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Butler Snow Law Firm Expands in Nashville

By Bill Dries Updated 4:52PM

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The Butler Snow law firm has launched an expansion of its Nashville office as the firm Walker, Tipps and Malone PLC joined the multi-state law firm based in Tennessee and Mississippi with offices in Memphis.

"This is the first large group so to speak that we've had join the firm that they all do commercial litigation," said Don Clark Jr., chairman of Butler Snow. "Normally you will have lawyers that are in very different practice areas. Walker-Tipps was a very noted commercial litigation boutique. That's what they did. That's what they are good at."

Among the Walker-Tipps attorneys joining Butler Snow's Nashville office is Frank Hunger, who has 45 years' experience as a civil attorney, including serving as the U.S. Justice Department's assistant attorney general over its civil division.

Gayle Malone Jr., a civil trial lawyer since 1973, was the attorney on the winning side of a \$20 million jury verdict in a Memphis wrongful death case in 2012.

Butler Snow has commercial litigators, including those at the Memphis office, in a law practice that overall is a full-service law firm.

"We very easily cross office lines to work on matters for clients," Clark said. "We put the best lawyers on the matter regardless of which office that lawyer may be in. Certainly one of the great things about our growth in Nashville is it pairs up so well with what we've been doing in Memphis."

Robert Walker, the Walker in Walker-Tipps, said he and the other founders of the firm came from a large law firm in 2000 when they started their own practice that grew to 13 attorneys by the time they joined Butler Snow this week.

"We liked the independence of it," Walker said. "I think what concerned



The Butler Snow law firm is expanding its Nashville office with 13 attorneys from the Walker-Tipps law firm of Nashville.

(Daily News File/Lance Murphey)

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us was being able to continue to do high-level litigation, both business disputes and products cases, class actions, anti-trust – things like that – in a market that's really changing.

"We were a one-dimensional litigation firm," he said. "We got a lot of business from conflicts at other law firms. But it looked to me like in the future we would really need to be joined up with somebody that had a broader bunch of expertise."

Walker, like Malone and Hunger, is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and has 45-years experience in litigation.

The expertise in commercial litigation was just what attracted Butler Snow in the spring and summer when more detailed talks began between the firms.

Clark said with more mergers and acquisitions not just among law firms, but other types of businesses, disputes are also more likely. And those disputes were at the heart of what Walker-Tipps did.

Clark agrees with Walker about the larger trends in law firms.

"You see a definite consolidation going on," Clark said. "When you really want to serve your clients, sometimes you need that bench strength to be able to handle the really large matters. We're not in it to necessarily grow to be the biggest. But we do want to be of significant enough size and significant enough geographic diversity to represent our clients in the southeastern United States."

Walker and Clark each said the expanded Nashville office is also a blending of similar office cultures aside from the normal transition of Walker-Tipps attorneys learning a new computer system.

"We like the fact that the way they seemed to handle their affairs was much like a small firm," Walker said. "The law business has turned into a business in lots of ways and of course it has to be run with efficiency. But the main thing is taking care of the client."

Clark said the talks and details of the acquisition began as more informal conversations among attorneys at the two firms who knew each other.

"It basically resulted in a realization from both sides that they operate much like we have been operating – in terms of their team work, their culture, not being internally competitive with each other," he added. "We really fit hand and glove with them in our outlook on practicing law."



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BANKRUPTCIES	69	271	1,861
BUSINESS LICENSES	31	104	806
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