

Cozen O'Connor Announces Hiring of Gilchrist & Rutter Attorneys

Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Los Angeles, September 27, 2017 – Cozen O'Connor is thrilled to announce that effective October 1, 2017, all of the lawyers from the Los Angeles real estate and commercial litigation boutique, Gilchrist & Rutter, will join the firm. This transaction continues Cozen O'Connor's ongoing expansion of its fast-growing and nationally recognized Real Estate Practice and Commercial Litigation Practice Groups. Consistently ranked among the top real estate firms in the country, Gilchrist & Rutter's full-service real estate practice encompasses commercial office, retail, multi-family, industrial, manufactured housing, development, financing, leasing, purchases, sales, joint ventures, exchanges, along with a regulatory and government relations practice. The following Gilchrist & Rutter attorneys will be joining Cozen O'Connor as Partners: Frank Gooch, III, Jonathan S. Gross, Richard H. Close, Paul S. Rutter, Thomas W. Casparian, Diane J. Hvolka, Peter E. Swain, and Duane M. Montgomery. Donald C. Nanney will join as Of Counsel, and Adam P. Wiley as an Associate.

Gilchrist & Rutter brings to Cozen O'Connor a group of experienced real estate lawyers with a strong background in all aspects of real estate, representing developers, investors, lenders, architects, contractors, brokers, and local government agencies. Over its 34-year history, the firm has served a range of major developers including Maguire Properties Group, Thomas Properties Group, J.P. Morgan Asset Management, Inc., Archon Group, and McCarthy Cook & Co, among others, who have transformed and revitalized the commercial real estate market in Southern California — particularly the Los Angeles region — and other markets nationwide. Paul Rutter, a co-founder of the firm, stepped away from the practice of law to serve as Executive Vice President of Maguire Properties, a public REIT, and then as Co-Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel of Thomas Properties, a publicly held real estate company, rejoining the law firm he helped found, following the merger of Thomas Properties into a public REIT.

"Real estate is booming in California, particularly in the Los Angeles area, so I'm thrilled to welcome the attorneys from Gilchrist & Rutter, a firm with an impeccable and national reputation in the real estate industry," says Michael J. Heller, Cozen O'Connor's President and Chief Executive Officer. "This acquisition marks an exciting and important time for us. From a strategic standpoint, it expands our real estate and commercial litigation practices on the West Coast, helps to further build our presence in California, and underscores our overall exponential growth nationally. From a firm culture standpoint, having this group of exceptional people join our firm is a home run."

"We're quite familiar with Cozen O'Connor's outstanding real estate team and have followed their growth all over the country. We are thrilled to be part of such an entrepreneurial firm with an expanding, national platform," said Gilchrist & Rutter Managing Partner Jonathan Gross. "Our team works with developers and owners throughout California and in other states as well, so we anticipate exciting times ahead." Gross will serve as Office Managing Partner of Cozen O'Connor's new Santa Monica Office and Co-Chair of the Real Estate Practice Group.

Gilchrist & Rutter also brings a nationally recognized manufactured housing team, led by Richard Close, which has more than 30 years of experience serving one of the fastest growing industries in the country. Its track record includes advising and representing owners of manufactured housing communities, helping them maximize the profitability of the assets through long- and short-term business plans. The team counsels and advocates on behalf of its clients before a range of California state and local agencies, including the California Coastal Commission, the Department of Housing and Community Development, and the California Bureau of Real Estate. The group is also widely

Related Practice Areas

- Commercial Litigation
- Manufactured Housing
- Real Estate
- Real Estate Litigation

known for its successful litigation in both state and federal courts.

“Manufactured housing is a premier practice and it’s quite unique as law firms go,” says Jeffrey A. Leonard, Chair of Cozen O’Connor’s Business Law Department. “The industry is quite large in the western United States and Gilchrist & Rutter is one of only a handful of law firms that can deliver experienced counsel on the many — and sometimes thorny — legal issues associated with it.”

In addition to their heavy emphasis on real estate disputes, the lawyers of the Commercial Litigation group also represent clients in trial and arbitration proceedings in state and federal courts in partnership disputes, corporate and LLC dissolution and partition actions, and in claims involving breach of fiduciary duty, unfair business practices, unfair competition, defamation, invasion of privacy , insurance bad faith and intellectual property.

Cozen O’Connor has California offices in Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, and now Santa Monica. This acquisition marks yet another step in the continued expansion of Cozen O’Connor’s Real Estate Practice throughout the United States. In July, the practice welcomed Francis “Frank” Halm as a member of its Minneapolis office and Jeffrey A. Mills to the firm’s Pittsburgh office. In June, the firm welcomed a Zoning, Land Use & Development Group to its Washington, D.C. office. That group, led by Meredith Moldenhauer, expands the firm’s transactional commercial real estate practice and brings a deep knowledge of the Washington, D.C., market. Like Gilchrist & Rutter in Los Angeles, the group has been instrumental in the redevelopment of many of Washington’s most up-and-coming areas, including 14th Street, Union Market, and H Street, NE.

In 2016, Cozen O’Connor’s revenue increased by 10 percent. In the last nine months, the firm has recruited 51 partners and 55 associates. Following a strategy focused on three elements — developing unique practices, diversifying the revenue stream with non-legal services, and investing in technology — the firm has plans to grow head count to between 700 and 1,000 lawyers nationwide.

About Cozen O’Connor

Established in 1970 and ranked among the top 100 law firms in America, Cozen O’Connor has more than 750 attorneys who help clients manage risk and make better business decisions. The firm counsels clients on their most sophisticated legal matters in all areas of the law, including litigation, corporate, and regulatory law. Representing a broad array of leading global corporations and middle market companies, Cozen O’Connor services its clients’ needs through 26 offices across two continents.