

Employment Law Daily

March 13, 2013



INDUSTRY NEWS/TRENDS

The Employment Law Group practices what it preaches as first night-student law clerk is named firm principal

District of Columbia-based [The Employment Law Group](#) (TELG) announced on March 13 the elevation of [John Thomas Harrington, Jr.](#) to a principal of the litigation boutique, which represents whistleblowers and others who stand up to wrongdoing by employers. Harrington's promotion is a milestone for one of D.C.'s more unusual hiring models — the national employment law firm refuses to be a part of the law-school recruitment mill and instead chooses entry-level lawyers exclusively from its pool of law clerks, all hired while attending local law schools at night.

Harrington, who joined the firm in 2004 while attending the George Mason University School of Law as an evening student, is the first of these clerks to climb the ladder to ownership at TELG, a move that the firm says cements its reputation as a nurturer of legal talent. Law is the new principal's second full career; before attending law school he worked for 19 years as an analyst for the NASDAQ Stock Market. Harrington was older than TELG's principals when he was hired as a student.

During his tenure as a TELG attorney, Harrington has worked closely with clients who suffer workplace discrimination and retaliation in violation of civil rights laws. His financial background has also helped him represent employees who are punished for reporting breaches of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act.

"We are honored that Tom has agreed to become our partner," said TELG managing principal R. Scott Oswald. "He embodies our firm's philosophy. We hire evening law students for their talent and motivation, then we promote them for their skill and devotion—with no limit to how far they may rise."

TELG currently has seven associates, all hired from within; three more clerks are poised for promotion after they pass bar exams in July. The firm's current clerks attend evening classes at six local law schools: American, Catholic, Georgetown, George Mason, George Washington, and the University of Maryland.

In addition to in-depth practical experience, TELG offers its clerks tailor-made perks that include educational leave to accommodate exams and other law-school obligations, and a flexible work schedule that recognizes their need to attend class each evening. Clerks also have a voice in the hiring of their peers.

In return, as each class of clerks graduates, the firm gets a ready-made batch of attorney candidates who are familiar with the firm's people and culture — and who already know more about employment law than any law school can teach. The move from clerk to associate is "hardly a transition at all," according to Harrington.