

# Briefs

ADDING JOBS ■ ON THE REBOUND ■ SALARY SURVEY ■ IN MEMORIAM

## Survey: 35 Percent Plan to Add Jobs in Third Quarter

**T**hirty-five percent of lawyers plan to add legal jobs in the third quarter of 2011, while 5 percent anticipate reductions in personnel, according to the Robert Half Legal Hiring Index.

The vast majority of lawyers (84 percent) are confident in their organizations' ability to expand in the third quarter, up 3 points from the previous quarter. Among the findings:

- 30 percent of lawyers interviewed plan to hire full-time staff in the next three months, while none plan reductions in personnel. The net hiring increase



is up 1 point from the second-quarter forecast.

- 84 percent of lawyers are confident in their organizations' prospects for growth in the third quarter.
- Bankruptcy/foreclosure is the area of law expected to experience the most growth in the next three months with

19 percent of the survey response; litigation received 17 percent of the survey response followed by general business/commercial law with 16 percent of the response.

- While the job market remains competitive, 51 percent of lawyers polled report difficulty recruiting skilled legal professionals.

Respondents noted they most likely will hire lawyers (93 percent), followed by legal secretaries/assistants (32 percent), paralegals (20 percent), law clerks (19 percent), and legal administrators (12 percent). ■

## Economic Performance on the Rebound, New Survey Reveals

**E**conomic performance is rebounding for law firms of all sizes and confidence is high among leaders of those firms, according to a new survey from Altman Weil.

Two-thirds of all firms surveyed reported increases in gross revenue in 2010 and nearly 75 percent reported increases in revenue per lawyer and profits per equity partner. Standard hourly billing rates are up significantly this year, with firms reporting or planning a median 4 percent increase in billing rates for 2011. Continued reductions in overhead costs and the strategic shrinking of firms' ownership ranks are contributing to profitability.

"If firms are finding their feet again post-recession, it is on new ground with a number of new factors in play," said Altman Weil principal Tom Clay. "And although most firm leaders seem to



recognize the changes, it's not yet clear whether they will be able to manage them effectively."

Among the highlights of the survey:

- Overhead costs were down in 53 percent of firms in 2010.
- The amount of non-hourly billing in 2010, measured as a percentage of revenue, increased in 58 percent of all firms and in 81 percent of firms with 250 or more lawyers.
- Only 12 percent of firms report that alternative fee arrangements are more profitable than hourly billing.
- Twenty-seven percent of law firms de-equitized partners in 2010 and 16

percent will do so in 2011. Thirty-two percent of firms made fewer partnership offers in 2010 and 18 percent will do so in 2011. Larger firms are more likely to take these actions than smaller firms.

- Ninety-two percent of all law firms plan to acquire lateral partners in 2011.
- 87 percent of law firms are planning to add associates to their ranks in 2011. Only 18 percent of firms plan to remove associates this year, down from 42 percent in 2010.
- Only 18 percent of those surveyed think that reduced associate salaries will be a permanent trend, down from 32 percent who thought that last year.
- Sixty percent of firm leaders expect that the increased use of contract lawyers will be a permanent trend, up from 52 percent last year. ■

# New Law School Graduates See Starting Salaries Plunge

**T**he median starting salary for new law school graduates from the Class of 2010 fell 13 percent and the mean salary fell 10 percent, while the aggregate starting private practice salaries fell an astonishing 20 percent for this class. These are among the most dramatic findings released from the NALP Employment Report and Salary Survey for the Class of 2010.

The national median salary for the Class of 2010, based on those working full-time and reporting a salary, was \$63,000, compared with \$72,000 for the Class of 2009 (falling nearly 13 percent), and the national mean was \$84,111, compared with \$93,454 for the Class of 2009 (falling nearly 10 percent). However, because many large law firm salaries are between \$145,000 and \$160,000, while many other salaries are in the \$40,000-to-\$65,000 range, relatively few salaries were actually near the overall median or mean.

The national median salary at law firms based on reported salaries was \$104,000, compared with \$130,000 the prior year (falling 20 percent), again reflecting the shift in the distribution of these jobs, and also salary adjustments on the part of some firms. Although salaries of \$160,000 still prevail at the largest firms, their share has dropped in firms of 101-500 attorneys, creating further downward pressure on the median.

The adjusted mean for all full-time jobs reported was \$77,333 (in contrast to the unadjusted national mean of \$84,111), and the adjusted mean for full-time law firm jobs was \$93,748 (in contrast to the unadjusted mean of \$106,444). First introduced with the Class of 2009, the adjusted mean compensates for the fact that the distribution of reported full-time salaries is not the same as the distribution of reported full-time jobs, particularly when it comes to law firm jobs. Whereas salaries for most jobs in large law firms are matters of public record and reported, fewer than half of the salaries for full-time jobs in small law firms are reported. The calculation of adjusted means is accomplished by giving more “weight” to the mean or average salary in small



firms and less “weight” to the mean or average salary in large firms to calculate the overall law firm mean and also the adjusted mean for all full-time jobs.

Medians for government and public interest jobs were virtually unchanged from 2009, at \$52,000 and \$42,900, respectively. The median salary for judicial clerkships was \$51,900, compared with \$50,000 in 2009.

“This downward shift in starting salaries is not, for the most part, because individual legal employers were paying new graduates less than they paid them in the past,” according to NALP Executive Director James Leipold. “Aggregate starting salaries fell because graduates found fewer jobs with the high-paying large law firms and many more jobs with the smallest law firms, those that pay the lowest starting salaries. No single legal employment sector really saw its starting salary change very much from the previous year.” ■

## Get Published in THE PHILADELPHIA LAWYER

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### IN MEMORIAM

Arnold Ginsburg  
Jun. 24, 2011, Age 94

Robert B. Goodyear  
Aug. 4, 2011, Age 88

Steven Silverman  
Jun. 22, 2011, Age 79

Jerome J. Shestack  
Aug. 18, 2011, Age 88

George S. Forde, Jr.  
Jul. 7, 2011, Age 77

Hon. Albert W. Sheppard Jr.  
Sept. 4, 2011, Age 74

Samuel Mazur  
Jul. 16, 2011, Age 101

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*Have you considered a contribution to the Philadelphia Bar Foundation in memory of a deceased colleague?  
For information, call Gene Sirni,  
Foundation Executive Director, at 215-238-6334.*

# Readers' Comments

## To the Editor:

A recent article in the Pennsylvania Bar Association magazine highlights the need for our bar associations to make facilities available to meet the situations of ill, incapacitated or deceased lawyers. I want all to know that the Philadelphia Bar Association has such a program. It is part of the services rendered by the Senior Lawyers Professional and Public Service Committee, where we have a panel of highly experienced senior lawyers who are available to guide families, colleagues, and lawyers themselves in dealing with the files that lawyers no longer are able to cope with. Our services include reviewing and organizing open matters, notifying clients of the nature of the situation and assisting to find active practitioners qualified to take over files in their areas, subject to each client's choice of counsel. A call to the Philadelphia Bar Association will lead to contact with our committee and the initiation of the process to protect the interests of clients and counsel.

**M. Melvin Shralow**

## To the Editor:



I just wanted to tell you how much I enjoyed reading Dan Siegel's Family Secrets story in The Philadelphia Lawyer (Summer 2011). Not only was it a gentle and loving tribute to your sister, but you captured the flavor of the 1950s, the neighbors, the bridge games in the evenings, the streets as a safe place for children to play in, and the innocence of the times when any adult was someone a child could trust. I miss those times despite the fact that I did not experience them myself. I also grew up in the 1950s but not in this country. I used to yearn to be part of a life you described in your story, which made me eventually come to the U.S. and build a home and a family here. Reading your story brought back these bittersweet memories, and reading it in a Bar

Association journal was especially refreshing.

**Rina Marks, Executive Director  
Delaware State Bar Association**

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