

# CRAIN'S DETROIT BUSINESS

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## **New CEO of Howard & Howard to focus on tech, diversity, work-life balance**

**NICK MANES**



"I'm a big believer that if it ain't broke, don't fix it," said attorney Jon Kreucher, who will take over as CEO of Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC in January.

As attorney Jon Kreucher gets ready to take the helm at Royal Oak-based business law firm Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC, "steady as she goes" makes for the mantra.

Kreucher, a veteran Howard & Howard attorney, was elected CEO of the firm in late December, and takes over Jan. 1 from Mark Davis, 59, who is retiring after leading the firm for nearly 20 years.

Kreucher, 59, acknowledged that more than a dozen attorneys have departed Howard & Howard in recent months, which he chalked up to normal churn in the legal industry. He pointed to the firm's client-driven focus and "competitive compensation" for attorneys as top attributes that will help the firm continue in the years ahead.

"I'm a big believer that if it ain't broke, don't fix it," Kreucher told Crain's in an interview last week. "Howard & Howard doesn't need any fixing. Mark Davis has done a phenomenal job over 17 years. We have very talented lawyers here at the firm. We have great clients."

Early initiatives that Kreucher said he plans to focus on include greater use of technology for areas such as research and e-discovery, and "improving the diversity of the firm's teams and fostering an environment which embraces a range of perspectives on work-life balance."

Kreucher, an attorney at Howard & Howard for nearly 20 years, has worked across the firm's business and corporate practice, in areas including litigation, energy, labor and immigration practice groups.

"Jon is an accomplished attorney and leader who has made exceptional contributions to the firm and always delivered top-notch counsel to our clients," Davis said in a statement. "We're confident that Howard & Howard will continue to thrive and succeed under his vision and leadership."

As part of taking on full-time CEO duties at the firm, which also has offices, in Chicago, Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Peoria, Ill., Kreucher said he would be giving up his law practice.

## **Attorneys on the move**

Over the last several months, several attorneys — who declined to comment to Crain's on their decision — opted to leave the Howard & Howard firm in favor of other law firms.

In late July, for example, five merger and acquisition attorneys from Howard & Howard — led by Joe DeVito, who chaired the firm's corporate, finance and real estate practice — joined Troy-based Dinsmore & Strohl LLP. Not long after, Tom Walter — who was DeVito's commercial litigation counterpart at Howard & Howard — also joined Dinsmore.

Likewise, in early August the Detroit-based Honigman LLP law firm announced the hiring of Brandon Booth, Megan Parpart and Tim Lee away from Howard & Howard to work as partners in the corporate department in Honigman's Bloomfield Hills office.

Honigman's CEO, David Foltyn, in a [September interview](#) with Crain's, acknowledged the poaching from Howard & Howard.

"We've done really well there. Great firm," Foltyn said at the time.

Kreucher, for his part, said the departures are mostly just cost of doing business.

"It's not unusual," he said, acknowledging that upward of a dozen attorneys had departed in recent months. "It happens all the time, every day. We lost some attorneys, we've added others. It's part of big law firm life. From my perspective, we're in a good place, and we wish everyone who chose to move on well."

To that end, Kreucher said the firm maintains the needed levels of staffing within its core areas of focus. Howard & Howard has about 65 attorneys in the Detroit area and 140-160 total.

"In terms of skill sets, there's no particular need (to hire more attorneys)," Kreucher said. "I will say, we remain opportunistic. If we find laterals that fit our profitability goal ... and who seem to be a good fit with the culture of the firm, we're interested."

Inline Play

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