

JULY 11, 2014 - **DUVAL & STACHENFELD LLP IN THE NEWS** - By Zachary Zagger

Duval & Stachenfeld Kicks Off Caribbean RE Practice

Law360, New York (July 11, 2014, 4:23 PM ET) -- New York law firm Duval & Stachenfeld LLP on Friday launched a new Caribbean and Central America real estate practice group, naming two partners snagged from Cooley LLP last year as the group's co-chairs, the firm said Friday.

Real estate partners Tom O'Connor and Alan Cohen will head the new practice group, which will leverage Duval & Stachenfeld's real estate experience in the region with attorneys already handling clients investing, owning or developing real estate in the hospital-ity, retail, office, industrial and mixed-use spaces.

The firm said it estimates its attorneys have handled over 100 real estate transactions in the Caribbean and Central America region, including in Aruba, Anguilla, Belize, the British Virgin Islands, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico, St. Thomas, Tortola, and Trinidad.

"It made a lot of sense for us to formalize this into a practice group so we could work on [the Caribbean/Central America region] on a regular basis rather than on a deal-by-deal basis," Cohen told Law360 on Friday.

The firm touted its connections with local law firms in the regions, which it said will enable it to "quarter-back transactions" in those countries.

"Our firm has long been active in the Caribbean and Central American regions, so establishing this practice is a natural extension of our real estate practice group," the firm's real estate practice group chair, Terri L. Adler, said in a statement. Adler was recently featured as one of Law360's Female Powerbrokers last month.

Co-chairs O'Connor and Cohen joined Duval & Stachenfeld last February after each had spent more than nine years at Cooley. O'Connor was a real estate attorney with Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP, and Cohen was the chair of Morrison Cohen LLP's real estate group prior to joining Cooley in 2004.

At the time, both partners operated a North American real estate practice with growing operations in Puerto Rico and other Caribbean countries.

"O'Connor and I had both been practicing in that space for over 10 years," Cohen said. "When we came here, we continued, but Duval & Stachenfeld had much more breadth and depth. We have been like kids in a candy store with all the talent here to help us."

Last year, they represented real estate investment firm Caribbean Property Group in its acquisition of almost \$1 billion worth of nonperforming commercial and constructions loans, and commercial and single-family real estate from Banco Popular de Puerto Rico.

The real estate practice group of the nearly 17-year-old Duval & Stachenfeld has over 50 attorneys, it said.

"We recognized that handling transactions in the Caribbean and Central America has been a significant part of our practice for many years," the firm's co-founder and managing partner Bruce M. Stachenfeld said in a statement. "Committing the firm's resources to focus on these areas allows us to provide an exceptional work product and value for our clients."