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HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

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Locke names managing partners for Texas, Houston

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[Locke Liddell & Sapp LLP](#) has named a new managing partner of its Houston office and has appointed an Austin-based litigator as the second-ever female to serve as firmwide managing partner.

Marc Watts, a corporate securities lawyer, has been elected managing partner in Houston. And Jerry Clements has been named as Locke Liddell's managing partner, making her only the second woman to become the firm's top boss. The first female managing partner for Houston-based Locke Liddell was Harriet Miers, who last year was nominated to the U.S. Supreme Court by President George W. Bush but later withdrew her nomination. She became co-managing partner of the firm in 1999.

"I'll be glad when it's no longer newsworthy when the managing partner of a major law firm is a woman," Clements says.

More noteworthy, she says, is that this is the first time Locke Liddell's managing partner is based in its Austin office.

Usually, a big firm's managing partner works out of the principal office where it was founded. For big Texas firms, that usually means Dallas or Houston.

But Clements, who happens to be based in Austin, is "who everyone in the firm wanted" as managing partner, says spokeswoman Julie Gilbert in Locke Liddell's Houston office.

Clements says technology allows her to run the nearly 400-lawyer firm remotely.

Plus, she spends a lot of time flying back and forth to the Houston and Dallas offices.

Clements has led the firm's litigation section since 2002 and has sat on Locke Liddell's management committee since 1998.

She says her duties as managing partner will entail challenges such as attracting top legal work and talent in an increasingly competitive market.

"That's the kind of work that makes law firms profitable," she says.

Watts is replacing Jeff Love as managing partner in the Houston office. Love is stepping down from his position after about five years on the job.

Watts has more than 20 years of experience in corporate securities and antitrust law as well as in structuring partnerships, joint ventures and other vehicles for joint investment.

He expects to continue expanding the firm's energy, intellectual property and labor practices.

The Houston office of Locke Liddell has about 150 lawyers, making it the sixth-largest law firm in Houston, according to Business Journal research.

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