of sustainable trade to major stakeholders.

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Andrew manages the Hong Kong office of Grunfeld, Desiderio, Lebowitz, Silverman & Klestadt LLP (GDLSK), one of the US’ largest law firms specializing in international trade and customs matters, with attorneys working in the US and Asia. His practice is focused on antidumping and countervailing duty actions and other federal trade actions before the US Department of Commerce, the US International Trade Commission and the US Trade Representative. His firm is involved in facilitating the movement of goods across borders, reducing barriers to trade, representing foreign governments and industry associations in trade policy, and arguing cases before US trade courts.

Agent of change

“I realized quite early on that my work in the trade remedy area had a meaningful impact on individual companies as well as certain industries.

“The work I do for specific companies or sectors in maintaining their access to the US market has had a big impact on individuals, entire workforces and has helped stimulate the local and regional development of industries. I realized that my firm is pivotal in keeping free and fair trade alive in developing parts of Asia and educating companies and their managers on how to become better global trade citizens.”

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Andrew grew up in an international family, moving to different countries as his father ran the regional and global human relations departments for a multinational corporation. His many travels through Asia, Africa and Europe, and exposure to various cultures, inspired him early on to look at careers that would give him the same international exposure.

His education was split between the US and the UK. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors from Tulane University, a master's degree with honors in International Relations from the University of Sussex in England, a Juris Doctorate (law degree) from Vanderbilt University in the US and completed a General Course (GC) Law at the London School of Economics.

"I took immediately to international living and began early to seek ways to have an international career with postings overseas. I was enamored with expat life and the opportunities and doors it opened for me. I learned a lot about the global interconnectivity between people and cultures and saw how the backbone of this connectivity was global trade."

Beginnings in trade

Andrew started his trade career "by chance" when he took his first attorney position with a large US law firm in their London office and handled two cases involving countertrade with Russia. He was fascinated with the many facets of these trade cases – legal, political, economic, accounting, logistics. He decided from then on to pursue a trade-related career as a lawyer. Andrew moved from London to New York in 1989 to join his current law firm, GDLSK, and has been managing the GDLSK office in Hong Kong since 2006.

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"Every project was unique and interesting. The results of these cases had an impact on entire industries, communities and individuals," he said. "I became a specialist in trade remedy cases and worked mostly in Europe, spending many months each year in the UK, Italy, Germany and France."

During the early part of his career, Andrew said the US trade remedy cases, mostly antidumping, were targeted against highly competitive European products – steel and ball bearings, agricultural goods, and automotive and machinery components. In the 1990s, the trade work shifted dramatically towards Asia, with Japan, Taiwan and China becoming the main countries, and later, Vietnam.

Now his work involves all aspects of representing US and foreign interests before US government agencies and courts, particularly in trade disputes involving unfair trade practices, "less than fair value" pricing investigations, unlawful subsidizations and other trade remedies administered under US law and the World Trade Organization. Andrew also counsels on US Customs, product and food safety, and related regulatory issues. He also advises government agencies in China and Vietnam on issues related to US trade law and policy.

Andrew sits on several boards, one of which is the Global Apparel and Footwear Trade Initiative (GAFTI), which brings large and small companies together with governments to streamline and standardize regulation and compliance in many areas, such as sustainability and product safety.

A rewarding career

“International trade remedy work is rewarding. There is great intrigue in bridging business cultures and building relationships with clients and their management teams.”

To succeed in international trade, Andrew believes a lawyer needs to be very culture-conscious, has to mold easily into new business cultures and traditions, and has to understand what the priorities are for the business versus the level of compliance required.

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Aside from his field, Andrew noted that there are many opportunities for younger people to find a career in trade-related industries.

“Global trade in goods and services presents hundreds of thousands of opportunities for young people and influences them in very profound ways. We live in a completely economically interdependent world. Every country and industry are affected by global trade patterns, policies and issues, and there are opportunities all the way upstream and downstream in the world of global trade. From import-export, logistics, regulatory and compliance (customs and trade), to trade finance, political lobbying and industry-support associations, government positions in trade agencies and private businesses. The list is endless.”

For soft consumer goods, there are opportunities in apparel and footwear, along with global sourcing and logistics, compliance, factory management, customer relations, sales, and marketing. He noted that technology is also one of the most exciting areas in global trade with the recent boom of online shopping and borderless trade. This has been a game changer and will fundamentally alter global trade going forward. In fact, the world of “digital trade” is rapidly evolving, with the advent of blockchain, crypto-currencies, virtual trading platforms and online consumerism.

Opportunities for the younger generation

Andrew is a strong believer in mentorship to develop the next generation of trade leaders. He noted the current lack of talented middle and senior management to drive global businesses and promote trade, particularly in developing countries.

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“This is perhaps the single greatest barrier to enhancing global trade. Leadership roles are emerging in every aspect of global trade and the younger generation has an opportunity to fill this vacuum and take the reins of trade development in the next 20 years.

“Old models of management are proving unreliable or ineffective for some companies that are grappling with a growing global presence and complex trade issues. Talented management requires great education and mentors, and a lot of hands-on experience. The world is coming closer together through cross-border trade and this will lead to a cultural change in the way we educate our future leaders.”

“My advice is to follow your instincts and interests in any career you chose. There are ample opportunities in the trade field but finding the one that fits your temperament and ambitions may take time.”

For the younger generation, Andrew said it is very important to grab each opportunity as it comes.

“My advice is to follow your instincts and interests in any career you chose. There are ample opportunities in the trade field but finding the one that fits your temperament and ambitions may take time. Working up through an organization and seeing as many different areas of the company or agency as possible is very important.

“Get a diverse and rich experience and don’t be afraid to move to other countries to find new opportunities and learn from different business cultures.

Never stagnate, embrace opportunity and the diversities of working in new and different areas and cultures. It has served me very well for the past 30 years.”

Andrew also noted the importance of mastering the language of global commerce, which is English. He said Chinese, French, Spanish and Japanese are also growing in prominence. Andrew is proficient in Italian and Spanish and has picked up a little Vietnamese and Chinese along the way.

“The language of global commerce is English – learn it well. The global trading system is primarily based on Western business norms and traditions – learn them well. Most importantly, global trade can be an enormous agent of change so find your place in this fascinating world. Trade is good. Trade is drawing us together. So, embrace it.”

Eventually, Andrew would like to do more work in trade promotion and compliance in developing nations. He hopes to be part of trade missions that bring new technologies and advancements to developing countries to promote sustainability, social welfare, and environmental awareness.

About the Hinrich Foundation

The [Hinrich Foundation](#) is a unique Asia-based philanthropic organization that works to advance mutually beneficial and sustainable global trade. Sustainable global trade strengthens relationships between nations and improves people's lives. We believe the most effective way to advance sustainable global trade is to invest in informing and training the people engaged in trade.

It supports research and education programs that build understanding and leadership in global trade. Its goal is to build a network of next-generation trade leaders by partnering with universities and corporations across global value chains.

Its team of global trade experts and practitioners apply their deep knowledge and experience in trade, economics, policymaking and education to deliver the Foundation's programs. Key initiatives include:

[International Trade Rankings](#)

Created in partnership with educational rankings expert QS, the International Trade Rankings provide a data-driven list of the world's top international trade-related graduate programs

[Hinrich Trade Educators Center](#)

The Trade Educators Center provides educators and students access to a collection of free classroom discussion guides, reading lists, whitepapers and videos focused on real-world business and policy scenarios

[Global Business Scholarships](#)

Annual scholarships awarded to people with a passion for pursuing or advancing their careers in global trade through master's study at Georgetown University, London School of Economics, Nanyang Technological University, INSEAD and the University of Auckland.

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