

## **Baker Donelson Expands Texas Presence with Second Houston Merger**

Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC has merged with the Houston law firm of Drucker, Rutledge & Smith, L.L.P., marking Baker Donelson's third merger, and its second one in Texas, in less than four months.

In October 2011, Baker Donelson merged with the Houston firm of Spain Chambers, giving the Firm its first Texas location, then in November merged with the Orlando firm of Litchford & Christopher, marking its first location in Florida. Now with its merger with Drucker, Rutledge & Smith, the combined firm, which will continue with the name of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, has more than 630 attorneys and advisors in seven states and Washington, D.C.

Baker Donelson's Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Ben C. Adams notes that adding the attorneys of Drucker, Rutledge & Smith is part of the Firm's plan to build a solid presence in Houston. "Houston is a large and complicated legal market, so we are committed to continued strategic growth with attorneys who bring strong experience and outstanding reputations. The attorneys of Drucker, Rutledge & Smith are a prime example of what we're looking for in building our team in Houston," Mr. Adams said. "They are an outstanding business litigation firm with an especially strong track record in representing financial services clients, which offers our existing clients in that sector experienced litigation counsel in Texas."

Karen D. Smith of Drucker, Rutledge & Smith said, "Joining with Baker Donelson gives us the opportunity to offer our clients a broader range of experience and increased resources with a full-service law firm that shares our commitment to personalized client service. We're pleased to become a part of Baker Donelson, and look forward to maximizing this new partnership to the benefit of our clients."

Through the merger with Drucker, Rutledge & Smith, Baker Donelson gains seven attorneys: shareholders Douglas R. Drucker, Karen D. Smith, Joseph T. Kennedy and Kirby D. Hopkins, and associates Rachel N. LeMay, Joseph P. Crescenzo III and Jessica A. Hinkie. In early March, these attorneys will relocate from their office in The Woodlands to join Baker Donelson's other Houston attorneys in a new location in downtown Houston.