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A law firm with a rich history successfully tackles today's challenges and prepares for tomorrow

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RECOMMENDED

With roots dating to 1900, Tucker Arensberg P.C. is among the oldest law firms in Pittsburgh. For over a century, its attorneys have broken barriers, handled important cases, influenced legislation, helped businesses, assisted organizations fighting for positive change, earned accolades, and served as trusted leaders in the region's legal industry and in the community.

Tucker Arensberg is as proud of its present day achievements as it is of its past. Having guided its diverse client base - which includes those hit hardest by the pandemic like the hospitality, healthcare and manufacturing industries, public and private educational institutions, and municipal bodies - through a year unlike any other in recent memory, the firm is stronger than ever. Its 80-plus attorneys - 24 of whom were recently named to the 2021 edition of Best Lawyers in America® - span over two dozen business-centered practice areas.

The same attributes that have anchored over a century of success - experienced attorneys with a fierce devotion to client relationships, a broad range of practice areas, and a culture that fosters collaboration and problem-solving - position the firm perfectly to help businesses, nonprofits, government entities, school districts and individuals face challenges and seize opportunities today and in the years to come.

Through it all, Tucker Arensberg maintains a clear, guiding principle.

"The bottom line is we do what's in the best interest of the client - that's the culture of the firm," said Managing Shareholder Irv Firman.

Tucker Arensberg's commitment to helping its clients succeed has not wavered or changed. That was the goal when the firm was first founded, it is the goal today, and it will be the goal tomorrow.

A history of success

Having navigated depressions, recessions, technological revolutions, and the current COVID-19 pandemic, Tucker Arensberg has evolved with the times, proudly standing at the forefront of change.

For example, in 1927, a lawyer of the firm (then known as Patterson, Crawford, Arensberg and Dunn) was believed to be the first female lawyer ever admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar Association; she is also thought to be the first female senior lawyer named a partner of a law firm in the Commonwealth.

"Our longevity is a reminder that the firm's commitment to clients, teamwork and embracing change creates not only a successful environment for those we serve, but helps change our community for the better," Firman said.

Today's hard-fought triumphs

COVID-19 put the firm's clients to the test and Tucker Arensberg rose to the challenge. It helped its clients overcome unexpected obstacles, such as forced shutdowns, bankruptcies and other conditions that affected deals, wild market fluctuations and a constant flow of new legislation and federal programs.

"It was also probably the most rewarding year I've had," said employment and labor attorney Albert Lee, a shareholder who was named to the Best Lawyers list. "It was special to work both with longstanding clients and meet new clients. In a pandemic, you don't have the luxury of time. These relationships developed and got intimate quickly because of how acute everything was. This crucible forged relationships, whether they were 20 years old or 20 minutes old."

Quickly adapting to a change was key throughout the pandemic. Across all practice areas, Tucker Arensberg attorneys kept up-to-date and became proficient in the latest developments.

"We've spent a lot of time helping businesses get through a year unlike any other, but we continued with our normal, effective process - identify what's wrong and the desired goal, assess the options, then guide the client to the right solution," said Best Lawyers honoree Michael Shiner, a shareholder and bankruptcy attorney.

Attorney Neil Gregorio agrees. He leads a team of attorneys and paralegals that handle a large volume of litigation for union pension funds across the country. This team's important mission is to ensure that these funds have enough money to pay monthly retirement benefits for thousands of workers and their families for years to come. So, when his entire staff began working exclusively from home, this team could not falter.

"I feel that our clients recognize and appreciate that we have a very collegial team. We're extremely close to each other and extremely close to our clients," Gregorio said. "It has definitely been different collaborating virtually, but fortunately, I'm surrounded by the most amazing people."

Tucker Arensberg's collaborative spirit played a big role in the past year's success. The firm is not simply a collection of individual practice areas and attorneys sectioned off from each other. Attorneys draw on the experience of colleagues simply by knocking on an office door or making a call.

"Our firm has attorneys with different backgrounds and expertise that we could rely on to help our clients through this really difficult time," said Rebecca Moran, a shareholder in the firm's Business and Finance Group. "For example, our Mergers and Acquisitions Group could seek insights from our Banking Group when we had the sale of a business subject to a Paycheck Protection Program loan. Even within our group, one attorney may have experienced a novel COVID-related challenge that they could share with the rest of us. All of our clients benefited from this sharing of information."

"We have a number of attorneys who serve in a general counsel role for companies," said Moran, who previously served as an in-house counsel before entering private practice. "Having the ability to meet any of our clients' needs makes us a stronger firm."

And that cooperation is not limited to those with law degrees.

"I give credit to every single person that works here," Lee said. "Our real heroes were our support staff, administrative assistants, clerks, and IT staff. Every lawyer works from home at some point, but many in this group had never worked from home and they really stepped up. To have them make the transition seamlessly and keep the firm running, it was special and inspiring to watch."

Strong values and a client-centered culture

Tucker Arensberg's efficiency, availability and relatability play a large role in setting its attorneys apart. The firm is right-sized and focused on proper staffing to ensure that all matters are handled by the right professionals in a cost-effective manner. Knowing that their clients operate in an unpredictable and fast-changing world, the firm's attorneys pride themselves on providing what clients need when they need it - even outside normal business hours or with no notice.

The focus is always on the client. "We've always said, 'I don't work for the firm, for the shareholder or myself - I work for the client,'" said Associate Ashley Wagner, who is part of the Business and Finance Group.

Tomorrow's bright promise

Tucker Arensberg has continued to expand its substantial list of practice areas, which include Business and Finance, Commercial Litigation, Construction, Education, Real Estate and Energy, Employment and Labor, Employee Benefits, Intellectual Property, Healthcare, Privacy, Data Security and Technology. The firm also added over 10 new attorneys over the previous year, as it prepares for a changing world.

"New challenges are always around the corner," Lee said, "so expanding our services and welcoming new talent has never been more important. Whatever comes next, we'll be ready for it."

For Wagner, whose practice also focuses on emerging technology and woman-owned businesses, tomorrow is today.

"I have worked with quite a few female clients who watched their corporate role take on a new life," she said. "These women are working from home, a lot of them are mothers, as well, and they are trying to juggle everything. I made time to meet with them, however they were able to meet - whether it was Zoom, during evenings or weekends, or over the phone. I'm always happy to assist them with their professional needs, whether they need contract review, help exploring a new area of their business, looking to downsize or upsize their office space, or taking on a partner. I have even had the opportunity to work with some who are venturing into the online arena, including the influencer industry."

With its ability to adapt and thrive in unexpected circumstances, an atmosphere that encourages collaboration, and most of all, a fierce devotion to clients, it is no surprise that Tucker Arensberg, a firm founded at the turn at the 20th century, continues to thrive - and will for many decades to come.

"Being a lawyer, if you're practicing the right way, there's nothing better," Firman said. "It's a rewarding way to spend a career and help people."

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