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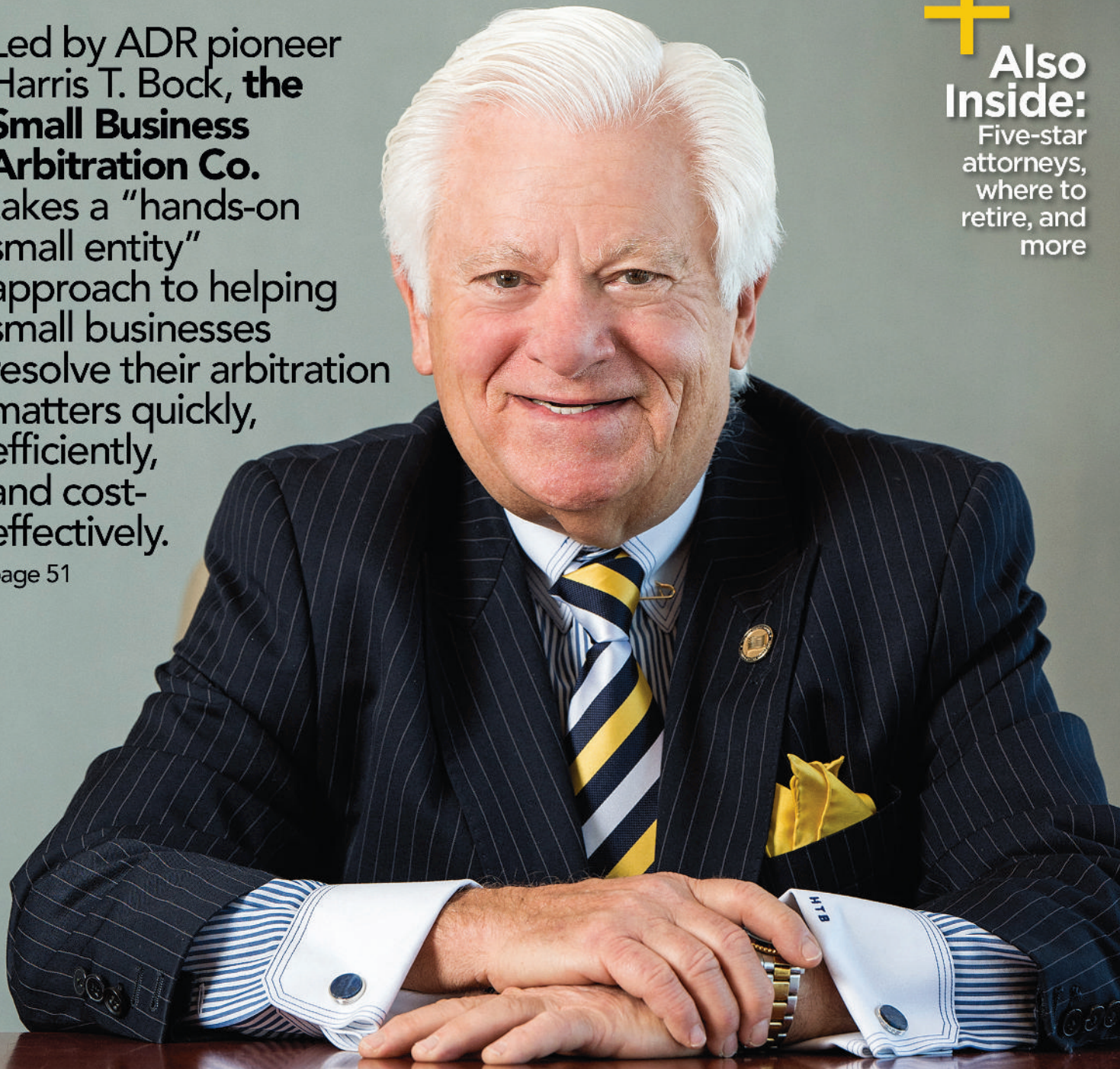
pg. 40

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Led by ADR pioneer Harris T. Bock, **the Small Business Arbitration Co.** takes a "hands-on small entity" approach to helping small businesses resolve their arbitration matters quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively.

page 51

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Five-star attorneys, where to retire, and more



A Better Mousetrap

Led by ADR pioneer Harris T. Bock, the **Small Business Arbitration Co.** takes a “hands-on small entity” approach to helping small businesses resolve their arbitration matters quickly, efficiently, and cost-effectively.



N BUSINESS JUST AS IN LIFE, SOME DISPUTES ARE UNAVOIDABLE. As a business owner considers initiating an arbitration, Philadelphia-based arbitration guru Harris T. Bock, Esq., offers the following sage advice: Choose your forum wisely.

Its many benefits aside, arbitration is imperfect. A complex structure of rules, excessive administrative fees, and the slow pace of case management by the large providers of arbitration services can sometimes diminish arbitration’s advantages. Mr. Bock recently founded the Small Business Arbitration Co. (SBA), with the goal of streamlining the process to resolve business-to-business disputes in an efficient, expeditious, and cost-effective manner superior to the services that are presently available.

“Many small-business owners have arbitration clauses built into their contracts, and they are in need of a provider to perform those arbitration services,” Mr. Bock says. “The American Arbitration Association is one of the primary providers, but business owners have options. Despite the fact that one provider is named in the contract, a business owner can select a different forum, provided there is no objection. SBA was created to arbitrate matters in less time and with less cost.”

SBA begins the process by providing a clear outline of the rules and procedures by which both parties must abide, with all ar-

bitration proceedings conducted in a virtual manner. The cost is clearly defined, too; unlike other providers, SBA charges a flat fee, which consists of a \$1,000 filing fee, which also covers administration and case management, and a \$1,000 arbitration fee.

“Oftentimes companies get charged for matters they don’t expect,” Mr. Bock says. “An hourly fee promotes the opposite of efficiency; it takes the problem and only makes it worse. We want to give clients the most benefit, so we make sure they know upfront exactly what they will be spending.”

Mr. Bock suggests SBA’s knowledgeable and motivated case managers strive to expedite each step of the arbitration process. Whereas arbitration typically takes an average of 120 days from start to finish, Mr. Bock says SBA projects a 60-day window from the initial arbitration request to the issuance of the award.

SBA is also unique in terms of the technology it uses to facilitate communication and provide a timely resolution. In this regard, SBA has incorporated one of the profound changes to American society brought about by the pandemic: the widespread adoption of virtual meeting technology. All cases will be heard on a strictly virtual basis. This “hassle-free” technology enables SBA to conduct all hearings remotely, which results in significant savings of time

and energy for all involved.

SBA has assembled a team of seasoned arbitrators, each selected based on their expertise and experience with business disputes. According to Mr. Bock, the majority of arbitration panelists are retired judges.

Mr. Bock is considered a national leader in alternate dispute resolution (ADR) for resolving disputes outside of the courtroom. Despite having a lucrative law practice of his own, he chose decades ago to devote his career to ADR. He has arbitrated or mediated more than 5,000 cases since his founding of the Dispute Resolution Institute in 1994. However, the pricing and model of DRI did not fit the need addressed by SBA. His vast experience has positioned him well for his role as the Director of SBA.

“Arbitration has always had admirable goals, but it has been impeded by the system that has been put in place around it,” he says. Mr. Bock states that he is excited with the formation of SBA because it has the ability to resolve matters in a more efficient, less costly, less cumbersome, and timelier manner than is presently available. ■

→ **Small Business Arbitration Co.**
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