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Samborn to depart U.S. attorney's office

After two decades as spokesman for federal prosecutors, lawyer heads to private sector

BY PATRICIA MANSON

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After 20 years with the federal government, Randall A. Samborn is leaving the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago for a position in the private sector.

Samborn, an assistant U.S. attorney who serves as the office's spokesman, will be joining Levick Strategic Communications LLC in February as a senior vice president.

He will open a Chicago office for the Washington, D.C.-based public affairs firm. Levick also has an office in New York.

Samborn's job will involve crisis response and communicating to the media on behalf of litigators and their clients.

Samborn said Levick does not yet have office space in Chicago, and Levick has not yet determined how many employees will work in the office.

Samborn will leave his post at the end of January.

"It's been a tremendous privilege to work in the U.S. attorney's office," he said. "And although it's bittersweet to think about leaving,

I'm very excited to join Levick and take on new challenges in the arena of law and media in Chicago."

Samborn's position with the U.S. attorney's office will be posted on government websites.

Samborn earned a bachelor's degree in 1979 at Washington University in St. Louis and a law degree in 1982 at the University of Toledo College of Law in Ohio.

He started working at the Toledo Blade the summer after his graduation from college and stayed there while in law school. He joined the paper as a full-time reporter after he completed law school.

In 1987, Samborn joined the Lucas County prosecutor's office in Toledo. He tried 10 cases in two years as an assistant prosecuting attorney.

Samborn became the Chicago bureau chief of The National Law Journal in 1989.

In 1995, he joined the U.S. attorney's office.

Scott R. Lassar, who served as U.S. attorney from 1997 to 2001, said Samborn "did a great job."

"I think he's one of the leading people in the country who perform that type of work for the Depart-

ment of Justice," said Lassar, now a partner at Sidley, Austin LLP. "He'll be hard to replace."

Lassar's successor, Patrick J. Fitzgerald, expressed the same belief.

"It will be a big loss to the office," said Fitzgerald, now a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP. "He did terrific work."

Samborn did double duty for a time, working as Fitzgerald's spokesman when Fitzgerald was tapped by the U.S. Justice Department in December 2003 to investigate the disclosure of covert CIA operative Valerie Plame's identity.

Samborn's current boss, U.S. Attorney Zachary T. Fardon, could not be reached for comment.

Levick's clients reportedly have included AIG, Dollar Tree, Lorillard Tobacco Co., GE Healthcare, Chevron Corp. and Comcast Corp.

Levick worked for Rosie O'Donnell in a dispute with publisher Gruner+Jahr USA over editorial control of the now-defunct Rosie magazine. The case was dismissed, with neither side awarded damages.

Levick launched what it describes as an "aggressive communications campaign" after the U.S. Justice Department allegedly breached an amnesty agreement and sought hefty antitrust fines against the Norwegian shipping company Stolt-Nielsen S.A. A fed-



Randall A. Samborn

eral judge ultimately dismissed the government's case.

Levick's officers include Richard S. Levick, the chairman and chief executive officer, and Mark Irion, who serves as president. Lanny Davis, who was special counsel to then-President Bill Clinton from 1996 to 1998, is an executive vice president.

Ian McCaleb, a senior vice president, knows Samborn as a result of McCaleb's previous work as a Justice Department spokesman and a TV reporter and producer.

"We're thrilled to have him," McCaleb said. "I just think it's a wonderful thing that he's joining the firm."

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