

The Ice Man Cameth

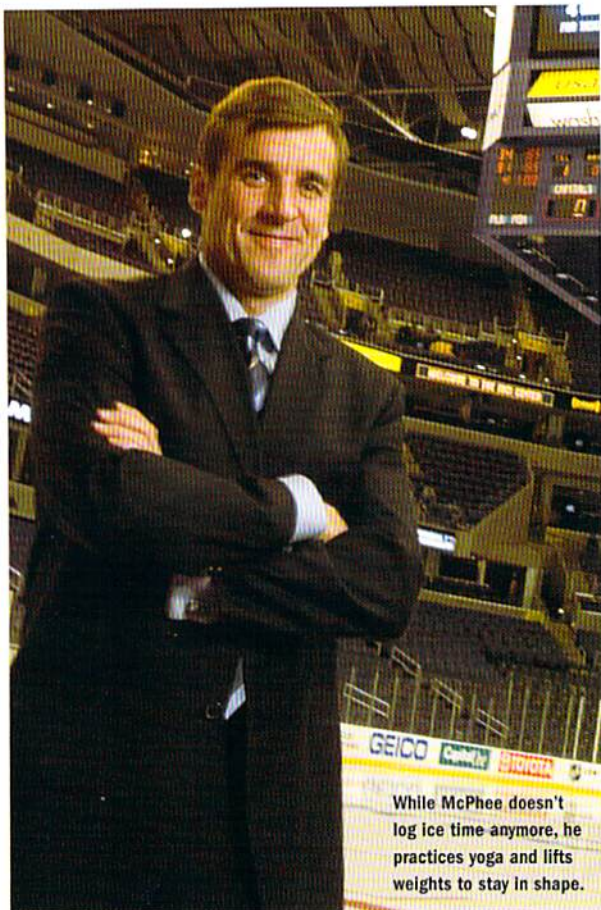
LAW SCHOOL HELPED GEORGE MCPHEE PUT HIS PLAYING DAYS BEHIND HIM

Michael Farber RC'73, who covers the National Hockey League (NHL) for *Sports Illustrated*, calls Washington Capitals vice president and general manager George McPhee NLAW'92 extremely bright, articulate, and one of the most respected general managers in hockey. But that's not all he has to say: "Pound for pound, McPhee may be the toughest, most intense son-of-a-bitch I've encountered. Following a preseason game once, he went after an opposing general manager when the guy broke an agreement that his team would keep checking to a minimum."

The 5'9" McPhee developed his toughness—as well as his passion for the game—as an undersized forward in the rough-and-tumble Canadian junior hockey league in his hometown of Guelph, Ontario. Despite winning the Hobey Baker award as college player of the year in 1982 at Bowling Green State University, he went undrafted by NHL teams. He still made the New York Rangers and went on to become an extremely popular player, one whose heart and determination exceeded his stature.

After seven years in the NHL, McPhee set his sights on a front-office job and law school. He believed law school would provide him with the foundation to better understand contracts and salary arbitration. At the School of Law-Newark, he feels he learned much outside the classroom from professors and classmates. Says the 47-year-old McPhee, "I learned that you're only as good as the people who you surround yourself with—and all the key people who work for me have law degrees."

After landing a front-office job with the Vancouver Canucks, he rose to become the vice president and director of hockey operations. In his time there, the team won a



While McPhee doesn't log ice time anymore, he practices yoga and lifts weights to stay in shape.

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division championship and made it to the 1994 Stanley Cup Finals. In his first season with the Capitals in 1997–98, McPhee helped take them to the Stanley Cup Finals for the first time.

During last season's work stoppage, he was able to spend more time with his wife and two children (a third is on the way) and concentrated on retooling the front office, scouting, and rebuilding with prospects in a wide-open free agent market. Says McPhee, "We're a young team that is probably a couple of years away from being a very good team."—BG □