

## Former big-firm lawyer: boutiques wave of future in R.I.

T&E attorney says he can compete with large and small firms alike

The law firm of Correira & Associates is bi-coastal — the coasts of New Bedford, Mass., and Newport, that is.

David J. Correira's boutique estate planning and elder law firm draws an even number of clients from both Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. As a result, his associates are either licensed or in the process of being licensed to practice in at least both states.

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Correira opened the firm in 2005, after three years as the local trusts and estates partner in the Providence office of Holland & Knight. Eight months after he left the national firm, Holland & Knight pulled out of Providence entirely.

After starting his career as a lobbyist for a utilities company, Correira moved into the area of estate planning. A sole practitioner, he eventually took on a staff of seven para-professionals, most of whom moved with him to Holland & Knight.

Now Correira thinks the Providence market is prime for boutique firms. When he spoke with Lawyers Weekly, Correira was preparing to open a Newport office, supplementing current offices in Providence and Swansea, Mass. Correira has visiting spaces in Boston and New Bedford, and expects to open official offices



in both cities by the end of next year. He recently spoke to Lawyers Weekly's Noah Schaffer.

**Q.** You started as in house counsel for a utility. How did you get into trusts and estates?

**A.** The first reason is that it is an intellectually challenging practice. It involves so many different areas of the law. Second, it is constantly changing, which is very stimulating. Finally, you are always dealing with families and family businesses. I find dealing with those family dynamics very interesting.

**Q.** Why open a boutique firm instead of returning to a sole practice or joining another large firm?

### DAVID J. CORREIRA, Providence

**Born:** June 17, 1958; Newfoundland, Canada

**Education:** New England School of Law (1989); University of Rhode Island (1984); Bridgewater State College (1980)

**Bar admission:** Rhode Island (1990); Massachusetts (1989)

**Professional experience:** Correira & Associates, principal managing attorney (2005-present); Holland & Knight, partner (2002-2005); sole practitioner (1989-2002)

**Professional affiliations:** American, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Fall River and Bristol County bar associations; Portuguese American Bar Association; Association of Trial Lawyers of America; Professional Advisory Committee, Rhode Island Foundation; past president, Bristol County Estate Planning Council; former co-chair, Practice Section, National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys

**Hobby:** Gardening

**A.** I was approached by several other firms over the last two years to join them as a partner. While several of the offers seemed attractive, I thought that, at the end of the day, a small boutique could have some of the advantages of a large law firm, while also having the advantages of a small office. When you look at any trust and estate group in a large firm, it is usually a group of two to five lawyers anyway. So a boutique of a handful of