

Valle Makoff Opens Silicon Valley Office With Skadden Hire

By Rebecca Cohen

Litigation boutique Valle Makoff opened a Redwood City office July 15, with longtime Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom attorney Timothy Miller as managing partner.

Miller, who made the jump to Valle Makoff in February after 14 years at Skadden, is in familiar company. The firm was founded by former Skadden lawyers Jeffrey Valle and Jeffrey Makoff in 2002. A number of its other attorneys are also Skadden alumni, including associate Thomas Haley, who is joining Valle Makoff's new Silicon Valley office with Miller.

In addition to the fact that he knew his new colleagues and their talents already, Miller said he was attracted to the opportunity to go after big cases for mid-sized clients.

"One of the things that I'm excited about is the ability to focus exclusively on litigation outside the big firm context and to really be a litigation boutique," he said.

Many of Valle Makoff's specialty areas also complement Miller's, he said. The firm specializes in business disputes. It has represented Heller Ehrman's estate in the bankrupt firm's malpractice suit against

Greenberg Traurig following Heller's dissolution. Other recent clients have included Time Warner Inc. and the USA Yoga Federation—the latter of which it successfully defended in a wrongful termination and sexual harassment lawsuit.

"Silicon Valley is the center of tech and innovation, and will continue to be an engine of growth," Makoff said in a prepared statement. "Opening an office here allows us to better serve our large existing practice in the Valley. Tim's strong relationships with high-tech and financial services clients will extend our reach in this critical market."

At Valle Makoff, Miller expects to focus on trade secret litigation, fiduciary duty claims, disputes between business owners and partners and private equity clients. He said he's not bringing a book of business from Skadden, though he will continue to serve as co-counsel on a couple of cases he was leading there.

Notable cases Miller handled at his former firm included defending the National Football League in a class action by former players who alleged that their teams pushed painkillers on them. He also represented Hewlett-Packard's directors



in a shareholder class action related to HP's \$11 billion acquisition of the British software company Autonomy.

Besides the office Miller will head up, Valle Makoff has offices in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Walnut Creek. The firm has a total of about 20 attorneys.

"I do plan to grow the office, but pretty slowly and deliberately," Miller said.

Skadden did not respond by press time to a request for comment on Miller's departure. Miller said he left the firm on good terms.

Contact the reporter at rcohen2@alm.com.