

Veteran attorneys join GableGotwals firm

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By Ralph Schaefer TBLN Correspondent



Attorneys Travis Jett (left) and Robert McCampbell joined the GableGotwals Law Firm's Oklahoma City office in January. They will be in Tulsa to represent clients as needed.
Ralph Schaefer/For TBLN

Attorneys Robert McCampbell and Travis Jett say they are problem solvers.

The two work at the intersection of government and law, helping companies dealing with issues involving government regulators or serving as an outside party for a company's internal investigation. Together they brought 40 years of legal experience when they joined the GableGotwals Law Firm's Oklahoma City office as shareholders in January.

Even though they office in Oklahoma City, the team said they will be in Tulsa as often as needed.

They previously worked together at another Oklahoma City law firm. McCampbell has a "banker's box" courtroom experience, while Jett's knowledge is on new technology and utilizes flash drives for courtroom data.

"This is a great example of complementary skills," McCampbell said. "I grew up in an era when everything was on paper and business was transacted by telephone calls. Travis is 10 times more fluent in electronics when it comes to megabytes and data-driven information."

Jett smiled as he recalled conversations with McCampbell about how many bankers boxes would be required if everything was on paper.

“It is a huge difference,” McCampbell said. “It is better today, but one must have someone who understands the technology and how it works as investigations are conducted.”

The legal team works with a company’s legal department on internal investigations when wrongdoing is alleged. An internal report points to financial problems, money going somewhere it is not supposed to or failure to pay taxes, McCampbell said.

The board of directors must know if something is happening, and if it isn’t, then they can move to other problems.

A lot of work is involved with internal investigations, which are emergency situations, Jett said. Having a team that has worked together being able to solve problems without dealing with administrative issues is helpful.

McCampbell is looking at what business owners might expect with the Trump Administration.

“My primary concern is going to be for companies that deal with regulators and regulations,” he said. “There will be challenges, and companies need to know how to efficiently comply.”

Businesses also need to watch for possible changes in the “Chevron Deference,” a legal concept requiring courts to defer to federal agencies and their interpretation of the law.

The U.S. Supreme Court in effect told judges they must pay attention to an agency’s interpretation of a statute, he said. A judge can rule against the agency if he thinks the interpretation is wrong.

Jett said Chevron Deference has given federal agencies significantly more power and there is a major question as to whether scales have been tipped too far. Businesses should be ready if there is a seismic change in the law and this would be one of those challenges.

McCampbell’s experience includes helping transform the Justice Department into a terrorism protection agency. This started following 9/11 when he was a new U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma.

“It was an awesome experience because I had to think about the safety of everyone in 44 counties,” he said. “I worked with U.S. Attorney David O’Melia who served the northern district along with law enforcement agencies throughout the state to develop policies.”

McC Campbell represented Govs. Frank Keating and Mary Fallin and Speaker of the House Lance Cargill, and he also challenged or defended legal questions in court.

Keating was accused of using state vehicles and airplanes to attend campaign events in the 1990s, McC Campbell said. Keating was following state law requiring the Department of Public Safety to provide him with transportation and security.

Fallin was represented during the grand jury investigation involving Oklahoma’s execution protocol. McC Campbell also successfully represented the Oklahoma State Senate in the 2001 redistricting plan.

Jett, in his six years with McC Campbell, said he has had a great learning experience in big cases while maintaining professionalism, trading people well while being tough as he represented clients.

“The biggest lesson I learned,” he continued, “is that you don’t have to yell, scream or twist people’s arm so they accept your viewpoint. If you go in and act collaboratively, it typically is the best way to a solution.”

McC Campbell learned from Andy Coats, a private practitioner, former Oklahoma City district attorney and University of Oklahoma Law School dean, who taught that credibility is the lawyer’s number one quality and everything else is second.

“I learned by working shoulder to shoulder with Coats, watching how he handled things,” McC Campbell said.

McC Campbell earned his law degree in 1983 from the Yale Law School. Jett graduated with his law degree in 2011 from Georgetown University.

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