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# DAILY REPORT

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## Trial lawyer, pals form Fried Rogers Goldberg

IN THE TRENCHES

MEREDITH HOBBS

THREE PLAINTIFFS' lawyers who've been making a name for themselves with some big verdicts have joined forces. *Joseph A. Fried*, who's been in solo practice for about a year, united with *Brian D. "Buck" Rogers* and *Michael L. Goldberg* of *Rogers & Goldberg* to form *Fried Rogers Goldberg* on July 1.

Rogers and Goldberg said their specialty is handling injuries from truck accidents. They also represent plaintiffs in other vehicle accidents, medical malpractice cases and other catastrophic personal injury cases. Fried focused his practice on auto products liability cases until branching out into trucking and other catastrophic injury suits.

Rogers, 41, said that he and Fried, 42, have been close friends for some time. "From a practical standpoint, we've been in each other's practices for years. We've just never been official about it," he said.

Rogers said he and Goldberg have

competed with Fried for commercial vehicle cases since Fried started taking them. "Time and time again [prospective clients] were leaving his office to interview us and vice versa," said Rogers.

Goldberg, 36, recalled one big trucking case, before the three practiced together, where the client had been referred to Rogers, Fried and himself which in hindsight seems propitious. He refused to divulge who got it.

"If you can't beat 'em, join 'em," said Goldberg. "It's hard to find somebody who is your own age and doing the same kind of work in the same kind of way that you like to do it. Joe is one of those people."

"It's also hard to find a partner that you can have a partner meeting with at a tavern with a beer," he added.

Fried and Rogers, as the two senior partners, flipped a coin to decide whose name would be first on the door. "Both those guys are very good at putting their egos in check," said Goldberg, who added that he

appreciated that as the "youngest guy on the totem pole."

Rogers and Goldberg formed their partnership in 2006. Rogers was previously at plaintiffs firm Warshauer Thomas Thornton & Rogers, now Warshauer Poe & Thornton, and Goldberg had been doing plaintiff's work in partnership with a defense lawyer, James S. Strawinski. The two started out at the same trucking defense firm, Dennis Corry Porter & Smith.

Their recent verdicts include a \$1 million jury award in DeKalb County to a dentist disabled by a car accident on Interstate 85 and \$925,000 in a mediated award to the family of a motorcyclist killed at the intersection of Peachtree and West Peachtree streets. They also won \$1.1 million from a Forsyth County jury in December for the estate of a teenager killed on Atlanta Highway when the car in which he was riding was rear-ended by a pickup truck.

Fried spent 14 years at Henry Spiegel Fried & Milling, now Henry

Spiegel Milling, before going solo about a year ago. His departure was amicable, he said, and occurred because his practice had evolved away from that of his partners. Henry Spiegel is known as a med-mal firm, said Fried, adding that he was “the guy who did the truck and roadway defect cases. I was the kid who took everything apart when I was little.”

Fried said his new partners are a good match because they, like him, are hands-on in preparing their cases. After taking on some trucking cases, Fried took a three-week truck-driving course. “I want to have the same license as the driver on the other side of the table when deposing him in court the same training. I think that makes me better at what I do,” he said.

He boned up on auto products in the same way when he started representing burn victims in fuel system fire cases. “For me, everything has to be a cause. I happened into an auto case and found a serious defect in the fuel system that resulted in a lot of people burning up. That became my cause.”

Fried was a police officer for seven years before going to law school. “I fell in love with the courtroom,” he said. “I still see myself as a police officer. It’s all about holding whoever is responsible accountable.”

Fried shares that zeal with students at Wyoming trial attorney Gerry Spence’s Trial Lawyers College. Fried said he took the intensive trial practice course six years ago and was later asked to join the faculty. He donates five weeks of his time each year to the program, he said.

Fried Rogers & Goldberg is located in Rogers & Goldberg’s space in the Cotton Exchange Building at 3155 Roswell Road. The partners are negotiating to buy a building, said Rogers.

Litigator *Betsy P. Collins* has joined *Burr & Forman* as a partner from *Alston & Bird*, where she was also a partner. In 2002, while a partner at Baxley, Dillard, Dauphin & McKnight & Barclift of Birmingham, Ala., she worked with Alston attorneys to win a \$50 million jury verdict for her client, Torchmark Corp., an insurance holding company, and subsequently moved to Alston.

She won a \$50 million verdict for another insurance client in 2004. Both cases involved disputes over compensation agreements, variable annuity products, sales and pricing. Collins also won a defense verdict in 2004 on behalf of directors accused of fraud for serving on the boards of two public companies with conflicting interests. She handles insurance, securities, class action and other business litigation.

*Nels S.D. Peterson* has become the deputy executive counsel to *Gov.*

*Sonny Perdue* after a stint as an associate in the litigation practice at *King & Spalding*. Prior to joining the firm, he clerked for Judge William H. Pryor Jr. for the 11th U.S. Court of Appeals.

*L. Norwood “Woody” Jameson* has become the new managing partner of *Duane Morris’* Atlanta office, succeeding *Charles W. Whitney*, who has led the office since it opened in 2000. Jameson is also the head of Duane Morris’s IP litigation team. Whitney will continue to serve on the firm’s five-member executive committee and lead its nuclear energy practice group.

*Hunton & Williams* opened a San Francisco office last week with the addition of a group of labor & employment lawyers from *Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld*. Two partners and an associate in the group are based in San Francisco. Two additional partners have joined the firm’s Los Angeles office and three associates have joined in Dallas.

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