

100 Years and Counting: Gresham Savage's History Bridges Two Centuries

Gresham Savage demonstrates progress even in challenging and changing times

September 1, 2010

(San Bernardino, Calif.)—Gresham Savage, the region's premier business law firm, is celebrating its 100-year anniversary. What began as a solo practice in the first decade of the 20th century has grown into one of the region's largest and most respected law firms, serving local, regional and Fortune 500 clients across a wide range of practice areas.

"The practice of law has changed dramatically since 1910 when we were founded, and we enter the 21st century with confidence," says Mark Ostoich, Gresham Savage president and chief executive officer. "It's exciting to help clients manage legal complexities and nuances driven by technology and societal progress that our predecessors could never have imagined a hundred years ago."

A LEGACY OF LONG-STANDING RELATIONSHIPS

Gresham Savage was founded by William Guthrie, a well-connected and influential native of San Bernardino who served as city attorney for 12 years. The firm he created played a prominent role in the early 20th century history of Inland Southern California. Company archives describe the firm's early days representing many of the fledging railway, mining and development industries that eventually fueled San Bernardino and Riverside's growth.

Guthrie's reputation for achieving results captured the attention of the corporate powerhouses of the time, including the Southern Pacific Railroad, Cal Portland Company, the firm's longest standing client to this day, and American Potash and Chemical Co., now known as Searles Valley Minerals, another client still with the firm. Later in his career, he was hired by Henry Kaiser, who went on to create the health care company known as Kaiser Permanente, to handle the legal affairs of his new Fontana, Calif., steel mill, which remained a client for more than 30 years until its closure. Kaiser Ventures, the successor of Kaiser Steel Corporation, remains a client to this day.

Ostoich says that long-standing client relationships, some now extending more than 70 years, are a hallmark of the firm. "Exceptional client loyalty has been the secret to our resiliency and growth in modern times," he says. "By offering a unique and dependable experience, going beyond the call of duty and producing winning results for our clients, we've been able to establish bonds that have lasted for decades."

CONNECTED TO THE COMMUNITY

Throughout its history, many of Gresham Savage's shareholders and associates have been influential figures in San Bernardino and Riverside. The attorneys and staff have been active

in regional philanthropic efforts ranging from education and health care to the welfare and protection of children, according to Ostoich. "Our contributions have been more than monetary," he says. "Our people donate many hours to the charitable organizations with whom we are involved."

The firm has also been active in initiatives promoting the growth and betterment of its communities, says Ostoich.

While the economic recession of the last two years has resulted in challenges for many companies, Gresham Savage has adapted to the changing marketplace by shifting resources to areas of growing demand.

According to Ostoich, the firm has defied national trends and experienced growth of nearly 20 percent in 2009, and he says it will remain on the lookout for new opportunities to expand its practice specialties. "We are in the process of creating some exciting initiatives that will cement us to this region for a very long time," he says.

Gresham Savage is the recognized leader for business, litigation, real estate, environmental and land use law in Inland Southern California. The firm is currently home to more than 50 attorneys, and operates offices in both San Bernardino and Riverside.