

Law firm Brinks Gilson merging with D.C. firm

The century-old Chicago patent shop is merging into the much bigger Crowell & Moring.

BY STEVEN R. STRAHLER

Brinks Gilson & Liono, a century-old Chicago patent law firm, is merging into a much larger firm based in Washington, D.C.

The deal with Crowell & Moring, expected to close next month, will create a firm of 625 lawyers, compared with Brinks' 61. Brinks' name will disappear.

Brinks President Gustavo Siller will co-chair Crowell's technology and intellectual property department, the firms said in a press release.

Kent Zimmermann, a legal industry consultant who advises Brinks, said a mutual client of the two firms suggested they consider joining forces, which triggered talks.

The pending transaction parallels talks between another old-line Chicago law firm, Schiff Hardin, and an East Coast firm.

Crowell & Moring, which has overseas offices in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and North Africa and concentrates on litigation and arbitration, regulatory matters and corporate transactions, said it would pursue "adding talent in Chicago."

The firm said it is negotiating with the Chinese government to open an office in Shenzhen, known as China's Silicon Valley, where Brinks has had an office since 2017.

In a statement, Crowell Chair Philip T. Inglima said, "Brinks Gilson & Liono has earned a reputation for protecting well-known corporate brands and complex intellectual property assets in the U.S. and across the globe." Brinks has an office in Indianapolis.



Crowell & Moring Chairman Philip T. Inglima, from left, Brinks Gilson & Liono President Gustavo Siller, Cheryl A. Falvey, a partner at Crowell & Moring who will co-chair the new IP and technology group with Siller, and Laura Lydigsen, chair of Brinks' appellate practice group.

Over the past three years, Crowell said, it has added close to 90 lateral partners and 21 senior counsel, including 24 from Wall Street boutique Kibbe & Orbe in April.

The merger will more than double, to 100-plus, the number of Crowell lawyers specializing in intellectual property, Inglima said in a joint interview with Brinks' Siller.

Siller said the merger will help Brinks in three practice areas it's considered expanding: cybersecurity, advertising and media, and pharmaceutical industry regulation.

The firms expect back-office attrition in Chicago but plan to retain secretaries, paralegals and administrators among 78 Brinks staffers staying on.

Inglima practices white-collar defense, representing BP in the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, Murray Energy in a fatal 2007 Utah mine accident and an Enron executive. Siller has developed a niche

representing Asian clients navigating U.S. patent laws, according to his firm's website.

Besides bringing on Brinks' IP resources, the deal will allow Crowell to strengthen its litigation bench.

"We also see it much more broadly as a technology play," Inglima said in the interview, allowing Crowell to build out expertise serving corporate clients navigating the changing tech landscape.

Inglima said it was a transportation industry client who suggested Brinks as a potential merger partner after Inglima mentioned a desire to expand his firm to the Midwest.

"We think of you as similar temperamentally," he quoted the client as saying.

