

Thompson Hine Takes Over IP Boutique for Silicon Valley Foothold

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Bloomberg Law

Jan. 6, 2026, 6:31 PM EST



Thompson Hine absorbed nearly all lawyers and staff from intellectual property litigation firm Turner Boyd Seraphine, giving the acquirer a Silicon Valley presence less than two years after it launched in California.

The addition of 12 lawyers and six staff members gives Thompson Hine an infusion of subject-matter experts in physics and microbiology and strengthens its hand in lateral hiring in Los Angeles, where it opened in 2024.

Turner Boyd Seraphine no longer exists as of Jan. 1, according to firm leaders.

"The TBS firm was having the best years they ever had in the history of their firm," said Tony White, firmwide managing partner of Thompson Hine, in an interview. "We see that momentum increasing."

The acquisition by the more-than-400-lawyer, Cleveland-founded firm is one of the first legal industry tie-ups announced in 2026. It echoes the busy Big Law merger activity in recent months, with newly-named firms Ashurst Perkins Coie, Winston Taylor, and Hogan Lovells Cadwalader scheduled to launch this year as a result of large combinations.

Thompson Hine's acquisition results in the 11th office for the firm, known for its transportation, construction, and employment practices. It launched a Los Angeles office via a 2024 acquisition of trial boutique Conkle, Kremer & Engel.

"To effectively cover California, especially from a litigation perspective, it's best to have a northern and southern California office," White said.

Turner Boyd Seraphine's founders started the firm in 2008 with a stated aversion to Big Law's approach of rate inflexibility and insistence on long associate hours, founding partner Karen Boyd said. Hourly rates at Thompson Hine

fall in line with Turner Boyd Seraphine's, and the larger firm gives associates the option to bill a reduced schedule of annual billable hours—1,530 instead of 1,800, she said.

'Every conversation about how to staff client matters has been consistent with the approach that we've always taken,' Boyd said. 'To have flexibility in how we serve our clients, our attorneys, our staff and people was really important.'

Leveraging AI

Lawyers at Thompson Hine and Turner Boyd Seraphine had become acquainted from serving as each other's local counsel in IP and tech-related disputes. Lawyers from both firms represent design platform Canva in a patent infringement case.

Thompson Hine partner Marla Butler floated the idea of a merger one day over lunch last summer, said Jennifer Seraphine, who will serve as partner in charge of the Thompson Hine Silicon Valley office. The smaller firm's leaders saw an opportunity to consolidate outside legal counsel for clients and take advantage of Thompson Hine's partnership with legal AI developer Harvey in cases, she said.

All of the lawyers from Turner Boyd joined Thompson Hine on Jan. 1 except for one who fast-tracked retirement plans, Boyd said.

Thompson Hine's White said the move will help the firm attract talent in Los Angeles, "because there are a number of partners who need to have a northern California presence for their practice," he said.

Thompson Hine hired three IP trial and tech trial lawyers from litigation boutique Robins Kaplan last year. One of those lawyers, Christopher Larus, has been steering growth of the IP and tech litigation group ever since as chair.

Law firm mergers involving Frost Brown Todd, Butler Snow, Taft Stettinius & Hollister, Morris Manning & Martin, Cozen O'Connor, and Moss & Barnett have already gone into effect since Dec. 31.

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