

In The News

Dallas Trial Boutique to Close as Munsch Hardt Hires Its Lawyers

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All four of the lawyers at Dallas trial boutique McDole Williams will join Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr on Aug. 1, adding a patent litigation practice and commercial litigation strength to the Dallas-based firm.

Keith McDole, who does commercial litigation, and intellectual property litigator Steven Williams will join Munsch Hardt as shareholders. Zac Duffy and Winston Huff will join as senior attorneys.

Williams said talks started in January. "I've been very familiar with Munsch Hardt," he said. "When this opportunity presented itself, we concluded it was a very positive fit, made sense for us."

Phil Appenzeller, chief executive officer of 118-lawyer Munsch Hardt, said the firm is excited to beef up its commercial litigation team and add patent litigation—an area the firm has needed for a while.

"We've been able to do trademark and copyright, but [Williams] can try patent cases," Appenzeller said.

Williams said the larger firm provides the four attorneys a bigger platform and additional resources to assist clients. It also gives them opportunities to cross-sell, he said.

McDole said their clients include large public companies and that he sees an opportunity for cross-selling in such practices as environmental, real estate and creditor's rights.

Out-of-state firms opening Dallas offices have been reaching out to lawyers at McDole Williams for several years, McDole said—just as they have tried to recruit lawyers at other firms in the hot Texas legal market. But McDole said they weren't interested in joining those larger, out-of-state firms. However, they decided that a move to Munsch Hardt made sense because it's a firm centered in Texas.

"That's really where our clients are," he said.

McDole said they also were attracted to Munsch Hardt's rate structure, which is lower than that of the big firms moving into the Texas market and fits with what they are currently charging. Both firms do a lot of flexible billing, he said.

McDole Williams had further motivation to strike a deal with Munsch Hardt because its lease is up at the end of August. Munsch Hardt has offices in Austin and Houston in addition to Dallas.

Williams and McDole, who will continue to work at their boutique firm through the end of the month, did not provide the names of firm clients.

A fifth member of McDole Williams, Walter "Bob" Pettey III, retired at the end of May, Williams said.

Read more here.

By Brenda Sapino Jeffreys

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