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MAGAZINE®

J. ALLEN MAINES OF  
**HOLLAND  
& KNIGHT**

Law Firm of the Month

**A-LIST  
ATLANTA  
LAWYERS  
EDITION**



Robert Green, Allison Dyer, Larry Shackelford, John Decker, J. Allen Maines, Mark Lange, Woodrow Vaugan, III, Terrence Davis & Ethan Cohen.  
Not pictured: Aly Piro & Roth Kehoe.

# HOLLAND & KNIGHT

## New Look, New View

By Laura Maurice

The Atlanta office of Holland & Knight is on the move – literally and figuratively. To accommodate recent growth, the 45-attorney office just this month relocated to offices on two floors of the Regions Plaza building at 1180 West Peachtree Street in midtown. The space features open, collaborative areas framed in glass to mirror the teamwork and transparency that are the hallmarks of the “new” Holland & Knight.



The move caps off an exciting few years during which the Atlanta office increased its headcount by 50 percent, key to the firm's national ranking last year as the No. 3 law firm in terms of lateral hires (the firm is the 27<sup>th</sup> largest nationally by headcount). According to executive partner, Allen Maines, this is just the beginning.

"I feel like one of the Blues Brothers, and I have the lucky job of getting the band back together," says Maines of his recruiting successes. "We're assembling a cohesive team of some of the most gifted, prestigious lawyers in Atlanta dedicated to providing advice and expertise at the highest levels to achieve extraordinary results and deliver superior service. We're a tight-knit group of friends who approach each matter with intensity, thoroughness and creativity, and we enjoy handling cutting edge, complex legal issues dominating today's regulatory agenda and headlines."

With a national footprint spanning 24 offices and featuring 1,200 lawyers, Holland & Knight has a particularly strong presence in the Southeast that will only increase as the firm continues to aggressively invest in Atlanta while other firms focus elsewhere. The firm has committed time, money and resources into rebranding and growing the Atlanta office and has trusted Maines' management and vision to do so.

"We're not, and don't strive to be, the largest law office in Atlanta, or a firm comprised of general practitioners. Our goal is to grow strategically and to be the firm of choice for clients to handle their most critical legal issues. So, we are recruiting an extremely elite few who already are recognized as leaders in their fields of expertise. Our lawyers are smart, interesting, motivated and professional – and yet remarkably different from each other. And, as you would expect in the case of lawyers with a history of excellence, they are well-compensated too."

Maines was recruited to Holland & Knight in 2013 from Paul Hastings, where he chaired the securities class action practice group and was co-chair of the global litigation section. During his Paul Hastings days, he and his peers would sometimes

discuss the kind of firm they would create if they could start from the ground up. When Holland & Knight came calling, it was the opportunity of a lifetime. Managing partner, Steve Sonberg, and chief operating officer, Doug Wright, asked Maines if he wanted to continue doing the same old thing or if he wanted to help build something; the answer was clear. Since then, it's been a whirlwind.

### IMPRESSIVE LATERAL GROWTH

Maines was instrumental in the lateral hiring spree that began in 2013 and was promoted to executive partner in 2014. The Atlanta office had about 25 attorneys when he first joined, and it anticipates some major announcements yet this year to bring it close to 55 attorneys by year's end, with the goal of being at 65-70 attorneys by close of 2016.

"We're incredibly excited about the new laterals who have joined us," says Maines. The roster reads like a Who's Who from among their practice areas. Key additions include Woody Vaughan and Allison Dyer from King & Spalding in public finance, which helped the firm be recognized as the No.1 bond counsel firm in Georgia in 2014 according to The Bond Buyer; Jordan Stringer from King & Spalding in litigation; Terry Davis in financial services from Baker Donelson; Jeff Lowe from King & Spalding in real estate; tax lawyers Mark Lange and Aly Pirio from McKenna, Long & Aldridge; litigator Ethan Cohen from Ballard Spahr; John Decker in real estate from Hunton & Williams; and Larry Shackelford from Troutman Sanders in corporate and securities.

for floor covering, poultry, information and media, and consumer protection industries, among others. The industry specialization is part of the firm's commitment to partner with clients to help them achieve their business goals. The specialties aren't meant to be practice silos though, and the firm encourages collaboration.

"The firms that are going to do well in the future are those that will assume responsibility for wringing the inefficiencies out of the delivery of legal services, and those who can access their pre-existing expertise in order to price their product. This adds predictability and value for our clients."

### LESSONS LEARNED

Maines believes that the time is right to deliver a new paradigm in the professional legal services business.

"I've had the good fortune to learn from great client leaders and law firm mentors over the years, and I've tried to take the best of everything from them and put it to work here. We don't want to be a hotel for pointy-headed lawyers but, instead, a place for attorneys with creativity, pride, mental energy and a sense of urgency who buy into our vision and are committed to the highest level of quality and service for their clients."

Maines says he learned what not to do, as much as what to do, from past experiences. Earlier in his career, he sat in on many client pitches that typically followed the same format. "The pitch was all about the firm – how many lawyers, how many offices, how many practice areas. But the law firms never addressed the clients' problem, and they as-

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Holland & Knight encourages attorneys to work together in client and industry teams to facilitate access to pre-existing expertise. Specialties in Atlanta include financial services, cybersecurity, consumer and crisis litigation, public finance and real estate. The firm has a strong presence in the payments and transactions processing space and has specialized industry groups

sumed no responsibility for wringing the inefficiencies out of the delivery of legal services. They couldn't price their product. They could not estimate how long it would take or how much it would cost. Clients had no idea what kind of value they were going to receive, and many times even after the work was completed the clients had no idea what kind of value they had received."

Then the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act became law, followed by the tragic ValuJet crash in the Everglades, which gave rise to crises litigation ranging from the earliest PSLRA securities class actions filed in the Eleventh Circuit to insurance disputes and regulatory investigations. The crisis prompted a turning point in his approach. "It became about the client – the problem, issues, claims, alternative solutions, recommendations, time and costs." Maines was retained to defend the airline, and he continues to use to this client problem-solving, crises-management approach to this day.

"I'm as excited about the opportunities for associates as I am for our lateral partners. The skill and diversity of our associates is top notch and getting better. We're looking for people who graduated at the top of their class from top law schools, or who have interned as judicial clerks. We can teach everything but character, judgment and smarts, and there is great opportunity here for smart young lawyers who want to work hard and who are serious about their



careers. We are not top heavy, and there are no structural impediments to a young lawyer making partner. In fact, there are different levels of partnership available to accommodate people at different stages in life. In my opinion, Holland & Knight is the best career opportunity in the country for associates. The firm is secure with no long term debt whatsoever and revenues that have increased in the double digits for the past several years, both important factors to anyone looking for a home."

#### **TIME TO PRACTICE**

One would think with all the growth in Atlanta that Maines would find it difficult to maintain his own practice, but he remains busy. Maines' practice focuses on major commercial litigation and arbitration, including securities and consumer class actions, M&A disputes, business torts and corporate investigations. He has more courtroom trial experience than most business litigators and his clients have described him as one of the few lawyers with a great business mind and a knack for turning a controversy into an opportunity. He has served as lead trial counsel to some of the world's largest entities but he enjoys working on smaller matters just as much as the large ones. "Early in my career we tried big cases with two lawyers and won," says Maines. "There's just this perverse view among many law firms that the more bodies on a case, the better. We're different. We believe that our experience, and the technology we use to access pre-existing expertise, allows us to win cases without costing our clients a fortune." He has handled cases in 25 states and 10 countries, and previously chaired the securities law committee of the International Bar Association.

Maines continues to love litigation because of the immediacy of it. "When you try a case, you have an instant feedback mechanism that lets you know whether or not you are doing a good job. I find it very results-oriented, and that suits me."

He has brought the same focus on results to his leadership role at Holland & Knight, and it is working. Attorneys and staff are re-energized; people are talking and the phone is ringing. The view from the new offices is open and wide, and Maines likes what he sees.

# AT A GLANCE

#### **Practice Areas**

Corporate Transactions  
Finance & Tax Law  
International Law  
Litigation & Dispute Resolution  
Private Wealth Services  
Real Estate Law  
Hospitality & Leisure Law  
Regulatory & Government Affairs

#### **Atlanta Attorneys**

24 Partners  
15 Associates  
3 Senior Counsel

#### **Community Involvement**

Supports National 9/11 Day of Service Initiative  
Holland & Knight's Opening Doors for Children

#### **Atlanta Executive Partner**

*J. Allen Maines*

#### **Education**

Juris Doctor, University of Florida Levin College of Law, 1976  
Bachelor of Arts, Taylor University, 1973

#### **Clerkships**

James Wm. Moore, Sterling Professor of Law, Yale Law School

#### **Professional Memberships**

American, Georgia & Atlanta Bar Associations  
Lawyers Club of Atlanta  
Georgia Bar Foundation

#### **Community Involvement**

Atlanta Ballet, Board Member  
March of Dimes, Georgia Chapter, Former Chairman  
Animal Health Trust, Board Member  
Leadership Atlanta, Alumnus

#### **Holland & Knight LLP**

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