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PERSPECTIVE

## 21 Dentons litigators join Husch Blackwell in LA, Bay Area

By Kamila Knautt

Daily Journal Staff Writer

**H**usch Blackwell LLP expanded its California presence Thursday with the addition of 21 litigators from Dentons US LLP who will serve as the foundation for offices in Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

“We had always intended to use our Sacramento office, opened in 2018, as a launching off point for further California growth, but we had no specific timetable and no specific practice area or location we were targeting,” Husch Blackwell’s chair, Catherine L. Hanaway, said in an email. “As with all growth endeavors, any opportunity has to make sense at the level of firm culture and on a financial basis. On those two metrics, we reached a comfort level quickly with this group.”

The mass tort litigation team includes: Los Angeles based partners Bradford J. DeJardin, Frederic Norris, Kelvin Wyles, and Jules Zeman; and Oakland based partners Lisa L. Oberg, Lynne Patricia Blair, Michelle C. Jackson, Jennifer J. Lee, Michael E. Sandgren and Christopher W. Wood. The team also includes: counsel Patricia Alberts, Arlene Barton, Erin Carpenter, Kimberly Chew, Daniel



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Hoye, Kathy Huynh, Karen Luong and Natasha Sumner; associates Natalie Lashinsky, Shayan Heidarzadeh and Amrita K. Pannu; and 14 administrative staff members.

“The opportunity to add a group with significant first chair trial experience as well as experience handling nationwide complex tort dockets doesn’t come around often, especially when that group fits the firm’s culture,” explained Hanaway. The additions were chosen because of client needs rather than to expand a particular practice area.

The team’s work together dates back decades. It was formed when Oberg and

DeJardin began working together at McKenna Long & Aldridge LLP, which merged with Dentons in 2015.

“We were not going to do this unless we could move together,” Oberg said in an interview Wednesday. “This opportunity was one of those situations where the more that we got to know both the practice and the people at Husch Blackwell the more remarkable the synergies felt.”

The group and the firm fit perfectly together in regard to their goals for growth and culturally, Oberg said.

“Husch has their own set of clients that they’ve had for years and this will give

Husch an opportunity to service those clients within the firm rather than having to use outside counsel as local counsel, which is a huge benefit for both the firm and the clients,” DeJardin said.

According to Hanaway, the team will also be able to assist the firm with complex commercial litigation.

The firm is actively pursuing growth in all three of its California offices.

“As long as we have a good cultural and financial fit, we would be interested in a wide range of practices,” Hanaway said. ■

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