

Shook Hardy Snaps Up Boutique Firm To Enter Chicago Market

By Lisa Ryan

Law360, New York (February 24, 2015, 3:45 PM ET) -- Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP is entering the Chicago legal arena with the acquisition of boutique commercial litigation, competition, class action, insurance, labor and intellectual property firm Grippo & Elden LLC, marking the fourth city the firm has overtaken in the past three years, according to a Tuesday statement.

The Kansas City, Missouri-headquartered firm said its Chicago office will open its doors in March 1, after Shook Hardy absorbed the 25 attorneys and 20 staff members of Grippo & Elden, the statement said.

Shook Hardy Chairman John Murphy told Law360 on Tuesday that the firm has three pieces of criteria it looks at when considering a lateral opportunity: whether the staff members are good people, whether the firm has good lawyers and if the firm has good lawyers in areas that Shook is hoping to expand.

"And the Grippo & Elden folks meet all of those. We've known them for years" and served as co-counsel with them on cases in the past, Murphy said. "We got to know them not only as lawyers but as people and respected them on both counts there."

Chicago is the fourth North American city that the international firm has overtaken in the past three years, joining the ranks of Philadelphia, Seattle and Denver. Thanks to the acquisition, Shook Hardy now has 13 office locations, including two in Europe, and more than 500 attorneys worldwide.

Murphy said the firm wanted to expand its roots to Chicago thanks to the city's status as a major financial market.

"It's a city that we've looked at in the past," Murphy said. "We were very careful when we looked in Chicago to make sure our criteria were met, and we passed on other opportunities in the past, and this was just too good of an opportunity to pass up."

Grippo's day-to-day practice won't differ too heavily, though its attorneys will now have access to Shook Hardy's new and expanded list of clients, according to Murphy. And on the other hand, the merger gives Shook Hardy an opportunity to establish a more national identity as a commercial litigation firm.

Grippo & Elden was founded in Chicago in 1988 and built its practice to become one of the top commercial litigation firms in the city, and the newly acquired group will remain at Grippo & Elden's current space, the statement said.

The former firm's principal Michael Conway will become vice chairman of Shook Hardy's business litigation and commercial services sections, working to build the firm's combined litigation practice, the statement said. Grippo & Elden's Todd Jacobs will serve as the Chicago managing partner.

--Editing by Christine Chun.

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