

Porter Wright Expands To Chicago With Butler Rubin Merger

By **Hailey Konnath**

Law360 (February 1, 2019, 5:58 PM EST) -- Ohio-based Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP has merged with Chicago firm Butler Rubin Saltarelli & Boyd LLP, the firms announced Thursday.

The tie-up, which became official Friday, is part of Porter Wright's effort to expand its Midwest presence, the firm said in a statement. The move adds about 20 new partners to Porter Wright, bringing the full-service firm's lawyer count to about 200 across eight locations, according to Bob Tannous, managing partner at Porter Wright.

"Growth into the Chicago area is a very exciting step for Porter Wright," Tannous said in the statement. "Our partnership with a highly respected firm like Butler Rubin will enhance the quality and depth of service we provide to our clients."

Butler Rubin boasts a 40-year history and a team of attorneys specializing in financial services, manufacturing, health care, insurance and reinsurance litigation, according to the statement. Its team will now operate under Porter Wright's name.

Porter Wright was founded in 1846 in Ohio. Its attorneys work in more than 30 distinct practice areas, including employee benefits, immigration, antitrust and consumer protection and real estate, according to the firm's website.

Tannous told Law360 that Porter Wright has wanted to get a foot in the door in Chicago for some time, and the addition of the Butler Rubin team "elevates" the firm's status. The goal, he said, is to be the go-to law firm for middle-market companies in the Midwest.

"We're certainly looking to grow the Chicago office to make it more full-service," he said. "... We're excited about what opportunities that leads to in the future."

Other Porter Wright locations outside Ohio include Pittsburgh; Washington, D.C.; and Naples, Florida.

Bob Hermes, who's become the partner-in-charge of the Chicago office, told Law360 the two firms are a "great cultural fit" and mesh well in how they operate.

"It brings two firms that are very client-centric together," he said, "and both of us recognize that there's kind of a marketplace in which this combination really hits the sweet spot."

Joining Porter Wright makes Butler Rubin more appealing from a talent-recruiting standpoint, he said. And on top of that, the merger allows his team to offer more wide-ranging services to its clients. Up until now, Butler Rubin only provided litigation work, he said.

“It’s very clear to us that this combination is clearly one-plus-one-is-more-than-two,” Hermes said. “How much more? That’s the only question.”

--Editing by Kelly Duncan.