

# NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

## Epstein Becker Green taps former Waller chairman John Tishler to spur growth



John Tishler, left, has joined the Nashville office of Epstein Becker & Green P.C. Tishler, former chairman of Waller, is pictured here with Chris Dunn, also a former Waller attorney now with the Epstein firm.

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One of the nation's largest health care law firms has recruited the past chairman of Nashville's biggest firm to propel its local and regional expansion.

Epstein Becker & Green P.C. has added John Tishler to its Nashville office, the firm announced exclusively with the Business Journal on Tuesday.

Tishler has practiced law in Nashville for close to 35 years, spending the majority of that time at Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis until he retired from the firm in July. Tishler chaired Waller for more than six years, from 2008 into 2014.

"It seemed to us ... that he could be an excellent way to give the companies in Nashville confidence that we can align our capabilities with their perspectives," said Mark Lutes, chairman of Epstein Becker Green.

Tishler will influence recruitment, business development and the overall growth of Epstein Becker Green's presence in Nashville and the Southeast while "really being able to drill deeper into the health care industry," he said.

The firm's \$218 million of 2021 revenue ranked No. 151 nationally, in data from industry publication *The American Lawyer*. The firm has the ninth-largest roster of health care attorneys in the nation, according to rankings in trade publication *Modern Healthcare*.

"I started to think about what I wanted to do in the second half of my work life," Tishler said about his transition. "I wanted to try a few other things."

Tishler's move reflects a trend of some of the nation's larger law firms not just landing in Nashville but moving fast to beef up their local presence. Other examples include K&L Gates, which arrived in 2021 and

already has 40 lawyers, as well as Holland & Knight, an even larger firm that is in talks to add the Waller firm.

It was that kind of activity that introduced Tishler to Lutes. A decade ago, as Waller's chairman, Tishler pursued a potential combination with the Epstein firm. It didn't materialize, but Tishler said he frequently referred work to their attorneys. Tishler remained in touch with Lutes, who oversaw the opening of his firm's Nashville office in 2017.

Epstein Becker Green has 12 local lawyers today and is aiming to add at least eight more within the next year, Tishler said. "We want a significant number of people here," he said.

Firms such as Epstein Becker Green are eager to capitalize not just on Nashville's growth but the ongoing shakeup in the city's legal sector – which could really accelerate if Waller seals a deal with Holland & Knight. Tishler will be rejoining several former Waller colleagues now at the Epstein firm.

"There's now a dispersion of local legal talent going on, and we think we can be well-positioned to be an attractive landing place for lawyers looking particularly to practice in a mid-size firm, with several hundred lawyers, rather than a 1,000- or 2,000-lawyer behemoth," Lutes said.

That "mid-market" size also translates into the firm's hourly rates, according to Tishler.

"Some of the larger firms, their rates are significantly higher ... the sort of New York-type rates that are four digits," Tishler said. "That's a very hard sell when a lot of the larger health care firms here in town have traditionally had very mid-market rates."