

Atlanta and Chicago Law Firms Join Forces in the Latest Legal Industry Merger Trend

Smith, Gambrell & Russell, an Atlanta-based law firm, and Freeborn & Peters, a Chicago-based law firm, recently announced their plans to merge on March 1st, 2023, creating a 400-attorney law firm. The combined firm will have 11 U.S. offices and three international locations in London, Southampton, and Munich, and it will operate under the name Smith, Gambrell & Russell.

The legal industry has recently seen a surge in law firm mergers, particularly as the pandemic begins to recede. This year alone, several deals have been made. For instance, Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe plans to merge with Buckley, adding 100 lawyers to Orrick's existing team, which already has over 1000 attorneys. The merger is set to be finalized in February. Another law firm, Maynard Cooper & Gale, based in Alabama, is joining forces with Carolinas-based Nexsen Pruet to create a 550-attorney law firm named Maynard Nexsen. Last week, two Ohio-based law firms, Bricker & Eckler and Graydon Head & Ritchey, announced their plans to form a 200-attorney firm by April.

Freeborn & Peters, with over 110 attorneys and offices in Chicago, New York, Tampa, and Springfield, Illinois, entered into the merger to meet the growing demand for corporate work. The firm's executive committee chair, Joseph McCullough, said that they evaluated the potential merger with their corporate practice growth plans in mind, and Smith Gambrell was able to meet their needs. Stephen Forte, who will remain in his current position as the managing partner once the merger is finalized, stated that the combined firm would not establish a headquarters. Still, Atlanta, Chicago, and New York will be their most prominent offices.

In New York, Freeborn will move into Smith Gambrell's office space, while Smith Gambrell's Chicago attorneys will move into Freeborn's offices in the Windy City. The combined firm will be looking to expand its Florida locations, with plans to bring on new lawyers in Tampa to boost its commercial real estate and intellectual property offerings.

In conclusion, the merger between Smith, Gambrell & Russell and Freeborn & Peters is a strategic partnership that will bring together the best of both firms to offer clients exceptional legal services. The merger is a testament to the resilience of the legal industry and its ability to adapt to changing times. The combined firm is poised for growth and success, and it will be exciting to see what the future holds for this newly formed law firm.

REFERENCES:

Atlanta, Chicago law firms merge as legal industry tie-ups gain steam

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