

NEWS RELEASES

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## Husch Blackwell Completes Leadership Transition

**Chairman Maurice Watson, CEO/Managing Partner Greg Smith take new positions April 1**

Determined by an election of its full partnership, Husch Blackwell has a new executive leadership team in place effective April 1, 2012. Maurice A. Watson now is Chairman of the firm and Gregory R. Smith is CEO and Managing Partner. Additionally, its Executive Board has grown from six members to 10 and the Partner Board has grown from 31 to 37. With nearly 600 attorneys and offices in seven states, the District of Columbia and London, Husch Blackwell is one of the 100 largest law firms in the United States.

Having this new leadership structure in place is the culmination of a long-range succession plan first devised when three separate firms merged to become Husch Blackwell in 2008. As announced in August 2011, previous Co-Chairmen Joseph P. Conran and David A. Fenley — each in their leadership positions for more than 10 years — continue to help guide this transition process and remain on the firm's Executive Board.

"I'm grateful for this opportunity to serve the firm to which I've been committed my entire career," said Watson, who joined Husch Blackwell as an associate in 1987. "My responsibility is to continue the excellent leadership we've had and ensure that we keep moving forward in this evolutionary process of reinvigorated growth and success." As chairman, Watson is charged with directing the firm's comprehensive long-range plans and developing effective strategic initiatives. He is located in Kansas City, Mo.

Watson graduated from Harvard College *cum laude* and from Harvard Law School, then served as a senior aide to U.S. Senator John Danforth in Washington, D.C., for more than three years. He is recognized for his extensive work in the legal, business and philanthropic communities and has dedicated

his career to representing public school districts, private schools, institutions of higher education and national education associations. He is a member of the National Association of College and University Attorneys, and has served on the boards of directors for numerous local and national non-profit organizations.

“My background gives me a perspective that not many other heads of major law firms have,” he noted. Watson is African-American, one of the rare minority chairmen in the *AmLaw* 100. “That understanding and insight — to recognize and relate to others’ issues and opportunities — ultimately provides value to our clients and their needs.”

Smith, in his new role as CEO and Managing Partner, now oversees the ongoing day-to-day operations of the firm. “Husch Blackwell is a great law firm with a rich history and remarkable talent,” he said, “and our people are our best asset. My job is to make sure we have the right resources and systems in place to enable our attorneys to continue the great service our clients have come to expect from us. I’m honored by the faith and trust my fellow partners have placed in me.”

A highly respected attorney in all facets of real estate development, Smith has been with Husch Blackwell since 1981 and is located in St. Louis. He earned his bachelor’s degree in political science from Washington University and his law degree from Saint Louis University School of Law. He consistently is recognized by numerous national publications as one of the top lawyers in his field.

The five new members of Husch Blackwell’s Executive Board are:

James M. Ash, Chair of the Business Services Division (Kansas City);

Joyce A. Dixon, Partner (Omaha);

Steven E. Feldman, Co-Chair of the Intellectual Property-Litigation Department (Chicago);

Christine F. Miller, Chair of the Litigation Division (St. Louis); and

Douglas J. Schmidt, Partner (Kansas City).

The five remaining members of the Executive Board are Conran, Fenley, Smith, Watson and Robert J. Tomaso, Partner (St. Louis).

Husch Blackwell also restructured its Executive and Partner Boards to conform to best practices in law firm governance. The new boards are more diverse and inclusive, and include members from multiple offices and practice areas. Under the new structure, terms in office are staggered to provide opportunities for new leaders to emerge while maintaining continuity and stability. In addition, the new structure includes identifying future leaders within the firm.