

Meet the New Boutique in Town: Gardner Haas PLLC

By Natalie Posgate – (August 5, 2014) – Two veteran attorneys at Bickel & Brewer have decided to try out the practice of law on their own with the formation of their new commercial litigation boutique, Gardner Haas PLLC.

The new firm serves clients in an array of complex litigation matters, including breach of contract, hospitality, fiduciary duty, bankruptcy, misappropriation of trade secrets, intellectual property, securities law and oil and gas law, among many other matters.



Michael Gardner

Like many attorneys who have left larger law firms to open boutiques, Gardner Haas founders Michael Gardner and Eric Haas said they decided to take the plunge on

their own because they wanted the flexibility to handle operational matters in a way that they felt served their clients better.

A large component of this is the freedom to stray away from the traditional billable hour in favor of alternative fee arrangements with clients, such as a contingency fee or a hybrid contingency/hourly arrangement.

Gardner said the alternative billing options allow he and Haas to “run a leaner operation” and focus on their actual practices versus “the other things that large law firms have to deal with on a daily basis.”

Haas added that they have been able to keep their overhead costs “extremely low” through alternative measures such as outsourcing work that traditionally would be completed by paralegals and administrative assistants.

“I think a lot of big firms have a legacy system in place,” said Haas, a SMU Dedman School of Law graduate. “It’s hard for them to adapt to what I think is a better model of really using more computer technology and outsourcing capability.”

The feedback from clients since beginning the formation of the new firm early this year has been “sensational” and “overwhelmingly positive,” said Gardner, who received his JD from George Washington University School of Law.



Eric Haas

“Our firm and model has really allowed us to focus on what is most important, and that is certainly our clients,” Haas said.

Since starting the firm, Gardner and Haas have already brought another attorney on board: New York-based senior associate Kerry Rigas.

Haas and Gardner said Rigas, who was also at Bickel & Brewer, approached them about joining the new firm. Since their docket had grown, needs had increased and they were “comfortable with her talent,” they decided Rigas would be a good fit for the new boutique.

Gardner said the firm will likely add a couple of more associates by the end of the year.

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