

A Special Report

Most D.C. Offices Expand

But for a few, poaching by rivals and defections leads to down numbers.



BY MARISA MCQUILKEN

This year's race to keep up with the Lathams and the Covingtons of the D.C. neighborhood included some posturing about whose international platforms were bigger and better, and whose mergers have brought the most, and best, growth.

For Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker, the 2005 union—or maybe collision is more appropriate—of Pillsbury Winthrop and Shaw Pittman was the gift that kept on giving in 2007. Paul, Hastings can partially credit post-merger instability at Pillsbury for a nearly 26 percent jump in its Washington office head count for 2007. It reports 141 total attorneys, up from 112 last year.

Of the 29 new Paul, Hastings lawyers, a dozen came from Pillsbury's McLean, Va., office. Barbara Brown, chairman of Paul, Hastings' Washington office, says the addition of former Pillsbury partners Lawrence Gotts and Michael Bednarek is a linchpin in the firm's plan to fortify its global intellectual property practice. "For example, we do a lot of work for Honeywell, and Larry Gotts had a big case for them. His arrival has certainly strengthened our relationship with that client," Brown says.

Understandably, Pillsbury reported a 22 percent drop in that office, going from 88 lawyers and 31 partners in 2006, to 68 lawyers and 24 partners this year.

John Jensen, managing partner of Pillsbury's McLean operation, insists the office is "doing terrifically." He says the firm is past its post-merger pains, and that the group that went with Gotts and Bednarek in September

2006 was the last significant departure. "We're not down in the dumps by any means," Jensen says.

Still, Gotts was counted among Pillsbury's top rainmakers. He says the big attraction for his group at Paul, Hastings was the firm's expanding presence overseas. "Our practice is increasingly international with a significant component of Asian clients," he says.

A desire for more international clout is certainly behind Vinson & Elkins' growing Washington presence. The firm lured Willkie Farr & Gallagher's entire international trade practice thanks in large part to its offices in Asia and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. In addition to attracting new clients, D.C. co-administrative partner C. Michael Buxton says the group can provide additional services to existing trade clients. Kenneth Pierce, a former Willkie Farr partner who moved to V&E, says he sees an opportunity to marry local intellectual property clients with trade clients.

In total, 18 attorneys jumped from Willkie Farr, led by Pierce and another partner, William Barringer. That

Five Gainers: D.C. Offices That Showed High Head Count Growth in 2007

Covington & Burling	+15%
Latham & Watkins	+16%
Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker	+26%
Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox	+39%
Vinson & Elkins	+28%

Source: Firms' responses to LT 150. Figures rounded to nearest whole number.

bumped V&E's D.C. head count from 74 attorneys last year to 95—up more than 28 percent. That's a significant change from last year, when the firm reported a 5 percent loss in D.C. attorneys.

"Because of their energy practice, they are just everywhere in the world, and a lot in the developing world," Pierce says of his new home.

Despite the loss of partners, Kevin Clark, managing partner in Willkie Farr's Washington office, says his firm has no plans to build offices in Asia. "We have a different model

for our firm," Clark says. "We're more focused on North America and Europe."



One growing trend has been for larger firms to develop their own IP practices, leading to speculation that the Washington IP boutique is an endangered species.

—MICHAEL RAY, MANAGING DIRECTOR,
STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX



The departure of Willkie's international trade group took a toll on the firm's D.C. numbers. In 2006, the office experienced a more than 47 percent increase in attorneys, reporting 109 lawyers. This year, that office is down nearly 13 percent, with 95 attorneys.

Despite the drop, Clark says Willkie's departing international trade group made the right call. "It's very important for them to have people on the ground in the countries where their clients are."

One growing trend in the market has been for larger firms to develop their intellectual property practices, lead-

ing to speculation that the Washington IP boutique is on the endangered species list. But Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox's 2007 growth numbers appear to counter that speculation. After a 7 percent loss last year, the firm reported nearly 40 percent more attorneys in 2007, rising to 92 from 66.

"The new patent rules make it very difficult for a firm to dabble in patent litigation and patent prosecution," Sterne, Kessler's managing director Michael Ray says of the benefits of staying a more specialized boutique.

IP boutique Kenyon & Kenyon, though, found itself in backpedaling mode after aggressive hiring in 2006. The firm's head count dropped almost 23 percent this year, from 53 to 41. Managing partner Edward Colbert says in 2006 he "staffed up for a phenomenal amount of growth."

Since the anticipated workload did not come, Colbert says this year's drop reflects his effort to "right-size" the office.

The last year also produced some new unions. Drinker Biddle & Reath merged with Chicago-based Gardner Carton & Douglas. Regional partner-in-charge Michael McManus credits this for the boost in the combined firm's Washington head count, up nearly 47 percent, from 60 to 88 attorneys.

Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Nicholson Graham merged with Preston Gates & Ellis. The new firm, Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Preston Gates Ellis, or K&L Gates, saw a decline in head count of more than 14 percent, from 211 attorneys to 181. However, business development manager Lisa Blackburn says last year's report by Preston Gates inflated that firm's head count because the firm included nonlawyers in its response to the LT 150 survey.

The pre-merger combined head count should only have been 187 lawyers, Blackburn says, which would make for a loss of just six attorneys this year.

Of the biggest D.C. offices, WilmerHale and Hogan & Hartson held on to their respective No. 1 and No. 2 spots in this year's LT 150.

Covington & Burling and Arnold & Porter were tied for third in 2006, but Covington has since secured third place to itself, with A&P dropping to fourth.

Mitchell Dolin, a partner in Covington's D.C. office, attributes the firm's more than 15 percent spike in attorneys this year to growth in a number of practice areas, including IP litigation, insurance coverage, international arbitration, and life sciences litigation. The firm's Washington office now reports a roster of 450 attorneys, 124 of whom are partners. Last year, the office reported 390 total lawyers, with 123 partners.

Howrey and Latham & Watkins also climbed significantly this year. Howrey reports 279 attorneys, up from 247. The firm had a slight drop in partners, though, down from 103 to 98. Latham is at 279 attorneys, compared to last year's 241. Eighty-seven of those are partners, up from 78. Both firms' D.C. offices are tied for sixth place this year. Howrey was ranked 12th in 2006, and Latham was ranked 13th.

Eric Bernthal, managing partner of Latham's Washington office, says D.C. is a key outpost for the firm.

According to *Legal Times'* annual survey of law firm revenues, of the more than \$1.6 billion Latham collected in 2006, \$223.5 million came from the Washington office. "It's a focus. And that's indicated by the size of the firm and the attention we're paying to making it strong," Bernthal says.

Marisa McQuilken can be contacted at mmcquilken@alm.com.

A Special Report

D.C. Metro Area's Largest Law Offices

The *Legal Times* 150 gives a snapshot of the D.C. legal community in 2007 by listing the largest law offices in the District, Northern Virginia, and suburban Maryland.



2007	2006	FIRM • Location	Founding City	Lawyers/Partners 2007	Lawyers/Partners 2006	Change in Number Of Lawyers	New Associates Expected 2007
1	1	WilmerHale • Washington	Washington/Boston	511/126	496/127	3.02%	54
2	2	Hogan & Hartson • Washington	Washington	466/229	453/226	2.87%	58
3	3	Covington & Burling • Washington	Washington	450/124	390/123	15.38%	57
4	3	Arnold & Porter • Washington	Washington	375/140	390/156	-3.85%	76
5	5	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom • Washington	New York	301/65	275/57	9.45%	38
6	12	Howrey • Washington	Washington	279/98	247/103	12.96%	30
6	13	Latham & Watkins • Washington	Los Angeles	279/87	241/78	15.77%	60+
8	8	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld • Washington	Dallas	275/112	254/111	8.27%	N/A
8	7	Dickstein Shapiro • Washington	Washington	275/113	262/111	4.96%	23
10	6	Step toe & Johnson • Washington	Washington	271/109	274/105	-1.09%	37
11	14	Crowell & Moring • Washington	Washington	264/111	235/100	12.34%	22
12	11	Patton Boggs • Washington	Washington	263/129	248/122	6.05%	29
13	9	Wiley Rein • Washington	Washington	262/118	250/118	4.80%	25-30
14	9	Morgan, Lewis & Bockius • Washington	Philadelphia	250/88	250/90	0%	32
15	15	Sidley Austin • Washington	Chicago	236/109	232/103	1.72%	29
53	72	Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein & Fox • Washington	Washington	92/27	66/25	39.39%	7



www.skgf.com