

Linihan departs McMahon Berger for Lowenbaum

Ninth attorney to defect, creating area's largest labor law firm

BY CHRISTOPHER TRITTO
ctritto@bizjournals.com

Michael Linihan, senior partner at the McMahon, Berger, Hanna, Linihan, Cody & McCarthy PC law firm, left after 37 years to join The Lowenbaum Partnership. Linihan joins eight other former McMahon Berger attorneys who made the same move during the past year, including five in January.

Both firms specialize in representing management on labor and employment law issues. With the recent defections, Lowenbaum has become St. Louis' largest firm in this field.

"I have a strong feeling a substantial number of clients will join me (at Lowenbaum)," Linihan said. He would not speculate as to which companies would follow him or how much business they represent. But Lowenbaum Managing Partner Timothy Elliott said he expects Linihan's arrival to make a significant impact on the firm's revenue.

Linihan has represented many companies, both in St. Louis and elsewhere, with household names. A few of his local clients include Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Prairie Farms Dairy, Tyco Healthcare/Mallinckrodt and Nordyne.

Lowenbaum generated about \$4.5 million in revenue before it began expanding its stable of lawyers last year. The eight-year-old firm, which started with six lawyers, has grown from 15 to 24 attorneys since last summer and expects to grow existing business and attract new clients as a result, Elliott said. The newly hired lawyers charge rates that range from \$190 to \$315 an hour.

Current Lowenbaum clients include Ameren, St. John's Mercy Health Care, Drury Inns, the Saint Louis Zoo, Belleville Shoe, American Water, Sinclair Broadcast Group, First Banks, MasterCard and many municipalities and auto dealerships.

The firm renewed its lease at 222 S. Central Ave. in Clayton a year ago and added about 5,000 square feet of office space. Now another 3,500-square-foot expansion in progress.

The McMahon Berger migration to Lowenbaum began last summer when Daniel Begian, a longtime friend of Lowenbaum, founder Michael Lowenbaum switched firms. Robert Stewart, Stanley Schroeder, Burton Garland Jr., Corey Franklin and Charles Morgan followed in January. William Lawson joined Lowenbaum in June after leaving McMahon for a stint with Greensfelder, Hemker and Gale PC. Linihan and Chris Sanders joined this week.

Linihan, 64, became a partner with Lowenbaum July 8. He said he wanted to join Begian and other attorneys he had mentored at McMahon Berger who have since switched to Lowenbaum. His son, Jeff Linihan, also practices law part time for Lowenbaum in addition to running a business — Ellisville-based Yellowtop Brushware, which he bought earlier this year.

Tom McCarthy and Tom Hanna, partners at McMahon Berger, could not be reached for comment. McMahon Berger lists 20 lawyers on its Web site.

Linihan would not comment on the changes at McMahon Berger except to say "the firm has good clientele and some very good lawyers."

"Mike brings us a level of stability and name recognition," Lowenbaum said. "We never had any intention to take away from McMahon Berger. (Begian's) presence here attracted these other guys. When you get these kinds of opportunities you can't turn them down."



Michael Linihan