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Morgan Lewis Attracts 50 Brobeck Partners

*Partnership Vote on Hires
Scheduled for Monday*

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Of the Legal Staff

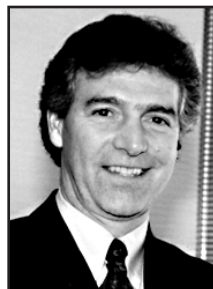
A week after spurning a merger with financially strapped Brobeck Phleger & Harrison, Morgan Lewis & Bockius scored a major coup yesterday by fending off a flock of impressive competitors to acquire 50 partners from the soon-to-be defunct San Francisco-based law firm.

The additions, which include some of Brobeck's best-known lawyers, are subject to a Morgan Lewis partnership vote on Monday but should be ready to start with the firm by Wednesday, according to Brobeck litigation partner Brock Gowdy.

In a statement released late yesterday afternoon, Morgan Lewis announced that it would be "immediately" opening offices in San Francisco, Palo Alto and Irvine, Calif., while roughly 10 Brobeck partners will be joining its Los Angeles office. Morgan Lewis chairman Fran Milone said that roughly 35 to 40 partners will be stationed in San Francisco, five in Palo Alto and one or two in Irvine. Milone added that when the smoke clears, the attorney count could more than double as many Brobeck associates are sure to follow partners.

Among the most prominent names on the list are Brobeck chairman and Los Angeles-based litigator Dick Odem, and former firm chairman and business and technology rainmaker John Larson along with his fellow San Francisco business and technology partner Ron Moskovitz.

San Francisco-based Steve Finn, regarded as the top real estate lawyer at the firm, will also be joining Morgan Lewis as will all



MILONE



GOWDY

three San Francisco-based intellectual property partners — Carla Oakley, Rochelle Alpert and Jeffrey Kingston — and virtually all of the labor and employment group, which is headlined by San Francisco-based employment litigator Cecily Waterman, practice chairman Brendan Dolan and Palo Alto-based Melinda Reichert. In addition, most of Brobeck's tax and estate lawyers, including practice chairman Max Gutierrez, are also coming to Morgan Lewis.

Morgan Lewis broke off four months of merger talks with 500-attorney Brobeck on Jan. 29. The San Francisco firm, overwhelmed by partner defections, bank debt and loads of empty office space, announced that it was disbanding last Friday. Milone said that he and other Morgan Lewis lawyers had built strong relationships with the Brobeck partners during the merger negotiations, something Milone believes gave his firm a leg up as lawyers from firms far and wide descended on the Bay Area to make their pitch for the top talent. A number of Morgan Lewis partners from several different practice areas flew to San Francisco and met with Brobeck partners while Milone coordinated the process from Philadelphia.

"During the merger talks, we really developed some nice relationships with the Brobeck people," Milone said. "And they were interested in keeping as many people

together as possible. So it all just fit together nicely."

Gowdy, a San Francisco-based litigator and former Brobeck executive committee member, also spoke of the shared values of the two firms.

"And just because the merger didn't come about, it doesn't mean that connection was no longer there," Gowdy said. "We couldn't be more thrilled that the best and the brightest of the Brobeck lawyers will be joining Morgan Lewis to form what we think will be the premier law firm in the country."

Milone said that while more partners could jump on board, any more additions will be nominal. Gowdy estimated that roughly half of the entire group consisted of litigators but that virtually every Brobeck practice group is represented in the additions. Other litigators coming to Morgan Lewis include Los Angeles partner David Schrader, whose lists Chevron as one of his top clients, and San Francisco's James Penrod, a fellow in the American College of Trial Lawyers.

"I think when you combine our presence on the West Coast and Morgan Lewis' presence in the East, you have a [litigation] group that can rival anybody," Gowdy said.

Morgan Lewis will be looking for office space in San Francisco that can accommodate as many as 40 partners and their associates and support staff. Gowdy said Brobeck partners would love to retain their space at One Market Plaza but that it is up to Morgan Lewis management to decide what will be best.

Milone said that Morgan Lewis would not assume any of the financial burdens that have plagued Brobeck for more than a year. Brobeck was informed by Citibank that it would have to close up shop on Feb. 14, two weeks before the original date the bank gave them. •