

McGlinchey Head Talks Firm's 50th Anniversary

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McGlinchey Stafford PLLC's managing member recently spoke to Law360 Pulse about the New Orleans-based firm's 50th anniversary, its plans for growth and how it tries to build and maintain a supportive culture.

Founded in 1974, McGlinchey has about 140 attorneys, with offices in its native Louisiana as well as New York, Texas, Florida, California and other states.

Michael Ferachi, who took over as head of the firm in 2021, told Law360 that he looks forward to seeing the firm through the changes affecting the legal industry in 2024 and beyond. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

I understand that McGlinchey is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. As the firm hits that milestone, where do you see it situated in terms of where it's come from and where it's going?

We're very pleased with the progress of the firm since 50 years ago, and we think the founders would be very pleased with the firm they started and that we've built. I look forward to the firm celebrating its 100th anniversary 50 years from now!

We're celebrating the anniversary, but we also recognize that for our clients, they're interested in where we are going to be in the future as opposed to where we were in the past. So it's celebratory, but it's certainly not an occasion to rest. We're not sitting on our laurels.

And on that note, I know the firm has said that it plans to continue growing, but what does that look like? What kind of growth are you focused on?

Right now we're really focused on organic growth in a number of different areas, primarily in the areas where we're already located, cities in which we have offices already and interested in finding more attorneys who

would like to join us in solving our clients' problems. We're always interested in those practice areas we cover, and there are areas where we'd like to have more depth.

We're not so much interested in planting a flag in a particular city right now, but we're interested in good people to join us and join our firm where they're located, rather than wanting to add a particular city to our letterhead.

When you say you are interested in adding depth to some practice areas, what areas are you thinking of?

We're interested in two areas primarily. One is our corporate real estate group. We're very interested in adding to that group.

And we're also interested in adding lawyers to our cannabis practice team. We just started doing that work about two years ago, and it's been going very well. We're glad we're in the space, but we'd also like to have some additional people there as well.

The firm publicly prides itself on being very focused on its people, but what does that mean for you and the firm?

We have fantastic professionals, and they're all very focused on solving our clients' problems — but when somebody is having trouble, either themselves or their families, we're involved. We help each other out; we have each other's backs. And we've been very successful in building that culture within our firm over the last several years.

We recognize that we work in order to solve our clients' problems, but we also do it because we have families that we want to take care of and provide for. So we have each other's back.

How do you go about building a culture that accomplishes that? What goes into it?

We have a number of policies, and then we have an attitude that goes with it as well.

We have a remote work policy we put together in the middle of the pandemic, which allows not just our attorneys but our staff as well to work remotely under certain circumstances, and we've done very little to change that. We have a very good parental leave policy for attorneys and staff. We help pay student loans for anybody employed by the firm with student loans.

So we have a number of those kinds of policies. But we also have the attitude that none of us should miss a soccer game, a play, a music recital that one of their children has, and that people need time away from work to recharge. So we've instilled that attitude in our folks. That's how we like to practice law together.

In terms of the future, what is on your mind as you're steering the ship in 2024?

A couple things are on my mind. One is our continued opportunities to find attorneys who would like to practice with us who would like to use our network or our platform.

We're also keeping in mind the impact of artificial intelligence on the legal industry. It's certainly here already and will continue to be here, so we want to make sure we're paying attention to it.

I'm also interested in our clients and what we can do to help partner with them, and what's impacting them in their industries, so that we're poised to help them tackle the next problem.

So those are the three biggest things I have on my mind as I, as you say, steer the ship.

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Michael D. Ferachi