

# LAW WEEK

## COLORADO

# Doing Business as RBF Law

*New litigation boutique is small but scrappy*

BY HANNAH GARCIA  
LAW WEEK COLORADO

As BigLaw firms compress under invisible market forces, a cabal of Reilly Pozner alumni have joined a growing class of experienced attorneys planting their own flags.

Rollin Braswell Fisher officially opened its doors Oct. 1 — the beginning of the fiscal year — and now has five partners, two associates and a fluctuating team of staff attorneys, a group well versed in large law firm culture but with a shared entrepreneurial spirit.

“In a natural evolution of a lot of lawyers, there comes a time — not for everybody, but for some — where you think it’s in your own, your team’s and your clients’ best interest to chart your own course,” partner Michael Rollin said. “So that’s what we did.”

The new firm — doing business as RBF Law — occupies the ground floor of an expansive office complex in Greenwood Village, more than 6,000 square feet that includes a co-working space for staff attorneys, conference rooms and offices lined with tree-shaded windows and oversized wooden doors.

Even with the healthy solo and small-firm market in Denver and a growing trend of experienced attorneys using the capital city’s zip codes for the business of their new, slimmer firms, the location “says a lot about ourselves,” according to partner Maritza Dominguez Braswell.

“We’re not looking for the big overhead,” Braswell said. “We’re looking to be modest and pass on only modest costs to the client and not necessarily needing some big, extravagant 20th-floor view to do it.”

All five of the firm’s leaders — founding partners Rollin, Braswell and Eric Fisher and partners Caleb Durling and Lindsay Unruh — spent time practicing at the Denver-based litigation firm Reilly Pozner and speak highly of their history together. Rollin and Braswell, two of the new firm’s main faces, practiced as partners from 2011 at Reilly Pozner with a specialty in financial and capital markets and complex commercial litigation.

They left the larger firm two years ago to manage a litigation practice with backend support at Jones & Keller in Denver, located along the seam of Capitol Hill and the city’s Central Business District.

Fisher called the opportunity to work with former RP colleagues “starting over a little bit” but spoke of a comfortable confidence in his fellow partners. And even with all of that experience in the types of firms that saturate the business-heavy skyline of downtown, he said the value proposition



MICHAEL ROLLIN AND MARITZA DOMINGUEZ BRASWELL ARE TWO OF THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE NEWLY FORMED ROLLIN BRASWELL FISHER, OR RBF LAW.

PHOTO: LAW WEEK, HANNAH GARCIA

made more sense at their new home in Greenwood Village.

“If the quality of your service was better, maybe it’d be justified (hiring a larger firm),” Fisher said. “But you can have the same level of service at two-thirds the rate. It does me no good to have someone sitting in an office on 17th Street (in Denver).”

Rollin said he and his fellow founding partners saw a “void in the market” for a top-tier litigation boutique. The group boasts a portfolio that includes work for Lehman Brothers and AIG in mortgage-related litigation, the Colorado Public Employee’s Retirement Fund and mega NFL franchises like the Denver Broncos and New Orleans Saints.

“In some respects, the proof is in the pudding,” Rollin said. “We have represented the same clients for 10 years, and they’re still with us.”

Recent work on the Lehman Brothers litigation relating to the sale and servicing of residential mortgage loans tested another feature of the new firm, with its ranks of staff attorneys ballooning to 35 weeks ago before settling to a more modest 15 in early December.

Moving away from the associate farms and legendary overhead that come with larger law firms is a point of pride for the new boutique, and its “expanding and contracting system” of staff attorneys is a hallmark of that, according to Braswell. It’s a simple formula: they hire more contractors as they get more work.

It speaks to what she calls a “generational culture shift beyond the legal market” toward the idea that work schedules can be shifted to accommodate life outside. One of the firm’s partners isn’t on what Braswell

a lot of thinking involved,” at RBF they can be found in strategy sessions or writing foundational memos for big cases.

The setup also allows the firm’s two associates, Tara Williams and Corey Longhurst, to manage their own teams on cases, an experience they would likely miss at a more conventional firm, according to the partners.

“I think lawyers, traditionally, are bad managers,” Braswell said. “That’s not a skill set that we learn. For (our associates) to have they skill set early in their careers is incredibly valuable. It’s, on multiple levels, healthy and beneficial both internally and for the client.”

While Rollin’s and Braswell’s practice typically has them practicing in the bank-saturated borders of New York, Fisher and Durling’s litigation and appellate practice allows the firm to court more local clients, as well. That’s where they see their future, they said.

“When new clients come to us, and maybe they’re not huge or recognizable names, we don’t have to turn them away like we’re better than them,” Durling said. “I think there’s a spot in the market for that.”

— Hannah Garcia, HGarcia@circuitmedia.com

called the “mommy track,” but works part-time with as full a caseload as that will allow, fully managing cases and making the arguments — a rare arrangement in the legal field.

And while Braswell said staff attorneys are generally used by law firms for menial tasks like document review that “don’t have

**NUMBER OF ATTORNEYS:**  
Five partners  
Two associates  
Fluctuating number of staff attorneys

**OFFICE LOCATION:**

8350 E. Crescent Parkway, Suite 100  
Greenwood Village, CO 80111  
Phone: 303-945-7415

**WEBSITE:**  
www.RBF.law

**FIRM FOCUS:**  
General civil and commercial litigation  
Capital markets and financial products  
Financial institutions and services  
Trade secrets litigation  
Sports litigation  
Public entity litigation

**OFFICE PARTNERS:**  
Michael Rollin,  
Maritza Dominguez Braswell,  
Caleb Durling,  
Eric Fisher  
and Lindsay Unruh



### RBF LAW

Rollin Braswell Fisher opened Oct. 1 under the leadership of founding partners who practiced together at the Denver-based litigation firm Reilly Pozner. The new firm, doing business as RBF Law, has three founding partners, two additional partners, two associates and a team of staff attorneys that fluctuates with the workload.

The new firm is a litigation boutique focused on streamlined services instead of padding a staff with associates, so the staff will likely not grow to huge proportions in the next year. For more information, visit the firm’s website at [www.rbf.law](http://www.rbf.law).