

Duval & Stachenfeld launches tax controversy practice group

New York, NY Duval & Stachenfeld LLP (D&S), New York's preeminent "Pure Play" real estate law firm, has launched its tax controversy practice group. The practice group will meld the extensive expertise of the firm's tax, litigation, not-for-profit, real estate and general counseling practices into an integrated practice group that is dedicated to protecting the Firm's clients from adverse results in controversies or other situations in which there is a real risk of actual liability, litigation from the government or a third party, or reputational damage.

The practitioners who head this practice group all take pride in crafting solutions to tax-related problems that are at the same time creative, aggressive (if necessary) and honorable.

Bruce Stachenfeld, one of the firm's founders and managing partner, said, "Often, adverse tax situations are merely punted to accounting firms; however, accounting firms may not have the necessary expertise in litigation that is typically required. In addition, conversations with accountants are not necessarily privileged; however, conversations with attorneys are. I expect this practice group to be of great - although hopefully very rare - use to our clients."

Stephen Land, chair of the firm's tax department, said, "The partners leading the tax controversy practice group represent an unparalleled level of expertise in dealing with adverse tax situations from all angles. Taxes are a material part of the economic life of every person and every business. But sometimes complications arise and put people and businesses at severe risk. This new practice group leverages the firm's expert handling of adverse tax situations with good solid thinking, high-level strategy and critical analysis."

Allan Taffet, chair of the firm's litigation department said, "Having access to experienced tax litigation advice at the earliest stage of an adverse tax situation most often makes the difference in whether the outcome is successful. At D&S, we will address these situations with the three mantras of our practice group: creativity - aggressiveness - honor."

The partners who will lead this practice group who, perhaps coincidentally, are almost all Harvard Law School graduates, are:

* **Stephen Land** chairs the D&S tax practice group. His track record in resolving federal and New York tax controversies on highly favorable terms is renowned and he is recognized as a thought leader in the tax community. In addition, Land is the upcoming chair of the tax section of the New York State Bar Association.

* **Allan Taffet** chairs the D&S litigation practice group. With more than 30 years of litigation experience, he has handled an extensive range of complex cases through trial and appeal, including numerous disputes involving complicated tax products.

* **Keith Blackman** is an expert in complex commercial disputes, and specializes in defending financial services clients against customer claims brought both in court and before FINRA arbitration panels.

* **David Samuels** chairs the D&S tax exempt organizations practice group. An adjunct professor at New York Law School, Samuels has dealt with a wide range of nonprofit tax issues, including excise taxes with respect to excess compensation, political and lobbying limitations, private foundation rules, unrelated business income tax, and real property tax exemptions.

* **Kirk Brett** chairs the D&S bankruptcy and restructuring practice group. On a nationwide basis, Brett routinely advises parties in commercial bankruptcies, restructurings and other distress situations.

* **Bruce Stachenfeld** founded the firm and was the former chair of the real estate department. Among other things, Stachenfeld spends his time helping his clients build their businesses. This includes many aspects, but one of them is protecting his clients' reputations, which puts him square in the mix of this practice group.

D&S' tax controversy practice group offers a sophisticated approach to defending against such tax issues as IRS audits, private litigation, tax evasion and fraud. In addition, it will advocate on behalf of tax-exempt entities and non-profit organizations subject to IRS investigation.