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LAW FIRM BUSINESS

Ex-Greenberg lawyers open new firm

Work on big case led Wayne Gross and Alan Greenberg to team up on their own

By Ameera Butt
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A new litigation firm spear headed by two former Greenberg Traurig LLP shareholders opened its doors in Costa Mesa on Monday.

Wayne R. Gross and Alan A. Greenberg, both former co-heads of Greenberg Traurig's litigation department, co-founded Greenberg Gross LLP after trying a high-stakes case and discovering how much they enjoyed practicing law together.

In October 2011, the duo won a \$50.3 million verdict on behalf of a real estate firm that countersued a nonprofit investment fund over disputes involving four pieces of real estate, including the Hollywood Palladium. Newport Capital Advisors LLC v. Commonfund Realty Inc., BC412918 (L.A. Supr. Ct., filed May 4, 2009).

The nonprofit appealed, and the case settled confidentially in November 2012.

"After that case, trying it with Wayne, I felt I never really wanted to try a case without Wayne," Greenberg said. "The teamwork that the two of us have in court really brings an incredible dimension to the trials."

The duo also felt the move to a smaller shop would allow them to take on a wider variety of clients.

"It's now at a point where I would like the freedom to represent the business client that I would like to represent without big firm conflict issues that sometimes arise," Gross said.

"Additionally big firms are often limited to representing defendants in business litigation case. By having our own firm, we can represent plaintiffs as well defendants."

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— Alan A. Greenberg

The new firm is temporarily located on the 17th floor of the Center Tower building while its 7,000-square-foot space down the hall in the same building undergoes improvements, according to Greenberg, who is no relation to the co-founder of Greenberg Traurig.

The firm currently has four support staff and anticipates hiring paralegals and associates, Gross said. The permanent space will have room for a dozen attorneys.

Gross, the current president of the Orange County Bar Association, practiced at Snell & Wilmer LLP before joining

Greenberg Traurig. Prior to that, he spent 17 years in the Orange County division of the Central District U.S. attorney's office, where he prosecuted a reputed Las Vegas mobster and others for beating a Mission Viejo man in a murder-for-hire plot. Although the executive who allegedly sought the murder was acquitted, Gross secured guilty pleas and verdicts against the assailants.

Greenberg started his career as a transactional lawyer on Wall Street and spent six years at Theodora Oringer PC before joining Greenberg Traurig. He scored several trial victories, including a seven-figure jury verdict for a Canadian company whose California division was sabotaged by a competitor.

Gross said the firm is in the process of hiring a number of associates who range in experience from just out of law school to senior associates who have been practicing for a number of years.

Gross and Greenberg's clients from their previous firm also followed them to Greenberg Gross, the attorneys said. The firm is also offering a variety of fee structures.

"Greenberg Gross, when appropriate, will take up cases on a contingent fee, fixed fee or a hybrid fee," Gross said, "as well as the traditional billing model for those clients where it is appropriate to do that."

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