

The Legal Intelligencer

THE OLDEST LAW JOURNAL IN THE UNITED STATES 1843-2010

PHILADELPHIA, FRIDAY, JULY 2, 2010

VOL 241 • NO. 125 \$5.00 An **ALM** Publication

Cohen Seglias Affiliates With Md. Firm

BY ZACK NEEDLES

Of the Legal Staff

Philadelphia-based Cohen Seglias Pallas Greenhall & Furman has formed an affiliation with nine-lawyer Maryland firm Treanor Pope & Hughes.

Cohen Seglias Vice President Edward Seglias said the two firms have worked together on several cases in Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania over the years and that the joint venture made sense for both of them.

Seglias said part of what the affiliation means is that Treanor Pope will serve as local counsel in Cohen Seglias' Maryland litigation and vice versa.

"Any time we have matters in Maryland and any time we're looking at new clients in Maryland, we will also be thinking about

how Treanor Pope would fit in," Seglias said.

Virginia A. Barnhart, an attorney at Treanor Pope, said the affiliation "allows Cohen Seglias to have an office footprint here in Maryland and it allows us to have an office footprint in Delaware, Pennsylvania and New Jersey."

Seglias said the firms will also embark on a joint marketing effort.

Now, when Cohen Seglias advertises its own services, he said, "we're going to tout what they provide as well and they'll do the same thing."

Seglias said that while the two firms have some overlapping practices, affiliating with Treanor Pope also brings some new capabilities to Cohen Seglias such as a corporate transactional practice, a utility

Affiliation continues on 9

Affiliation

continued from 1

and regulatory practice and a class action litigation defense practice.

Seglias said Treanor Pope “adds a substantial adjunct” to Cohen Seglias’ practice and the two firms will refer work to each other based on expertise, similar to the way attorneys refer matters within a firm.

“In effect, at times we’ll be working as one firm,” he said, adding that he, along with associate Jennifer M. Horn and senior counsel Jason C. Tomasulo, will split their time between Cohen Seglias’ Philadelphia office and Treanor Pope’s headquarters in Towson, Md.

But Seglias was clear that this new venture was not a merger or an acquisition because both firms will maintain their own management structures and will not share in all of each other’s profits.

If one firm handles a matter for a client directly, that firm collects all of the profits, he said.

But Seglias didn’t rule out the possibility of a merger in the future.

“As time goes by, we’ll see how it works

out,” he said.

If a merger does happen, it wouldn’t be the first time for Cohen Seglias.

In 2002, the firm acquired Rothenberg Silverman & Furman, a three-attorney labor and employment boutique based in Elkins Park, Pa., after a period of affiliation.

Law firm consultant Joel A. Rose said firms utilize affiliations as a “quasi-growth methodology,” as opposed to acquisitions or mergers.

Doing this allows both firms involved to “maintain their integrity” by not having to disrupt their established management or compensation systems, according to Rose.

“Each firm can do what they do, how they do it,” Rose said.

Joel L. Frank, managing partner of Lamb McErlane in West Chester, Pa., said affiliations can serve a number of functions, which include providing additional service to clients, expanding an existing client base and addressing an immediate need.

And, according to Frank, some affiliations are more successful than others.

For example, Lamb McErlane’s relationship with the three-attorney West Chester-based business law firm Schumacker & Lunkenheimer eventually grew from an

affiliation to an integration of practices.

"The three guys we formed an affiliation with were a little bit up in years and it was a mutually beneficial thing," Frank said, explaining that Lamb McErlane provided a new home for Schumacker & Lunkenheimer's clients.

On the other hand, Lamb McErlane's affiliation with Wayne, Pa., trusts and estates boutique Reardon & Associates "didn't work out so well," he said, declining to go into details.

Dennis C. Reardon of Reardon & Associates agreed that his firm's arrangement with Lamb McErlane didn't work out, but also declined to go into specifics.

Rose said affiliations are only effective if the firms are comfortable with each other and "know each other's style."

Barnhart said that's exactly the case with Cohen Seglias and Treanor Pope.

"We have had a relationship with Cohen Seglias here in Maryland over the past three years and have been successful in those cases," she said. "We've realized that our practices could be combined for the benefit of both firms."

Meanwhile, the affiliation is just the latest development in what has so far been a busy year for Cohen Seglias.

In January, the firm beefed up its commercial litigation group and more than doubled the size of its Pittsburgh office by adding three partners and two associates.

In April, the firm announced the launch of FedCon Consulting, a wholly owned subsidiary that aims to assist federal construction contractors in the bid proposal process and beyond.

The company, which has locations in Philadelphia and New Orleans, comprises an 11-member team of Cohen Seglias lawyers, former government contracting officers, project managers and engineers, all of whom review contractors' bid proposals and solicitations and advise the contractors as to how to navigate government regulations and RFP criteria both before and after they are awarded contracts.

"I think the health of the firm is good, particularly in view of the fact that it's been a difficult economic climate," Seglias said, adding that the firm has been conservative in its spending while "trying to be creative and proactive with opportunities."

Seglias said the firm has no plans to expand in the immediate future but has its sights set on opening a North Jersey office some time in the next year or two. •