

BakerHostetler Launches in San Francisco With Winston White-Collar Leader

Robb Adkins is the latest in a string of Winston & Strawn attorneys to jump to BakerHostetler as the firm expands aggressively in California.

By Dan Packel

BakerHostetler continues to draw on talent from Winston & Strawn to build its presence in California, announcing Monday that has landed the firm's former white-collar co-chair, Robb Adkins, to lead a new San Francisco office.

Adkins also served as the managing partner of Winston's San Francisco office and its head of West Coast litigation. He spent the last nine years with the firm after a series of high-level roles in the U.S. Department of Justice.

His arrival at BakerHostetler follows the former managing partner of Winston's Los Angeles office, the co-chair of that office's labor and employment practice and others who have made the jump since the start of 2019.

"Many of the people that I've known for a very long time



Kim Morris and Robb Adkins at BakerHostetler, San Francisco.

and have worked with over the last decade now work at BakerHostetler," Adkins said. "It's a rare thing, in my experience, to get in at the ground floor and build an office for a law firm in a major national market."

Adkins currently splits his practice between white-collar,

internal investigations and regulatory defense work and complex commercial litigation.

At the DOJ, he served under President Barack Obama and alongside the U.S. attorney general as executive director of the Financial Fraud Enforcement Task Force. Before that, he was an assistant U.S. attor-

ney in the Central District of California and chief of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Orange County. Even earlier, he was a trial attorney in the government's criminal prosecution of top Enron executives Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling.

Now, he said, he's eager to take on the new challenge of building out a new "destination" trial practice.

"You exercise different muscles when you open and grow an office," he said. "We'd like to anchor the West Coast practice in trials and white-collar work."

BakerHostetler announced its ambitions for growth in California last January when it **hired Eric Sagerman** to lead the firm's Los Angeles office. While in charge of Winston's Los Angeles office, he hired more than 60 attorneys to the firm.

Sagerman's additions since switching firms have included former Winston litigators Kim Morris and Robert Julian and

former Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman restructuring expert Cecily Dumas. Although initially attached to the Los Angeles office, the three have been **resident in Northern California**, where they've been involved in BakerHostetler's representation of the tort claimants committee in the massive Chapter 11 reorganization of utility Pacific Gas and Electric Co. For the last several months, the firm has had space in the iconic Transamerica Pyramid.

But Adkins' arrival marks the formal start of a new San Francisco office, which opens with eight attorneys. Sagerman said that he expects that number to grow to a dozen quickly, and he hopes to establish a full-service office over time. He added that the firm already has \$30 million worth of in-bound work in the Bay Area.

Sagerman also praised his long-time colleague's legal acumen.

"He's one of the most impressive individuals I've been around," he said of Adkins. "He's consistently been chosen to lead high-level initiatives on behalf of the government. On top of that, you're not going to find a more quality human being."

Meanwhile, when Sagerman arrived in Los Angeles, that office was home to 38 attorneys. It is now up to 50, with recent hiring highlighted by the addition last month of former Dechert partner William Oxley as head of litigation, and Sagerman aims to bring the number closer to 80.

Winston had no immediate comment on Adkins' move.

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