

## **Baker Donelson Lands Constangy Labor Pro In Atlanta**

By **Ben James**

*Law360, New York (December 07, 2012, 6:09 PM ET)* -- Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz PC has lured a former U.S. Department of Labor trial lawyer who focuses on labor relations and occupational safety and health matters from Constangy Brooks & Smith LLC to its Atlanta office.

Carla Gunnin, who spent 11 years with Constangy Brooks, joined Baker Donelson as a shareholder and member of its labor and employment team, the firm said on Dec. 3. Gunnin litigates cases in front of federal and state tribunals around the U.S. in workplace and mine health and safety matters, and she also counsels clients on how to stave off potential disputes.

"Compliance and advice is always part of the practice, just because people want to know what they can do to avoid future problems," she said.

Before joining Constangy Brooks, Gunnin dealt with a range of employment issues as a trial attorney with the Labor Department's Office of the Solicitor.

Gunnin said she was drawn to Baker Donelson, which has over 630 lawyers and covers 30 practice areas, by the breadth of expertise and services it offers clients, and its strong presence in the southeastern U.S.

Linda A. Klein, managing shareholder of Baker Donelson's Georgia offices, said in a statement that the firm was delighted to have Gunnin on board.

"Carla Gunnin brings a great depth of experience to our L&E practice team," Klein said.

Gunnin's addition to Baker Donelson comes against a backdrop of heightened regulatory scrutiny under the Obama administration, a trend Gunnin said she had observed in the worker safety context and which wasn't likely to abate in the near future.

Under the Bush administration there was more of an emphasis on partnerships between businesses and workplace safety authorities, but now the balance had shifted away from collaboration and toward tougher enforcement, she said.

“It's definitely a stronger enforcement position than what typically what you would see from prior administrations,” Gunnin said.

David Gevertz, vice chair of Baker Donelson's labor and employment practice, said Gunnin's experience would be an asset to the employers the firm represents.

“With her 20-plus years in practice and her experience with more than 15 different state OSHA boards, Carla brings a strong background in OSHA law that will serve our clients well. We are proud to welcome her to our team,” Gevertz said.

In October, Baker Donelson announced that it had beefed up its employment presence in Tennessee by bringing on Frederick Lewis, a veteran labor and employment attorney from Ogletree Deakins Nash Smoak & Stewart PC.

--Editing by Andrew Park.

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