

No Huths, no Thompsons, yet partners foster family atmosphere

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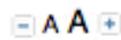
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For more than 85 years, Huth Thompson has been entrenched in the Lafayette community, in one form or another.

Now, with two new senior partners, the firm's seven leaders are hoping that continues long into the future.

In September, CPAs Travis Duell and Kyle Clark were promoted to partner at the accounting and wealth-management firm. They join five partners who will write the latest chapter in the firm with a history entwined with that of Lafayette itself.

"We're small enough to be personal and offer personal service ... but we're large enough and have sufficient depth to really meet (clients') needs," partner Lincoln Perkins said.

Huth & Co. was founded in 1927 by Alvin Huth. In 1957, Alvin's son, Ron, joined the company. In 1998, Huth & Co. merged with Thompson Heller & Co., creating the largest accounting company in Lafayette.

Shortly after the merger, which doubled the company's size, the firm moved into its present location at Fifth and Columbia streets. Partner Matthew Robertson runs the firm's only satellite office in Rensselaer.

These days Huth Thompson — which offers accounting, tax preparation, financial planning and auditing services — has 45 employees, including seasonal staff brought in during tax season.

The company leases the entire second floor of its building, which dates from 1999 and was the first building constructed in downtown Lafayette since the Bank One building in 1969.

Today no Huth or Thompson family members are partners. Steve Thompson still drops by occasionally, and Ron Huth is scheduled to make an appearance at the company's Thanksgiving party.

"We basically feel like a family," partner Debra Swick said. "When we did our merger, Steve and Ron could not have been more gentleman-like. This firm has never had a lot of turmoil."

The fact that the company hasn't changed its name throughout the years to reflect new partners is a testament to its focus, Swick said.

"We've always centered on longevity of the firm rather than longevity of the people," Swick said. "There are no family members (here), but we all just feel like a continuation of the Huth family."

When Kimberley Morisette joined the firm in 1998, she was looking for a temporary job while her husband finished his Ph.D. A self-described "East Coast girl," she had no intention of staying.

That changed, and in 2010 she became a partner.

"I've grown with the firm," Morisette said. "The family atmosphere is what kept me here."

The partners are hoping to draw more Lafayette-based clients; many clients now are outside the city. The firm plans to continue its technology-focused approach; the firm was an early adopter of technology under Ron Huth.

"We're positioned to grow right along with the clients," partner Bob Sabolich said. "As they move into their future generations, we should be able to do the same."

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