

# PACIFIC BUSINESS NEWS

## Law firms vie to hire public figures

BY BRAD BROBERG  
Contributing Writer

Rob McKenna's loss in the 2012 race for governor was a win for Mark Parris and the global law firm Orrick.

Parris, who leads the firm's Seattle office, was able to hire the former state attorney general after McKenna lost the general election to Jay Inslee – a big victory for Orrick given the number of firms vying to land someone with McKenna's public profile and insider take.

"It's definitely a very competitive market to recruit talent like Rob," Parris said. "It was a competition between ourselves, some other significant indigenous firms here in Seattle, but also some national and international firms who were willing to open Seattle offices to entice Rob."

Big name recruits from the public sector create an instant splash, but firms and recruits alike say the wow factor typically takes a back seat to the genuine legal acumen they are expected – and want – to contribute.

"You can only get so far on the fact that you're the former fill-in-the-blank," said McKenna, who joined Orrick in February 2013 as co-leader of the firm's public policy group. "You've got to have strong substantive skills because clients need someone skilled who can advance their cause, not just open doors for them."

The most important skill that McKenna and other former public servants bring is the ability to guide clients through the growing maze of government regulations – mainly because they helped create or enforce those regulations.

"These days it's the exception when a legal issue doesn't include a legislative or regulatory wrinkle," Parris said.

"Rob's perspective is enormously



*Former Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna is just one public figure who has returned to private practice at a local firm.*

valuable to our clients navigating this increasing web of regulation...whether they are facing a government inquiry or a civil lawsuit or just in their business generally," he said.

During presidential election years, the flow of senior public servants out of government service and into the private sector spikes. "With any administrative change, there is that much more movement, so that will happen this fall," Parris said. "We're already beginning to look at potential candidates who may be leaving or considering leaving government."

Orrick began wooing McKenna about a month after the 2012 general election. The courtship involved visits to several Orrick offices around the country and video conferences with many others – all so each could understand what the other brought to the table.

Much like being attorney general, working at Orrick gives McKenna a platform to tackle "very interesting,

often cutting-edge, legal issues," he said. "That was really the deciding factor for me in choosing Orrick."

Parris declined to discuss how much business McKenna has brought to the firm, but said he is a rare and valuable asset. "There are only so many folks...at Rob's level," he said. "Adding someone of his stature certainly enhances our success in any number of ways."

The same make-it-rain expectations hold true for former Washington Governor and U.S. Ambassador to China Gary Locke and former U.S. District Attorney John McKay, a pair of prize catches for Davis Wright Tremaine. "I'm very confident they'll be generating more work and more revenue for the firm," said Bob Blackstone, who leads the Seattle office.

Both are ridiculously well connected, especially Locke, a former King County prosecutor, state representative and county executive who followed two terms as governor with stints as U.S. Commerce Secretary and U.S. Ambassador to China. Locke rejoined DWT in September 2015 – he first worked there from 2005-2009 – as a senior advisor. McKay, who followed his stint as U.S. attorney by teaching law at Seattle University, came aboard as leader of the government investigations and crisis management group in April of this year.

"Both of these guys have large Rolodexes and know a lot of people," Blackstone said. "They know who to talk to...in a way that would take us a lot longer."

But they don't just bring access. They know what to expect and how to respond when the government is on the other side of the table.

"I think our clients, especially our business clients, take some comfort in knowing people like Gov. Locke are here and I'm here," McKay said.



*Jenny Durkan joined Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan in 2015 as co-managing partner of the Seattle office and global chair of the firm's cyber security and data protection group after serving as the United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington from 2009 to 2014.*



BUSINESS JOURNAL PHOTO | ANTHONY BOLANTE

*Gary Locke, former Washington Governor and U.S. Ambassador to China, is pictured in his new office at David Wright Tremaine law firm in Seattle, Washington.*

Davis Wright Tremaine was the only firm McKay talked to when he decided to return to practicing law – in part because two former colleagues worked there.

"At this level, the compensation arrangements are not going to be wildly different," he said. "It comes down to good fit, culture...and does the exist-

ing client base of the firm match the strengths I bring."

That also was the key to hiring Locke. "Other firms were interested in talking to him, but we didn't get into a bidding war or anything like that," Blackstone said. "He thought we offered the best platform."

After hanging out its shingle in February, JND Legal Administration of Seattle wasted little time in mining the public sector for talent. Charles Lawson, who directed the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection settlement fund administration program, joined the firm in June as senior vice president of government services.

Lawson isn't an attorney, but he has longstanding relationships with government agencies that need legal administration services. At the same time, he has years of experience managing those services.

"For us, we would take either. It's a plus to find someone who has both. That's what we think Charles brings to the table for us," said Neil Zola, co-founder of JND along with Jennifer Keough and David Isaac.

Zola met Lawson before launching JND. He thought to himself that he'd like to hire Lawson if he ever got the chance. Zola's interest in Lawson was matched by Lawson's interest in JND, resulting in a relatively quick signing once the opportunity arose.

"If we have to wine and dine and convince somebody, they're the wrong fit," Zola said. "We're more interested in people who are excited about what we want to do."

#### HIRING FOR CLOUT

Here's where some of the region's top public figures landed.

##### **Gary Locke**

**Employment:** Joined Davis Wright Tremaine in September 2015.

**Practice:** Advises clients on business activities in the U.S. and China.

**Previous:** U.S. Ambassador to China, 2011-2014; U.S. Commerce Secretary, 2009-2011; Washington State Governor, 1997-2005; King County Executive, 1994-1997; Washington State

House of Representatives, 1983-1994; King County Deputy Prosecutor, 1975-1980.

##### **John McKay**

**Employment:** Joined Davis Wright Tremaine in April 2016.

**Practice:** Heads the firm's government investigations and crisis management group.

**Previous:** Seattle University School of Law professor of law, 2007-present; United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington, 2001-2006.

##### **Jenny Durkan**

**Employment:** Joined Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan in 2015.

**Practice:** Co-managing partner of the Seattle office and global chair of the firm's cyber security and data protection group.

**Previous:** United States Attorney for the Western District of Washington, 2009-2014.

##### **Rob McKenna**

**Employment:** Joined Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP in 2013.

**Practice:** Partner and co-head of the firm's public policy group.

**Previous:** 2012 gubernatorial candidate; Attorney General of Washington, 2005 to 2013; Metropolitan King County Council, 1996-2005.

##### **Charles Lawson**

**Employment:** Joined JND Legal Administration as senior vice president of government services.

**Practice:** While not a lawyer, Lawson uses his expertise to help navigate the U.S. government.

**Previous:** Federal Trade Commission, 2004-2016; U.S. Small Business Administration, 2003-2004; Federal Trade Commission, 2000-2003.

##### **Mike McKay**

**Employment:** Launched McKay Chadwell in 1995.

**Practice:** White-collar criminal defense, commercial litigation and internal investigations.

**Previous:** Lane Powell, 1993-1995; U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Washington in Seattle from 1989-1993; McKay & Gaitan, 1981-1989; Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for King County, 1976-1981.



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