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LAW FIRM OF THE MONTH

SHOOK, HARDY & BACON L.L.P.

A HALLMARK OF HEALTH, SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

FRONT ROW (L-R): BILL GERAGHTY AND HILDY SASTRE. SECOND ROW (L-R): HASSIA DILOMBI, FRANK CRUZ-ALVAREZ, KEN REILLY AND AL SAIKALI | PHOTO BY TRACEY BENSON

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One of the country’s most prestigious national law firms, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P., has roots that span nearly 130 years and extend to a dozen offices across the United States and in London.

With its own unique origins, Shook Miami has not only embraced the traditions and philosophies of the firm’s founding partners but has distinguished itself by serving some of the world’s leading companies and consistently obtaining favorable results under even the most contentious circumstances.

Built on a solid foundation of tradition and service, Shook’s attorneys litigate and serve as trial counsel in high-stakes product liability cases representing pharmaceutical companies and medical device manufacturers throughout the United States. These include a significant number of Fortune 100 corporations in national multidistrict litigation, consolidated proceedings and mass tort claims.

Now, celebrating its 20th anniversary as a distinguished part of the dazzling Biscayne Bay skyline, Shook Miami can proudly reflect on an impressive record of consummate service to its clients and the community.

THE ORIGINS

Conveniently located in downtown Miami, Shook, Hardy & Bacon has been an

essential and influential part of the thriving business landscape since 1998.

To bring a bit of Shook’s history to living color, we spoke with two original members of the Miami firm – Managing Partner Bill Geraghty and Administrative Managing Partner Hildy Sastre – whose insights date back to the firm’s beginnings.

“Our roots are entwined with those of the founding partners,” says Sastre. “But, it’s interesting because the Miami office was born as the result of a very long trial that went on for well over a year.”

The merger that brought together some of the best legal minds of an established Miami boutique firm – Anderson, Moss, Sherouse & Petros – and those from the rapidly expanding Shook, Hardy & Bacon, appeared to be inspired.

“We took a very traditional, conservative, Midwestern firm from Kansas City and married it with an exotic and hard-to-describe Miami-cultured firm,” Geraghty says.

There were skeptics. Many within the legal community viewed this as an unlikely pairing. Of course, as history bears out, it proved to be a perfect balance.

“Hildy and I were both young attorneys when Shook first came to Miami,” Geraghty says. “Ed Moss was the first managing partner. Ken Reilly, who came from Kansas City, succeeded Ed, trained us both, and we all worked together closely. It was a natural progression and almost a duty to

MIHAI VRASMASU, BILL GERAGHTY, JAMES DANIEL GARDNER AND HUMBERTO OCARIZ | PHOTO BY ROBERT KLEMM

GERI HOWELL, JENNIFER MCLOONE AND ALEXANDRA BACH LAGOS | PHOTO BY ROBERT KLEMM



the firm to take over some of the responsibilities.

“And we took to it,” he continues. “Because we’d spent so much of our practice working together, the fit was very natural. We’ve really enjoyed the five or six years that we’ve really been ‘in charge’ of the Miami office.”

MIAMI'S GLADIATORS

Since the beginning, Shook Miami has been attracting the crème de la crème of juridical talent. Today, the team of 30 accomplished attorneys is focused on representing health, science and technology clients with complex litigation needs. Product liability, commercial and business litigation, tort and environmental, intellectual property, data and privacy security, and global arbitration remain their core strengths.

Some of the powerhouse litigators that make up the Miami gladiators are John Barkett, Frank Cruz-Alvarez, Humberto Ocariz and Kenneth Reilly.

The National Law Journal has selected Reilly's cases for its Top 10 Verdicts in three consecutive years. He made a name for himself in his defense of class actions against the tobacco industry.

Barkett is a problem solver who serves as an arbitrator, mediator and

facilitator after a long career as a commercial and environmental lawyer. He is a certified mediator under the rules of the Supreme Court of Florida and a member of the London Court of International Arbitration. Over his career, he has garnered many accolades, including the Burton Award for Legal Achievement, a recognition for his distinguished legal writing. Beyond two books, Barkett has been an active legal author throughout his career.

Cruz-Alvarez has represented Fortune 100 companies in various roles from pre-trial counselor to appellate counsel. In addition to his litigation and trial depth, Cruz-Alvarez advises foreign and domestic corporations in arbitrations throughout the world.

Ocariz has first-chaired numerous trials from product liability and intellectual property cases to mass torts and legal malpractice. He has also entered the international arbitration arena.

ADAPTING TO TRENDS

As the team looks ahead, it welcomes new members to grow the firm and help to adapt to new legal challenges. Beyond drug and medical device and product liability cases, Shook Miami is developing a portfolio of data privacy work and international arbitration.

“Al Saikali, our privacy and data security chair, deserves a lot of credit. He was at the front of this movement,” Geraghty says. “Ten or 15 years ago, there was no data and privacy security law. Al took it upon himself to become a subject matter expert in that field. It has become a large part of our firm given the nature of business in today's world. I can only imagine that this practice will grow as technologies continue to evolve and present new issues for tomorrow's consumers.”

“Through Saikali's work in data and privacy, we will continue to grow as we get in front of new clients and share our potential with them,” he continues.

Looking at other trends, Shook Miami saw an opportunity to grow an international arbitration team – viewing it as the next legal frontier.



DATA AND PRIVACY SECURITY ATTORNEYS AL SAIKALI AND CAMILA TOBÓN (ON MONITOR FROM DENVER) | PHOTO BY TRACEY BENSON

“Latin America is the untapped world,” Geraghty says. “So many of the companies in Latin America and the Caribbean are reticent to be involved in American-style litigation. Often, the agreements they have require arbitration. I think it will become the new frontier, and I hope to be at the forefront.”

To that end, Shook Miami has welcomed Ricardo Ampudia to help grow this facet of the firm. Ampudia comes to the table fluent in four languages and a background of representing clients from five continents and Central America.

“After living and traveling all over the world, I have a true understanding of a variety of cultures – something that's invaluable when resolving business issues in and out of the hearing room,” Ampudia says.

STRENGTH IN DIVERSITY

There is an uncommon depth and texture to this thriving firm that goes beyond headlines and illustrious clients. Quality, dedication and knowledge are a given, but beyond this, Shook has established a policy of diversity and inclusion that was initiated long before it became the trend.

Each office, attorney and employee is in tune with, indeed celebrates, the power, versatility and range resulting from an effective mixture of personalities, backgrounds and ideas. Nationally and internationally, Shook is esteemed for its commitment to creating and sustaining an inclusive workplace where everyone is respected, rewarded, equipped and invested in because of their differences.



BILL GERAGHTY AND HILDY SASTRE | PHOTO BY TRACEY BENSON



Evidenced by the fact that Shook has women leading or co-leading offices in Orange County, Chicago, London, Tampa, Houston, and of course, Miami, their policy is not a branding ploy or marketing slogan, but a sincere commitment.

Or, more precisely, as noted by Shook Chair Madeleine McDonough, who leads the firm's 12 national and London offices, "At Shook, we consider daily how we are intentionally championing and developing diverse lawyers. Creating a culture of belonging is a critical component of engaging and advancing our lawyers."

McDonough has made an intentional push to professionally develop a diverse attorney workforce. To that end, more than half of the work done for several big clients is billed by Shook Hardy women attorneys, and more than 20 percent is billed by attorneys who are members of the LGBT community.

STRENGTH IN TRIAL

"While we are growing our reach up and out, our bread and butter will continue to be providing defense to big, national companies that are facing difficult cases against plaintiffs throughout the state of Florida," Geraghty says. "As we grow our business, we will continue to focus on that. In fact, I think we will only become more of a

resource for our clients in that area for years to come."

Check with any in-house counsel about their litigation short list and Shook, Hardy & Bacon lawyers are certain to be on it. In fact, according to one in-house counsel interviewed by Chambers, "Shook is loaded with talent, integrity and committed to client service."

With a deep and talented bench of seasoned trial lawyers, supported by an even deeper bench of professionals with advanced degrees in the sciences, engineering and a wide range of technical disciplines, the in-house team has repeatedly proven to be a game-changer.

"From a litigation perspective, I think Miami is a full-service firm," Sastre says. "When I talk about our strengths, I always turn to our trial experience in high-stakes cases. When you look at the work Shook has done on \$20 to \$100 million cases in that arena, you will see that we have tried more of those cases to verdict in the past 15 years by a lot when compared to any other law firm."

Something that has not gone unnoticed in the legal community. As one Chambers market commentator said, "No one has been in as many jury trials as Shook, recently."

"Candidly, that's something I'm most proud of," Sastre says. "We understand intimately how to put a case together and how to talk to a jury so it's relatable and we come across as likable as well as persuasive. I think that's where we shine."

As Shook Miami enters its third decade, the leadership is dedicated to raising the firm to the next level while holding steady to the values, principles and drive that make up its foundation. With a team of dedicated professionals behind them, we can only hope that the dedication of the founders will be carried on into the next century.



TALIA ZUCKER, JOHN BARKETT, EILEEN MOSS AND DAN ROGERS | PHOTO BY ROBERT KLEMM

AT A GLANCE

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