

Pettit Firm Adds Ex-Appellate Judge To Its Dallas Office

By Todd Hutchinson

Law360 (March 22, 2019, 8:45 PM EDT) – The Pettit Law Firm announced it has added a former Texas appeals court judge to its commercial and real estate litigation practices in its Dallas office.

The firm released a statement on March 19 saying Craig Stoddart joined the firm in January as senior counsel after spending 4½ years as an appellate judge on the Texas Fifth Court of Appeals in Dallas.

Stoddart was appointed to the appeals court in 2014 by then-Texas Gov. Rick Perry to replace Justice Jim Moseley. He was elected to the position in November 2014.

Stoddart, who ran as a Republican, **was defeated in 2018 by Erin Nowell as part of the “Blue Wave”** in which Democrats won more than 30 seats in Texas’ intermediate appellate courts.



Craig Stoddart

During his time as a justice, Stoddart said he heard more than 1,300 cases and wrote more than 400 opinions.

Prior to serving as a justice, Stoddart was a Rockwall County district attorney for 22 years, working on a variety of criminal cases and supervising an office of 25 employees, including 12 prosecutors. He also represented Rockwall County before various appellate courts.

Pettit Law Firm founder Julie Pettit said she was honored to have such a knowledgeable and well-respected lawyer become part of the firm.

“He provides our trial team with a pragmatic appellate perspective as we prepare for the courtroom, and he has the experience and expertise to assist our clients on appeal,” she said in the statement.

Stoddart told Law360 on Friday that he was enjoying being part of a private practice for the first time. He said working at Pettit was a “fantastic way” to gain experience in the practice of civil law.

“Everyone here is so smart and good at what they do,” Stoddart said. “As a prosecutor, I had a desk full of cases. Same at the Court of Appeals. Here, you live with the cases that you have, the cases that are yours. It’s a different world, but I’m enjoying the challenge.”

Stoddart’s work at Pettit will include a variety of things, including commercial and real estate litigation and appellate work.

“Right now, I’m getting my feet on the ground with the cases that are going on here,” he said.

Stoddart earned his law degree from Texas Tech University School of Law in 1990.

--Additional reporting by Michelle Casady. Editing by Janice Carter Brown.