

New Jersey Law Journal

STATEWIDE LEGAL AUTHORITY SINCE 1878

NJLJ.COM

VOL. CXCIII – NO. 13

SEPTEMBER 29, 2008

An incisivemedia publication

Commentary

Following Young Attorneys to Newark

By Robert S. Steinbaum

This past weekend, Genova, Burns & Vernoia moved from 354 Eisenhower Parkway in Livingston to 494 Broad Street in Newark. During the past 15 years, many firms based in New York and Philadelphia have opened up offices in Newark, but this marks the first time a major, suburban-grown New Jersey firm has moved to this city.

Newark's Penn Station, and from there it's an easy ride to the firm's other offices in downtown New York, Red Bank, Camden and Philadelphia. Each of those offices is within a block of a train station.

Getting closer to clients is always a prime element of a law firm's expansion. This firm has some sizable clients in Newark, including Fidelco (its new landlord), the New Jersey Devils, AEG (operator of the Prudential Center),

Did the firm's young Hoboken attorneys actually do cartwheels when the Newark move was announced, as Burns claims? Maybe not, but it stands to reason that the new location would attract young lawyers living in Chelsea, SoHo, Wall Street, Jersey City or Hoboken much more than would an office in Roseland, West Orange or Livingston.

In August 1998, I wrote a column, "Why Your Firm Should Move

The number — and importance — of attorneys in the city's firms, governmental agencies and nonprofits has grown in the past decade.



PHOTO BY CARMEN NATALE

The firm's 42 attorneys and 30 support staff are moving to two floors of a building overlooking the Newark Bears & Eagles minor league baseball stadium and the new Rutgers Business School. The building is a block from New Jersey Transit's Broad Street Station, which is undergoing a major restoration. A stop on the new Newark Light Rail connects the building to

Steinbaum is the publisher of the New Jersey Law Journal.

New Jersey Transit, Verizon and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

For decades, law firms have cited the reluctance of attorneys, staff and clients to go to Newark because of inconvenience or safety fears. But Genova, Burns articulates quite the opposite approach. Says managing partner Jim Burns: "A growing, expanding firm needs to go where the action is. The talent pool lives in cities — Hoboken, Jersey City, New York and someday maybe even Newark."

to Newark" (153 N.J.L.J. 667). That column examined statistics from the *Lawyers Diary and Manual* showing that in 1978, the legal community's heyday in Newark before many of the state's largest firms moved out, 1,828 attorneys worked in the city. They constituted 10 percent of the state's practicing lawyers at the time.

The corresponding figure in 1998 was 2,482 lawyers, or 6.9 percent. Now the figure is 2,775 lawyers,

or 7.6 percent. Attorneys employed by Newark's law firms, governmental offices and nonprofit institutions have grown in absolute number and relative importance during the past decade.

Since that 1998 column, additional out-of-state firms have moved into Newark: K&L Gates, Herrick Feinstein, LeClairRyan, Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, Sedgwick Detert Moran & Arnold, Landman Corsi Ballaine & Ford, Patton Boggs, Harris Beach, Tressler, Soderstrom, Maloney & Priess, and Friedman Kaplan Seiler & Adelman. Another firm—Robertson Freilich Bruno & Cohen—started in Morristown and moved to Newark within a year of its formation.

It's not just law firms that have moved in. Lexis-Nexis' Matthew

Bender legal publishing division moved from New York to Newark in 2001, joining Gann Law Books and the *Law Journal* to make up a significant legal publishing industry here.

Have you answered a calendar call in Essex County recently? If not, find an opportunity to visit the courthouse complex. Cass Gilbert's restored historic courthouse, a model for his U.S. Supreme Court design, glistens with its marble staircase and beautiful courtroom murals. Lawyers and jurors can enter from the new parking deck through the new Brendan Byrne plaza, and jurors can pass time in pleasant surroundings with wi-fi availability. The entire complex is newly landscaped and appears from the street to be as fine a collection of government buildings as one would see in

Washington or Paris.

Assuming Genova, Burns attorneys can take some nonbillable hours to walk around their new neighborhood, they might visit the new Impressionism exhibit at the Newark Museum or join the gatherings of well-dressed young professionals listening to jazz during NJPAC's Thursday afternoon outdoor concerts in the summer. Maybe they'll pull out a red and black Devils jersey and walk with the throngs down Mulberry Street to the new Prudential Center.

Maybe, as Jim Burns muses, they'll even move to Newark. If so, there's Eleven-80, the newly refurbished, elegant, art deco apartment building at 1180 Raymond Boulevard, once the home of many prestigious Newark law firms. ■