



Michael Proctor, left, and Guy Iversen, right, of Iversen Proctor. Courtesy photo

NEWS

'Too Cool to Pass Up': Durie Tangri's Michael Proctor Launches Law Firm With Federal Defender Alum

Michael Proctor served as the managing partner of Durie Tangri's Los Angeles office, which he helped launch in 2018.

October 11, 2022 at 10:06 AM

4 minute read

Law Firm Office Launches and Closures



Alaina Lancaster [↗](#)
Litigation editor

A founding partner of Durie Tangri's Los Angeles office has started a new law firm with a long-term member of the city's federal public defender's office.

Michael Proctor, who was [managing partner](#) of Durie Tangri's L.A. office until Friday, is teaming up with Guy Iversen, who served for 27 years in the Federal Public Defender office.

Their firm, Iversen Proctor, is the culmination of a 25-year friendship after working together in the trenches of the Federal Public Defender office in the 1990s. Proctor, who started his career at San Francisco's Kecker, Van Nest & Peters, returned in 2002 to private practice, first at Caldwell Leslie & Proctor and then at Boies Schiller Flexner after it acquired Caldwell Leslie.

However, the litigators kept in touch over the years. Proctor even deejayed Iversen's retirement parties from the Federal Public Defender office and Loyola Law School, where he was an adjunct professor. In between, they talked about how great it would be to practice together, according to Proctor.



Event

The British Legal Awards (BLA) 2022

Celebrating achievement, excellence, and innovation in the legal profession in the UK.

[Get More Information](#) [↗](#)

In the last few months, both the attorneys had been reflecting on what aspects of their work they found rewarding and were passionate about, Proctor said.

"We both had that same vision, which was representing people who really need assistance or help at a very critical juncture, whether it's in the civil context or the criminal context," he said. "We both talked about starting a firm where we could make decisions on what cases to take on, not just based on financial bottom line, based on what cases we were going to be excited about and devote all of our efforts to."

The firm will take on both criminal and civil matters, with Proctor specializing in white-collar, regulatory and complex commercial cases. The first case the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara-based firm will take to trial is on behalf of legal research platform Trellis Research Inc. and co-founder Nicole Clark, who has been in litigation with fellow co-founder Andrew Thaler for four years. At many firms, Proctor said, there's an incentive to have a large

team, but he felt most rewarded by the cases where he had a lot of one-on-one contact with the client.

The firm's representation of Trellis, which Proctor called a "classic example" of the type of case the firm is well-suited for, will feature a lean litigation team led by Iversen in a high-stakes trial that will determine whether a startup can move forward.

Iversen said that as a criminal defense attorney working with people during their most vulnerable hour, a model that emphasizes the emotional bond with clients is exciting. But from a client perspective, it means they get to talk to the senior lawyer who's coming up with the case strategy and making decisions.

"It's one of the things we say in our approach, if you hire Iversen and Proctor, you're getting Iversen and Proctor," he said. "You're not going to [get] an associate. You're not going to have to make an appointment to meet with us after you jump through hurdles with everyone else in the team. We're your lawyer."

The format represents a change of pace for Proctor, who has been a key player in several firm's growth strategies. The attorney said he joined Kecker Van Nest as its 12th or 13th lawyer when the firm was still Kecker & Brockett, and he saw how John Kecker, William Brockett and Robert Van Nest build and expanded the firm. After launching Durie Tangri's Los Angeles outpost in 2018, Proctor and Benjamin Au, now a partner at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe, grew the office to 14 lawyers.

"That was really rewarding," Proctor said. "But honestly, the idea that I can practice with only the lawyer that I respect more than any other trial lawyer that I've met during my career, and do so in a smaller platform, that just seems really right right now in my career."

Iversen said the draw for him was similar.

"Mike is, in my opinion after 30-plus years of practicing law with every Federal Public Defender, U.S. attorney and private attorney in the Central District of Los Angeles, the best holistic overall lawyer I've ever met," he said. "So the opportunity to work together to do the stuff we do was just too cool to pass up."

TRENDING STORIES

These Five Law Firms Had M&A Boosts, as the Rest of Big Law Slowed Down

THE AMERICAN LAWYER

London Kirkland Partner Exits For General Counsel Role At Private Equity Client

INTERNATIONAL EDITION

NJ Judiciary Report Reveals Growing Backlog of Cases in Counties With Highest Judicial Vacancies

NEW JERSEY LAW JOURNAL

Why Cozen O'Connor's Associate Turnover Has Fallen

LAW.COM

Why Big Law is Getting Bigger and Bigger

INTERNATIONAL EDITION