



Kevin P. Sullivan, left, and Benjamin S. Salsbury, attorneys at Salsbury Sullivan, LLC. (The Daily Record/Maximilian Franz),

Litigation attorneys team up to form new firm

By: Lauren Kirkwood Daily Record Legal Affairs Writer May 28, 2015

After a dozen years at Baltimore firm Gallagher Evelius & Jones LLP, litigation attorney Kevin Sullivan is leaving the midsize firm's ranks to launch a new two-lawyer practice with attorney Ben Salsbury.

Salsbury Sullivan LLC will officially launch June 1, but the attorneys' plans for the future have long been in sync, they said.

"We used to swap war stories all the time about our trials, and we both like working in the courtroom," Sullivan said. "I wanted to start my own practice and put my own stamp on things, and we started talking more and more about our practices, our work styles and ethics, and the things we wanted to accomplish matched up with each other."

Combined expertise

Sullivan, who joined Gallagher Evelius & Jones after graduating from the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law in 2003, concentrated his practice there on real estate-related litigation, including complex construction disputes.

Meanwhile, Salsbury — also a UM Carey Law alum — has worked primarily on medical malpractice and personal injury cases, most recently at Gleason, Flynn, Emig & Fogleman Chtd. in Rockville.

The new firm, located on Charles Street in downtown Baltimore, will combine their expertise and experience, focusing on plaintiffs' catastrophic personal injury and medical malpractice cases, with some real estate litigation in the mix, Sullivan said.

“Over multiple dinners, over multiple months, at multiple restaurants around the city, these plans kind of came together,” he said.

But the goal, both attorneys added, is for the firm to eventually serve additional practice areas and grow beyond two attorneys and one paralegal.

“We don’t want to be a two-person law firm forever,” Sullivan said. “The hope is to kind of expand it and be a full-service law firm with as many attorneys as we need to serve our clients’ needs.”

They’ve mainly relied on word of mouth to spread the news of the firm’s launch so far, Salsbury said.

“I’ve always developed my business through personal relationships with other lawyers and former clients,” Salsbury said. “I hope that’ll be enough for us to get off the ground and continue through the lifespan of the firm.”

‘Do-it-yourself’ mentality

Although Sullivan said it’s unusual for a partner to leave his former firm, it was a decision that aligned with his professional goals — and a move that he and Salsbury had long aspired to make.

“For me, it’s always been in the back of my head, I’ve always had that want-to-do-it-yourself kind of mentality,” Salsbury said. “We were on the same boat and on the same path in terms of wanting to do something like this.”

But making the leap from their larger firms without firsthand business experience of their own has brought some challenges, Sullivan said.

“I’m comfortable, and Ben is comfortable, handling the legal part of our work — we’ve both been attorneys and litigators for multiple years,” he said. “But neither of us has an accounting or business background. It’s exciting, I enjoy it, but that’s kind of the scary piece. That is by far, I think, the biggest challenge.”

However, Salsbury said, watching the new firm come together has brought a different type of satisfaction than that of winning a big case.

“I love being a litigator; I love being a trial lawyer, but one thing that’s difficult is that you come in where things are falling apart, as opposed to building something,” Salsbury said. “That kind of has always eaten at me in my professional career, but now I feel like I’m getting the best of both worlds.”