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News

Sheppard Mullin Launches Dallas Office

The firm's new Dallas office has a total of 18 lawyers, with more on the way.

BY BRENDA SAPINO JEFFREYS

Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton launched a Dallas office on Monday with 18 lawyers, including 10 partners from six firms, marking another new entry into the hot Texas legal market.

The firm said it expects to add a few more lawyers to the office soon.

The new partners include Carolyn Benson and Yvette Mabbun, who joined from Quilling, Sleander, Lownds, Winslett and Moser; Gemma Descoteaux, Stephen Fox and William Mateja from Polsinelli; Jennifer Klein Ayers and Steven Schortgen from K&L Gates; Jason Mueller from Locke Lord; Dwight Francis



from Gardere Wynne Sewell (now Foley Gardere); and Evan Williams from Hunton & Williams (now Hunton Andrews Kurth).

Fox and Schortgen lead the office as managing partners, and Descoteaux is the lateral hiring partner.

Jon Newby, vice chairman of Los Angeles-based Sheppard Mullin, said that because of client need, the firm has considered a Texas office for a while and started working on establishing a Dallas office a year ago. He said the firm has about 100 clients with

headquarters or operations in Texas, including Toyota and PepsiCo.

“Dallas made a lot of sense for us. It’s a very diversified economy, as you know. We have a very diverse practice mix. It was a very logical place for us to come,” Newby said.

Schortgen said he moved to Sheppard Mullin in part because he liked the firm’s atypical transparent management culture. Also, he said, he has a number of Fortune 500 clients who expect him to work at a firm that has the ability to do work around the country.

“On day one here in Dallas, we are fully configured to handle transactional work, commercial litigation, IP, labor and employment, real estate, government contracts and white-collar work,” he said.

Fox said he was attracted to Sheppard Mullin’s nationally recognized labor and employment practice and also the diversity of the lawyers working in Dallas, not-

ing that half of the lateral partner hires are women or ethnic minorities.

Corporate lawyer Descoteaux said she was attracted to the firm’s client-focused culture and the ability to serve her clients, which are emerging growth and technology clients.

Descoteaux, Fox and Schortgen declined to identify clients they brought with them to Sheppard Mullin.

The new Sheppard Mullin partners do a wide range of work, including commercial litigation, employment litigation and counseling, fund formation and management, intellectual property litigation and portfolio management, M&A, real estate asset management, and white-collar criminal defense, including health care fraud and abuse and securities enforcement.

Descoteaux and Williams joined Sheppard Mullin’s corporate practice group, and Fox joined the labor and employment practice.

Benson and Mabbun are part of the real estate, land use and environmental practice group, while Ayers, Mueller and Schortgen joined the IP practice group. Francis is now part of the business trial practice group, and Mateja joined the government contracts, investigations and international trade practice group.

A spokesman from K&L Gates said the firm declines to comment on lawyer departures. Polsinelli also declined to comment. The other firms did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Sheppard Mullin has seven offices in California and other U.S. offices in Chicago, Dallas, New York and Washington, D.C. It also has offices in Beijing, Brussels, London, Seoul and Shanghai.

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