

Business Review

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Open for Law

Sensing an opportunity in Florida, Milwaukee-based law firm Quarles & Brady established its new foothold in Tampa six months ago.

Although it lured several senior lawyers from established firms, it has been working from temporary space in various floors within the Bank of America Plaza building downtown.

But as if signifying that it has now arrived among top-tier Tampa law firms, it has moved into permanent space on an upper floor in the prestigious tower, where 20 other law firms are tenants.

“Tampa clearly is one of the significant markets that gives us a real ability to meet the needs of clients who are looking for the kind of corporate services we provide,” says John W. Daniels Jr., the firm’s chairman who also owns a home in the Tampa Bay area. He adds that Quarles has been looking to establish a local office for the last few years.

“We see significant growth opportunities in Tampa,” Daniels says. “Our key strategy in Florida is to grow in this community first.”

The Tampa office is led by Kimberly Johnson, a partner at Quarles’ existing office in Naples who divides her time between the two each week. The firm hired six partners from DLA Piper and Holland & Knight to establish the Tampa office.

“We’re thrilled with the people we’ve hired,” Johnson says, noting that about 20 personnel now work in the new office, including lawyers and support. “They work hard and they have integrated their clients into the firm.”

Daniels, whose firm has four other offices around the country, says the emphasis in opening a new operation is on getting the right talent from within the local market, rather than opening in the right building. “It all starts with getting the right group of people,” he says. “The lawyers we have attracted are used to dealing with complex problems.”

‘A leap of faith’

Even for seasoned lawyers, leaving one firm where a lengthy career is spent to restart a practice with a new firm and office can be daunting.

“There’s always a learning curve,” observes Philip Martino, a veteran bankruptcy lawyer who spent more than two decades with DLA

Wisconsin-based Quarles & Brady is among several firms expanding its practice to Tampa. Opportunities for growth along the Gulf Coast and in Florida are driving the additions, which secure talent that’s already here.



Partners at the new Quarles & Brady law office at Bank of America Plaza in downtown Tampa include (left to right) **Christian Burden, Kimberly Johnson, Philip Martino, David Beyer, Kelli Edson, Paul Parrish** and **William Hamilton**.

Piper. “It’s a leap of faith, both for the firm and for those of us who joined.”

Going from a law firm with hundreds, or even thousands, of attorneys to one with a dozen or so local colleagues also requires a bit of adjustment. However, Martino says the nice thing about working with Quarles is that any one of its 450 attorneys around the country is usually a phone call away to address a client matter in Tampa.

“Even if this office isn’t full-service yet, the

firm clearly is,” he says. Quarles also has offices in Chicago, Phoenix, Tucson, Ariz., and Madison, Wis.

“We have a lot of talented lawyers that we can bring to Tampa if we need them,” adds Johnson, who practices trust and estate law.

Starting out, Quarles’ current areas of emphasis in Tampa include bankruptcy and creditors’ rights, franchising and distribution, foreclosure and workouts, e-discovery, ERISA, admiralty, product liability, insur-

MEET THE PARTNERS

Quarles & Brady's Tampa office has some familiar names from other well-established downtown firms. They are:

- **David Beyer**, who has extensive experience in organizing and structuring franchise and other distribution programs. He also represents franchisors on technology-related issues, including website development, e-commerce, cyber-squatting and channel conflict.
- **Christian Burden**, who has experience in representing franchisors as well as with intellectual property disputes, business torts, claims of unfair trade practices, class actions and employment law.
- **Philip Martino**, who concentrates his practice in commercial bankruptcy litigation and representing national and regional banks and financial institutions. He has extensive experience in single-asset real estate and franchisee bankruptcies.
- **Kelli Edson**, who has extensive experience in representing clients in a range of complex litigation matters, including class action defense, intellectual property, telecommunications, technology, contracts and business torts.
- **William Hamilton**, who is board certified in business litigation and intellectual property by the Florida Bar. His work includes complex business litigation in the areas of contract, software and technology disputes, e-commerce, data security, telecommunications, trade regulation and commercial real estate.
- **Paul Parrish**, whose practice emphasizes claims relating to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, in which he represents plans, employers, participants and beneficiaries in the entire spectrum of ERISA litigation matters. He also maintains a admiralty litigation practice.

REVIEW SUMMARY

Firm. Quarles & Brady LLP

Practice areas: Bankruptcy, franchising and others

Key. Establishing an immediate presence in a new market

ance coverage, non-compete and trade secrets, and general commercial litigation.

Johnson says the firm is in the process of hiring two additional partners to handle corporate and real estate law, and would eventually like to offer expertise in intellectual property and health care.

Daniels says he would like to grow the Tampa office organically, recruiting associates from law schools as well as finding veteran lawyers who are attracted to its business platform. "We hope it will be a combination of both those things," he says.

Established in 1892, Quarles & Brady began as a small law firm in Milwaukee and eventually grew to one of the nation's most widely recognized firms, including a recent mention in U.S. News & World Report's inaugural list of Best Law Firms. Daniels, who joined the firm in 1974 and became its chairman three years ago, is among the nation's leading black lawyers.

Diversity and inclusion

Quarles places a firm-wide emphasis on diversity and inclusion, as well as giving back to the communities it serves. The Tampa office is already involved in supporting local charitable causes such as collecting supplies for schools in underprivileged neighborhoods and donating personal care products to the city's homeless.

Its lawyers are also encouraged to perform 50 hours of pro bono work annually to indigent clients.

The firm's "people first" culture is what attracted many of its partners from Tampa's larger, more prestigious firms. "This was a sterling opportunity," says William Hamilton, who spent 27 years at Holland & Knight.

Efficiency is another strong suit for Quarles, which is big on electronic documentation rather than having numerous filing cabinets taking up valuable office space. The firm takes up three-quarters of the 34th floor at Bank of America Plaza, with an option for the entire 20,000-square-foot floor at a later date.

"Technology has made all the difference in the world," Martino says, noting that 80% of the offices files are now accessible via computer. Some important and historical documents still need to be maintained, either within the office or at an off-site storage location, he says.

On the same floor

From April until late September, Quarles had wedged itself into two smaller temporary spaces on the 18th and 23rd floors, where support personnel were working practically side by side. The partners, who have their own private offices, joke about tolerating the arrangement but also remark that the office will run a lot smoother with everyone in the same space.

"They have been a great tenant to work with throughout lease negotiations and moving into



Carl Cronan

Paul Parrish, one of six partners in Quarles & Brady's Tampa law office, gets a quick peek at his new desk on the 34th floor of Bank of America Plaza in downtown Tampa.

the temporary space," says Michael Hoffman, first vice president with CB Richard Ellis and a leasing representative at Bank of America Plaza. "It's nice to get a law firm from outside this area to come into this tower that feels the time is right to open an office in Tampa."

The city's largest skyscraper, which is also home to the 42nd-story Tampa Club, will soon welcome another out-of-town law firm into its tenant mix. Hoffman says New Orleans-based Adams & Reese signed a lease this summer for the entire 40th floor and will move into the space in December.

To complete Quarles' new presence in Tampa, a permanent managing partner will eventually be named to replace Johnson, who currently spends two to three days making the two-hour drive from Naples to Tampa.

"I try to make the drive as productive as I can," she says. "Part of my job is to help make sure things are integrating smoothly."



Carl Cronan covers the Tampa Bay region. He can be reached at ccronan@review.net, or (813) 221-9505.