

## King & Spalding Adds 14 Litigators From Filice Brown

**The group making the move includes three partners, four counsel and seven associates**

King & Spalding has doubled its San Francisco office with the addition of 14 litigators from Oakland, Calif.'s Filice Brown Eassa & McLeod. Coming aboard in the past week have been three partners, four counsel and seven associates.

Partners Gennero "Gus" Filice III, Peter Strotz and Nicholas Kayhan joined King & Spalding as partners in San Francisco. Two of the associates will remain in Los Angeles but will be members of the firm's S.F. office.

The push is part of the firm's plan to build a litigation practice in California that runs from discovery through the appellate phase, said Atlanta-based Chairman Robert Hays. With its focus on energy, pharmaceuticals and toxic torts, the group fits King & Spalding's client mix and industry expertise, he said. Lawyers from the two firms have represented companies such as Chevron Corp., The Dow Chemical Co. and Shell Oil Co. in litigation – often as co-counsel.

"Our common experience really did give this opportunity much more traction," Hays said.

Filice said the deal had been in the works for a number of months. Robert Meadows, the managing partner of King & Spalding's Houston office, had called Filice to describe the firm's strategy and ask if there would be interest, Filice said. "We were very pleased when we were contacted by Bobby," Filice said, adding he hadn't been looking for a new home. He was persuaded by the bigger platform, he said. "Bobby and I have had many meals together over the months."

Filice was one of four lawyers who opened Filice Brown in Oakland in 1999 to focus on a mix of product and premises liability, environmental, employment and commercial litigation. At its peak about four years ago, the firm had about 45 attorneys.

Effective Feb. 1, Filice was dropped from the masthead and the firm became Brown Eassa & McLeod. About 17 lawyers remain at the firm.

Eugene Brown, one of Filice Brown's co-founders, said King & Spalding had approached the firm nearly a year ago with an offer to cherry-pick certain partners, including himself, Robert Eassa and Filice. Because King & Spalding wasn't interested in taking on the whole firm, he and Eassa resisted the overtures, Brown said.

"Bob Eassa and I said we were not interested because we had many people working with us and we weren't interested in leaving them high and dry," Brown said.

He said that with nine partners and eight associates, his firm has retained the most experienced trial lawyers who still represent companies like Chevron and Dow in toxic tort, product liability, employment and other matters. "What went over was groundwater litigation – that's the bulk of what it is they do," representing dry cleaners and chemical manufacturers, among others, Brown said.

Brown Eassa will be hiring a few midlevel associates in the near term, he added.