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Leech Tishman Combines With Calif. Firm Nelson Hardiman

By **Rae Ann Varona**

Law360 (September 4, 2024, 9:53 PM EDT) -- Leech Tishman is set to add California-based healthcare and life science law firm Nelson Hardiman's 17 attorneys to its Los Angeles office this fall and will do business in the Golden State under the combined name Leech Tishman Nelson Hardiman, the firm announced Tuesday.

The Pittsburgh-based firm said its expansion in Southern California will take effect on Oct. 1, bringing together its full-service commercial platform with Nelson Hardiman's experience working with a range of healthcare clients, including hospital and health systems and telehealth providers. The combination will also allow Leech Tishman to tap into Nelson Hardiman's expertise in industry matters including healthcare licensing, corporate practice of medicine, U.S. Food and Drug Administration compliance, health privacy and data security, and healthcare finance and investments, the firm said.

"We're ecstatic to welcome Nelson Hardiman's elite team of healthcare lawyers to the firm and diversify Leech Tishman's legal service offerings both in California and nationwide," Leech Tishman managing partner Pete A. Fuscaldo said in a statement Tuesday. "Over the past year, our firms have already built a strong working relationship for the mutual benefit of our clients; we believe our shared core values as well as our commitment to client service, continued innovation, and collaboration will position us well to harness new opportunities."

The move will bring Leech Tishman's team to over 140 lawyers and more than 230 total staff across its eight major U.S. markets, the firm said.

Nelson Hardiman founder Harry Nelson said in a statement Wednesday that the Los Angeles-based boutique firm has seen a client demand on an "increasingly national basis" and for a wider range of commercial legal services, including in labor and employment, intellectual property, and restructuring and insolvency.

Nelson, who will lead the new Leech Tishman healthcare practice group, said that over the last decade, Nelson Hardiman received well over 100 offers from larger law firms across the U.S., but that it found a match with Leech Tishman's culture, values and "commitment to delivering real value to clients."

"In a time when the legal practice has gotten increasingly mercenary in many firms, we feel we have found a true partner and a new home at Leech Tishman," Nelson said. "We are excited to become their Healthcare Practice Group, and to make this strategic combination the answer for the demands of the rapidly transforming healthcare and life science industries, enabling us to lean even deeper into meeting client needs."

Nelson Hardiman was co-founded by Nelson, who is also an author, advocate, and adjunct clinical assistant professor of anesthesiology at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine, according to the firm's website. The firm's other co-founder is partner

Mark Hardiman, who, before helping to start the firm, spent more than eight years as a federal prosecutor in the U.S. attorney's office in Los Angeles and was a partner at a law firm where he focused on defense work in healthcare criminal and civil fraud actions and investigations, according to Leech Tishman's site.

The firm's move follows recent individual additions to Leech Tishman. In July, Leech Tishman **added** former industrial tool supplier Kennametal Inc.'s in-house intellectual property counsel, Larry R. Meenan, to the firm's IP group in its Pittsburgh office. The same month, the firm **welcomed** experienced trusts and estates attorney Stephen Kirschenbaum to its Los Angeles office as a partner.

Earlier this year, Alexander J. Reyes, the former general counsel at Pittsburgh-based natural gas company CNX Resources, **rejoined** Leech Tishman.

Leech Tishman serves clients in a broad range of industries including aviation and aerospace, cannabis, hospitality, and healthcare. The firm, for instance, represented insurer Tri-Century Insurance Co. in a lawsuit brought against it by a former University of Pittsburgh Medical Center surgeon, who sought coverage for defense in another surgeon's wiretapping and defamation case against him. The parties **settled** the doctor's suit in January.

The firm also represented a property owner in its bid to evict a Pittsburgh cannabis company from its warehouse for unpaid rent. A Pennsylvania state court entered a **$15.5 million** judgment against the defunct cannabis company in late October.

--Additional reporting by James Boyle, Adrian Cruz and Matthew Santoni. Editing by Linda Voorhis.

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