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Jenner & Block's LA office celebrates 10-year milestone

By Nicole Tyau
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LOS ANGELES — Rick Richmond, who opened Jenner & Block in Los Angeles, doesn't like calling the office a branch. Instead, he said, it was founded as an extension of the already prestigious litigation firm.

"It was a place where really the landscape was littered with the carcasses of other firms who had come and tried to establish a presence here. It's not an easy place in the legal market to establish a presence," Richmond said. "So I looked at it as a great, wonderful once-in-a-lifetime opportunity offered by Jenner & Block with all of that reputation and all the knowledge I had about that great law firm to start an office from scratch and to build it in a way that would be consistent with the culture of Jenner & Block and its values."

"That culture and those values really fit hand in glove with everything that I believed in and wanted to achieve in my career," Richmond added.

Now the firm is celebrating the 10-year anniversary of its Los Angeles office. The decade has seen two of the office's first three partners nominated for federal judgeships in California and consistent dedication to diversity and the promotion of women.

"I'm very proud of what we've accomplished together," Richmond said. "I would never want anyone to think it was anything less than a collaborative team effort, not just here locally in Los Angeles, but throughout the firm."

The firm's growth over the past 10 years has expanded its litigation practice. The office started with two attorneys, both of whom did litigation work. As the firm grew, it continued to bring on litigators, and today, the L.A. office has more than



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From left: Rick Richmond, founding partner of Jenner & Block's Los Angeles office, and Mike McNamara, managing partner

40 attorneys.

Richmond said the firm still focuses largely on litigation work in areas crucial to California's economy as well as some transactional work. He said the firm's success is the result of well-laid plans.

"The truth is when I was thinking about what would succeed here in Los Angeles and how to build an office, I had most of these ideas already in mind," Richmond said. "So it's really just then implementing that strategy over the past 10 years."

Adam Reiss, executive vice president and associate general counsel for Fox Corporation, has used the firm's transactional and litigation services. He described Jenner as smart, responsive and high-quality outside counsel.

"They really go the extra mile to understand our business and understand the context in which they're giving legal advice," Reiss said.

Former Jenner partner Ken Lee, who joined the firm just months after its L.A. opening, was confirmed to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals as a judge earlier this year. In August, President Donald Trump announced the nomina-

tion of Richmond to a seat on the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California. Richmond called the nomination "a great honor and a privilege."

Richmond said the recognition is a reflection of Jenner's dedication to hiring good attorneys and a commitment to acts of public service, through pro bono work and government work.

"We are dedicated not only to giving our best and most excellent efforts to our paying clients, but we also are going to give that same level of excellence to our non-paying pro bono clients," Richmond said. "We're also going to bring that same level of excellence to helping the community, whether it be through leading and serving in bar associations or other nonprofit situations or in moving into government or moving back out of government."

Managing partner Mike McNamara said Jenner's core principles have helped keep the firm successful over the years.

"I've never been to a place where the firm talks about values that actually means it," McNamara said. "That's not just rhetoric here. It's a

religion. It is our religion. There's no way that you could fake it and be No. 1 for 10 years nationally and do that."

One of those core values has been the promotion of diversity and inclusion. Over the past decade, the L.A. office has maintained an average of 40% women attorneys, more than 30% ethnically diverse among all its attorneys and 13% who identify as LGBTQ, according to statistics provided by the firm.

Partner Carissa Coze joined the firm in 2011 with a group of attorneys from Hogan Lovells LLP to strengthen Jenner's West Coast content media and entertainment practice.

"It was really great to join a firm that has a critical mass of female lawyers, including female partners when we joined," Coze said. "The fact that we've maintained that and increased that over time has been really terrific."

Reiss said when hiring outside counsel, it's important to him the firms he works with are diverse, and Jenner is consistently devoted to it.

"It's clear in the people that we interact with and the voices in the room that diversity is as important to them as it is to their clients," Reiss said.

Coze said Jenner's commitment to diversity has always been a core part of the firm's values, which goes beyond just the promise of diversity and works actively toward putting it into action.

"Whether it's on the office level or the firm level, it's about building a diverse, collegial team of highly talented lawyers," Coze said. "I know that that's a lot of platitudes and a lot of firms say that, but I really feel like this firm lives it. It matters that our lawyers are collegial, it matters that they're diverse, and it matters that they're highly talented. I think that goes a long way."

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