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Calif. Boutique Adds 2 Litigators From CDF Labor Law

By **Rachel Rippetoe**

Law360 (February 9, 2021, 3:19 PM EST) -- Women-owned California boutique GBG LLP announced Monday that it snagged two employment litigators from CDF Labor Law LLP.

The defense-side employment law boutique, headquartered in San Francisco, has added Jen Cornell as an equity partner and Teresa W. Ghali as of counsel. The pair both started in GBG's San Francisco office in January, leaving their partnerships with CDF.

Cornell, who had been a partner at CDF for just under two years, specializes in representing startups, tech companies and retailers in several aspects of labor and employment law. She hosts a high-stakes investigation practice, while also working on class and Private Attorneys General Act actions.

"GBG has a really sophisticated and sort of data driven litigation practice," Cornell told Law360 Pulse. "It felt like a good fit for the work that I do. I always joke that I do law with spreadsheets, and that is what most of the partners do at GBG."

Ghali had been with CDF for almost seven years and had been a partner there for three years. She is a trial attorney and appellate attorney who works on both class and PAGA actions as well as single plaintiff cases.

"It was really appealing to me that it was a women-owned business that had a great set of attorneys with excellent backgrounds," Ghali told Law360 Pulse. "They're doing really exciting stuff in a wide range of employment law areas. It felt like a good place to make my home."

According to the firm, GBG, which hosts 13 attorneys in offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles, is certified as Women Owned by the Women's Business Enterprise National Council. Both Ghali and Cornell said this was appealing to them.

"My clients really liked that emphasis on diversity," Cornell said. "And I enjoy working with a diverse set of equity partners. It aids decision making to have diversity and have women represented."

Before gaining her law degree at the University of Minnesota Law School in 2010, Cornell worked for the Minneapolis Fire Department for 15 years, retiring as a battalion chief. Cornell said her work in management at the Fire Department gives her a unique perspective to advise employers on managing their workforce.

"Because I managed for 10 years in a union environment, I have expertise in talking to clients about managing certain situations because I've been there," she said. "I have great clients and they really do great by their employees and so I feel really good about the work I get to do and the clients that hire me. It doesn't feel like this discord between my role in the fire service and my role as a defense attorney."

Cornell also worked for many years as a cause and origin fire investigator, which she said has helped her investigations practice as a lawyer. The veteran litigator was also a board member for the ACLU of Minnesota from 2016 to 2018, according to her LinkedIn profile.

Ghali graduated from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law in 2007.

"We are so excited to have Jen and Teresa join us," GBG co-founding partner Lisa Brown said in a release. "With their addition, we continue to fulfill our original vision of excellence in employment defense at a firm that values experience but understands that clients need both effective and cost-efficient counsel to help them navigate the complex world of California employment law. Furthermore, Jen and Teresa's deep industry expertise with tech companies and startups will round out GBG's overall firm practice."

--Editing by Alyssa Miller.

Correction: A previous version of this article misstated the firm name for GBG LLP. The error has been corrected.

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