

In The News

Munsch Hardt To Absorb Dallas Trial And IP Boutique

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Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr PC will boost its commercial litigation and intellectual property services as it brings the attorneys of McDole Williams PC into the fold at its Dallas office starting Aug. 1.

The McDole Williams Team brings trial experience to Munsch Hardt's commercial legal platform and is part of a continuing expansion for the firm, Munsch Hardt said in a statement. CEO Phil C. Appenzeller Jr. of Munsch Hardt told Law360 in a phone interview that he feels the McDole Williams team's experience and specialization in intellectual property will be a boon to the firm.

"We think it's going to be a great move for us," Appenzeller said, noting he's known Steve Williams of McDole Williams for nearly 20 years and worked with him at McKool Smith. "We haven't really had as robust of an IP litigation practice as I wish we had ... so with Steve's knowledge and expertise in that area, it's going to be a great addition for our firm and our clients."

He added Keith McDole's experience in commercial litigation will add significant depth to the firm's commercial litigation group, with the merger allowing Munsch Hardt to better represent the interests of the Fortune 500 and mid-sized companies that make up its clients.

Four of the five attorneys from McDole Williams will make the move to Munsch Hardt, with the fifth, shareholder Walter G. Pettey III, retiring.

McDole told Law360 in a phone interview that the firm was at a crossroads where it had to either expand or join with a larger firm. While they've heard offers from other large firms in and coming into Dallas, he said Munsch Hardt offered a unique opportunity.

"The IP capabilities that we have can enhance their practice and it also enhances our practice in terms of having more people who are familiar with that practice area," he said. "Our feeling was that they represented a much bigger but a very similar ... type of practice and would be a good home for us."

Williams added the broader platform afforded by Munsch Hardt will help round out its representation, noting while they handle a client's litigations needs, their clients often have issues McDole Williams didn't handle. Now, with Munsch Hardt, Williams said they can provide those services.

"This really presented what we thought was a unique opportunity to expand our platform," Williams said. "Being part of a firm like Munsch, we now will be partnered with other attorneys who can handle those other areas so that we can provide even greater value in service to our clients."

Munsch Hardt is a 120-attorney commercial law firm with offices in Dallas, Houston and Austin, with practice groups in admiralty and maritime; business litigation; construction; corporate and securities; energy; environmental and intellectual property, among others, according to a statement.

McDole Williams is a trial-based boutique focused on commercial disputes and high-stakes litigation in areas including antitrust; patent, trademark and copyright infringement; regulatory compliance; securities and trade secrets, according to the firm's website.

This move is the most recent expansion for Munsch Hardt, which added shareholder Craig Harris to its litigation and labor and employment groups in Dallas in June.

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