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Tampa Bay's rapid growth drives confidence at Shumaker to beef up its litigation business

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Shumaker sees opportunity in both conflict and resolution.

The Tampa-based national law firm has added five new associates across its Sarasota, Tampa and Toledo, Ohio offices, it said last week. Shumaker now has more than 80 litigators across nine offices.

A good economy has litigation volume heating up.

"There might be a little more feistiness to fight because there's just more activity going on," said Michele Leo Hintson, partner, litigation and disputes regional service line leader. "There's more growth, there's more confidence."



GITTINGS PHOTOGRAPHY

In talent development, the firm is Michele Leo Hintson always assessing its team depth, she said.

“We want to make sure we can provide value to the clients and provide an efficient way of handling disputes,” she said. “We are seeing a lot more construction matters, whether it’s pre-dispute or post dispute,” she said. That includes a volume of work in issues in housing, multifamily and commercial construction.

Early on in a conflict, construction plaintiffs have pre-suit requirements that give them more options when it comes to deciding what legal action to take if any, she said.

“That does lend itself to potential early resolution of things, which is a good thing, but sometimes that lends itself to more disputes arising as a result of that process,” she said.

More activity is ahead around landlord-tenant, commercial landlord-tenant and potentially residential landlord-tenant disputes.

Lawsuits are not the only demand driver. Much of the looming work centers on getting through a dispute resolution process. In construction especially, oftentimes there are liens or contracts executed a few years ago that have to be looked at if an issue comes up, she said.

A lot of the anticipated work is also consultative. Many clients need help deciding whether to avoid litigation or pursue a more formal dispute, she said.

Shumaker has a history of promoting from within and developing young talent, Hintson said, and that is central to the expansion.

“There’s an obligation for us to bring up other professionals who are going to be, hopefully in their own right leaders and great attorneys who are going to be able to service their clients for many years, hopefully at Shumaker.”

Alexis Muellner

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