

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2015

Bankruptcy boutique adds name partners

By Steven Crighton / Daily Journal Staff Writer

Weiland Golden LLP, an Orange County business bankruptcy and financial restructuring boutique, has added bankruptcy attorneys William N. Lobel and Alan J. Friedman as name partners.

The firm, which managing partner Michael Weiland said is now one of the largest and most experienced bankruptcy boutiques in California, will be known as Lobel Weiland Golden Friedman LLP.

"It made sense to grow. For the past year we've had record productivity. We're as busy as we can possibly be, in a good way," Weiland said.

The firm's corporate, real estate, and general commercial litigation practices helped it prosper during a time where bankruptcy filings were near an all-time low, Weiland said, but as their bankruptcy business began to rebound, adding attorneys with dynamic bankruptcy practices made sense.

'It made sense to grow. For the past year we've had record productivity. We're as busy as we can possibly be, in a good way.'

— *Michael Weiland*

"I think Bill was looking at us because we had the corporate, real estate, and commercial litigation practices to better support his Chapter 11 clients," Weiland said, noting that the move was mostly planned between Lobel and himself. "I feel very fortunate that Bill chose our firm over our competition, because I know how heavily courted he was by many bankruptcy boutiques."

Lobel, who managed The Lobel Firm LLP for five years after leaving Irell & Manella LLP in 2010, said the potential for more



Courtesy of Lobel Weiland Golden Friedman LLP

From left: William Lobel, Michael Weiland, Jeffrey Golden and Alan Friedman, name partners at the re-named Lobel Weiland Golden Friedman LLP.

well-rounded practice coverage sold him on joining Weiland Golden. The planned width and quality of coverage marks a return to form for Lobel, as he operated Lobel Winthrop & Baker until its 1995 dissolution. He said the firm was regarded as the top bankruptcy boutique in Orange County.

"My goal for the next five years is to recreate that sort of Chapter 11 boutique here in Orange County," Lobel said. "There's a need for it." Some of Lobel's highest profile clients over the years have included homebuilder John Lusk and Carl's Jr. founder Carl Karcher, adding that he's "always been pretty busy" in the fast food market.

Joining Lobel in the effort to restore that vintage boutique style is Friedman, an old

colleague from Lobel Winthrop & Broker who most recently worked as a partner at Irell & Manella. Also joining the firm as senior of counsel are Sean A. O'Keefe, Michael R. Adele and Tavi C. Flanagan.

Weiland said that talks with Lobel to expand the firm started near the tail end of 2014. In October 2014, the firm, then known as Weiland Golden Smiley Wang Ekvall & Strok LLP split into two, with those who left forming the firm Smiley Wang-Ekvall LLP.

Lobel said that with bankruptcies poised to trend upward, the firm's in a good position to continue growing. The firm now has about a dozen attorneys on staff, Weiland said, with hopes that they'll add at least two more before the end of the year.