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Big Firm Fees Drive Out Top Litigator

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Prominent Los Angeles litigator Gregory Evans announced Thursday he has left Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy to start up his own boutique litigation firm, taking prominent clients such as Nike Inc. and The Sherwin-Williams Co. with him.

His decision to leave was prompted by the economic downturn and his feeling that most large firms have been inflexible in the face of clients' needs to control their legal budgets, Evans said.

"I think trying to be in the top 10 most profitable firms every year and generating enough revenue to land in that coveted spot creates tension between the interests of the client and the interests of the partnership and it's why I've decided to break out and do something more consistent with what clients need," Evans said.

At his new firm, called the Integer Law Group, Evans said he expects to hire two or three associates and institute alternative billing arrangements, lower billing rates and contingency fee arrangements.



While a majority of his work focus on environmental litigation, Evans has handled cases involving such issues as trade secrets, business discrimination and corporate governance. Evans recently represented copper mining, smelting and refining company Asarco Inc. in bankruptcy proceedings in which the company agreed to pay \$1.8 billion in environmental cleanup costs, the largest such settlement in U.S. history. He has successfully fought off government investigations and lawsuits filed against painter manufacturer The Sherwin-Williams Co. for alleged environmental violations.

"I know from representing these companies that it doesn't take a standing army billing \$900 an hour to win the cases," Evans said.

Evans joined Milbank Tweed four years ago after leaving Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe, where he headed the firm's San Francisco litigation group. Evans has also worked at Preston, Gates, & Ellis, which later became K&L Gates as well as Hill, Farrer & Burrill.

Evans, 49, is on the national board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Education Fund and the boards for the Los Angeles public interest organization Public Counsel, Catholic Charities of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Bar Foundation.

Erica Tamblyn, a spokeswoman for Milbank Tweed, declined to comment on Evans' departure.

His announcement comes a week after leading project finance attorney Edwin Feo retired from the firm. Feo, a partner in the Los Angeles office, has taken a position with the renewable energy investment firm US Renewables Group in Santa Monica.

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