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Seven lawyers move to Swanson, Martin & Bell

Firm adds four partners and three associates in the past four months

BY JAMIE LOO

Law Bulletin staff writer

Swanson, Martin & Bell LLP has added seven attorneys in the last four months, including four partners who specialize in representing defendants in toxic-tort and product-liability litigation.

"We've been very fortunate in having great people inquire about having them join us," said Timothy G. Nickels, managing partner.

Nickels said each of the attorneys approached the law firm and that it was not part of a targeted growth plan in terms of the number of attorneys. Business has also been strong in a few different practice areas such as asbestos, product-liability and toxic-tort litigation, which has allowed the firm to add more lawyers, Nickels said.

Each of the attorneys has his or her own story about why they joined the firm, Nickels said. For instance, new partner Jennifer S. Kilpatrick is relocating from Louisiana and wanted to join a firm in Chicago. Kilpatrick is formerly of counsel at Degan, Blanchard & Nash PLC.

Swanson, Martin & Bell is a litigation firm of about 110 attorneys who represent defendants in a variety of complex commercial and civil disputes. The firm's attorneys are known

for their jury trial experience and cover 22 different practice areas.

For David A. Kanter, who spent his entire 30-year law career at Edwards, Wildman, Palmer LLP, joining the firm is like a reunion.

Swanson, Martin & Bell was founded in 1992 by nine partners who left Edwards, Wildman, Palmer — which was Wildman, Harrold, Allen & Dixon LLP at the time. Kanter said many of the attorneys who helped him as a young lawyer left to start the new firm.

Kanter said he enjoyed his time at Wildman and that it was a tough decision to leave.

"I just thought it was time for a change and I needed something to energize me," he said.

Kanter's practice areas include product-liability; toxic-tort; and pharmaceutical and medical-device litigation. The firm is a natural fit for him professionally, he said.

"They're truly committed to that type of work (trial litigation)," he said. "That's how I want to spend the rest of my career."

Robert R. McNamara, who was at Johnson & Bell Ltd. for 20 years and a partner there, said the decision to move in June was difficult. McNamara's practices include product liability, with a focus on European products, and utility and construction litigation.

McNamara said he wants to expand his practice in product liability and felt that the firm has more opportunities in this area.

"Swanson, Martin & Bell has more of a national presence on



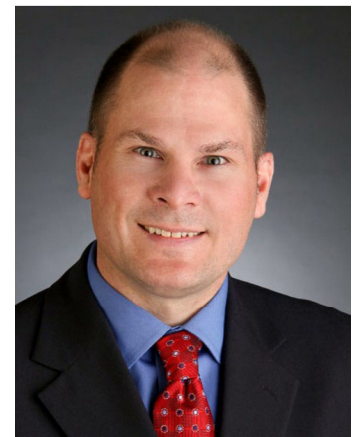
Jennifer S. Kilpatrick



David A. Kanter



Robert R. McNamara



Ronald L. Wisniewski

some of the product-liability issues and has a national coordinating counsel," he said.

Ronald L. Wisniewski is also joining the firm as a partner. He was formerly a sole practitioner.

The three associates who

joined the firm are Nathan A. Quaglia, formerly of Foley, Mansfield PLLP; April A. Vesely, formerly of Sanchez, Daniels & Hoffman LLP; and Julie D. Miller, formerly of Complex Litigation Group LLC.