

Ex-DLA, Greenberg Attys Launch Austin Employment Boutique

By **Vin Gurrieri**

Law360, New York (September 08, 2014, 3:47 PM ET) -- Two attorneys, formerly from DLA Piper and Greenberg Traurig LLP, have joined forces to launch Beckstead Terry PLLC, an Austin, Texas-based employment and commercial litigation boutique law firm.

Amy Beckstead, a former equity partner at DLA Piper, and former Greenberg Traurig senior attorney Jana Terry launched the firm last week, according to a statement issued Sept. 3.

"Beckstead Terry is the latest chapter in our legal careers, which have spanned working for the largest law firms in the world to working in smaller, more agile, business-focused platforms," Beckstead said. "Business has been great for both Jana and me and it made sense to join forces to leverage our respective skill sets and optimize the services we could offer clients."

Beckstead, who worked at DLA Piper for 13 years and is licensed in both California and Texas, left the firm earlier this year to join labor and employment boutique firm Hutcheson Bowers LLLP, where she spent just over six months before joining with Terry.



Her practice focuses on helping employers comply with the myriad state and federal employment laws, guiding employers through investigations conducted by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission.

Beckstead also defends her clients when they are sued in employment-related matters such as wage and hour class actions, wrongful terminations and discrimination, Beckstead said.

The former DLA Piper attorney said that she loved working at the firm and plans to maintain a working relationship with many of its attorneys. But Beckstead said that the opening of the new firm allows her "to still do the same thing I was doing, but on my own terms."

Terry, who left Greenberg Traurig three years ago to work as a solo practitioner, focuses her practice on commercial litigation matters, particularly on litigation involving employment disputes, commercial real estate and matters involving breaches of commercial contracts. She also provides transactional advice with respect to employment matters, according to the new firm.



Prior to her nearly six-year stint at Greenberg Traurig, Terry had also practiced at Baker & Hostetler LLP and McKool Smith PC.

Terry received her law degree from the University of Chicago Law School in 1996, and Beckstead earned her law degree from the University of Kansas Law School in 2001.

Terry and Beckstead first became acquainted during the early days of the Mother Attorney Mentoring Association, or MAMA, in Austin. Beckstead founded the networking group, which includes more than 350 attorneys in Travis County who are working mothers. Terry served as a co-founder and was one of the group's earliest volunteers.

Beckstead said that she had been a part of a similar group while working in DLA Piper's San Diego office and that the group has since taken off in a way she didn't expect. Over time, MAMAs has gained a lot of support from both the community as well as many law firms, including DLA Piper, which regularly hosts meetings for the group, Beckstead said.

Of the new boutique venture, Terry said that she has enjoyed the opportunity to open a business and focus on clients' needs in a way that is independent of the model used by larger firms.

"Big law can be weighed down by the need to finance big overhead," Terry said. "Having [a boutique firm] makes for a better client experience."

Both attorneys noted that being part of a boutique firm allows them to charge clients rates that are competitive and more reasonable for the Austin market than rates charged by some larger firms.

Terry also said that advances in technology have "leveled the playing field" and allow smaller firms to offer services to clients that are at least on par if not better than those offered by large firms, something which will ultimately benefit her and Beckstead's clients.

"We have the benefit of similar clients," Terry said. "Our practice areas are different, but complementary. It's a good union."

The firm intends to represent companies of all sizes, from startups to Fortune 500 clients in a variety of different industrial sectors, many of whom are clients Beckstead and Terry have represented for several years, according to the firm.

--Editing by Rebecca Flanagan.

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