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Duane Morris and the University of San Diego: A growing relationship

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It all began with a search. The University of San Diego, a 7,000-student Catholic university, was seeking a single provider of legal services to help implement a complex expansion plan. After an extensive hunt, the university awarded our national firm, **Duane Morris LLP**, an exclusive five-year contract in 2005.

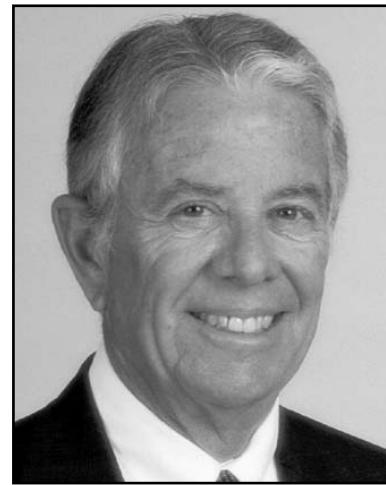
As the university's outside counsel, Duane Morris advises on a variety of legal matters, including general business, real estate and litigation issues. In addition, the firm represents USD in matters of intellectual property, employment and planned giving. The agreement represents a continuing trend among public and private institutions alike, which are beginning to consolidate the wide scope of their legal services under a single "umbrella" to save both time and money, as well as to address the increasing number of matters which span multiple practice areas and disciplines. For USD, Duane Morris' national resources and full range of legal services were key factors in the selection process. Equally important to the decision was USD's longstanding relationship with my partner, Duane Morris corporate attorney Robert Copeland.

As USD prepared for a complex, 30-year, \$93 million tax-exempt bond issue that would help the university expand, USD turned to Copeland and Duane Morris for help. Copeland suggested to Paul Bissonnette, the university's vice president for finance and administration, that a team of attorneys from the firm's Philadelphia office handle the bond offering. Bissonnette, however, had concerns. Could a team of attorneys 3,000 miles away provide the attention to detail and coordination necessary to make such a complicated project a success? The answer, we're proud to say, was a resounding "yes."

The Philadelphia team of



Christopher Celentino



Robert Copeland

partners, including Dianne Meyer, a commercial finance attorney, and Robert Archie Jr., who focuses on municipal finance, coordinated the project. Meyer, who managed all aspects of the transaction throughout the process, and her colleagues ensured that the offering conformed to the university charter and bylaws, California laws and regulations and those of the IRS. Though the university would incur some debt from the transaction, the bond issue's "Aaa" Moody's credit rating made it very attractive to investors. The offering, which involved a variable-rate, tax-exempt bond transaction, enhanced by a letter of credit with an interest rate swap feature, closed quickly and sold out within hours.

With the responsiveness, cooperation and careful planning of both USD and Duane Morris, the sophisticated deal was successful, and the university raised the necessary funds for expansion.

The relationship between Duane Morris and the University of San Diego only grew from there. San Diego-based Duane Morris partner Julie Mebane, whose practice focuses on commercial real estate purchases, as well as industrial and office leases and land use issues, handled a large share of the early legal work for the university. From working with the city and other parties to extend the lease for a waterfront

facility used by the university's crew team, to negotiating a special use agreement with the U.S. Soccer Federation to use the university's Torero Stadium for a match with the Mexican national team, Mebane has become a prominent advocate for the university. As a result of this commitment, she has become well liked and highly regarded among the administrative and legal staff of the university.

For all of the university's divergent and changing needs, from multimillion-dollar finance, real estate, intellectual property, employment, immigration issues and others, USD draws on the strong relationship with Copeland to access the full range of local and national Duane Morris resources.

"We value the relationship with Duane Morris. We've got a good, responsive team, one that's providing us with the legal services we need," USD General Counsel Kelly Capen Douglas recently told us. "The relationship enables all of us to provide the university with proactive legal counsel and excellent service."

Likewise, we at Duane Morris recognize that it is the camaraderie and teamwork on both sides that make this relationship work. We are proud to have USD as a valued client.

Celentino is a managing partner of Duane Morris' San Diego office.

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