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## Buckley Sandler Co-Founder Helps Launch New DC Law Firm

By Aebra Coe

Law360 (May 1, 2019, 9:33 PM EDT) -- After retiring last year from the law firm he co-founded — Buckley Sandler — Andy Sandler has now teamed up with two long-time colleagues to form a financial services-focused law firm managed by women in Washington, D.C., according to an announcement Wednesday.

In addition to Sandler, the new firm's founders include former Buckley Sandler partners Andrea Mitchell and Robyn Quattrone. The three are joined by two additional attorneys — former Buckley Sandler counsel Stephen LeBlanc and Alex Acree, co-founder of financial technology venture capital firm Fenway Summer Ventures.

According to Sandler, the financial services- and fintech-focused firm, named Mitchell Sandler, will likely add another three to five attorneys within the next few weeks.

“We expect, given we’re one day in and we have had a number of clients already commit, including eight fintech clients, we’re clearly going to need more lawyers,” he said. “We expect to have several more shortly.”

But, he says, the firm's partners do not have ambitions to grow quickly into a behemoth. In fact, they plan to avoid it.

“We want to keep it small, and Andrea and Robyn are very intent on remaining a women-owned and managed law firm, and I am completely supportive of that,” Sandler said. Mitchell will serve as the firm's managing partner and Quattrone as its chief operating officer, while Sandler's title is senior partner.

The firm's partners have also made it clear that their goals for the law firm include being innovative in the delivery of legal services, something they say is aided by their size.

“We formed this law firm to demonstrate that we are listening to what clients expect from their outside counsel,” Mitchell said in a statement Wednesday. “We understand the competing demands that our clients are facing today. They are expected to help achieve their company's business goals, embrace diversity and inclusion principles, and obtain superior legal advice at a reasonable cost. We are prepared to share the responsibilities placed on our clients and partner with them as they strive to meet their objectives.”

The firm's small size also supports the partners' goal of finding innovative ways to deliver value to clients by moving away from the billable hour and toward value-based billing, Sandler said.

“[Value-based billing is] something I've tried hard to do in the past, but it becomes difficult to do that at a larger law firm. We think we're going to be better able to do it by staying very small and very focused,” he said.

That focus is on the financial services industry.

Sandler brings with him experience and clients from a long and decorated career representing companies in the financial industry as a partner and practice group leader at Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom, co-founder of Buckley Sandler, and founder of financial services consulting firm Treliant Risk Advisors.

Mitchell is one of the nation's leading fair lending lawyers, according to Sandler, has a broad financial services regulatory practice and performs enforcement work in the financial services sector. Quattrone is a class action defense attorney serving financial services clients, while LeBlanc has worked alongside her for a number of years. Acree is a transactional attorney with a strong focus on financial technology startups, Sandler said.

"Our business model is centered around high expertise, doing what we know how to do well, and finding new ways to deliver value to clients," Sandler said.

--Editing by Janice Carter Brown.

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