

## Lawyers' big idea is starting smaller firm

### Former Jones Vargas attorneys help to launch new venture

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**GAMING WIRE**



Renee Reuther, seated, and standing from left Stephen Sullivan, William Silbey and Stephen Rice, are launching Rice Silbey Reuther & Sullivan, a law firm with offices in Hughes Center.  
Photo by [Ralph Fountain](#).

A trio of prominent local attorneys has left one of the state's oldest and largest law firms to join with a fourth partner in creating their own Las Vegas law company.

And while the firm's new office at Hughes Center remains somewhat unfurnished during today's first day of business, the movers have already unpacked a client list that's loaded with an impressive array of local, national and international businesses, including several major players in Southern Nevada's burgeoning real estate and development industries.

Attorneys Stephen Rice, William Silbey, Renee Reuther and Stephen Sullivan will direct the new firm, which is collectively called Rice Silbey Reuther & Sullivan. Each previously worked with

Las Vegas legal powerhouse Jones Vargas, though Silbey most recently headed his own local practice.

The group's members have worked together closely at varying intervals in their respective careers. Each said this week the decision to launch their own professional venture stemmed from a desire to work at a small firm.

"Bill (Silbey) and I had the experience of practicing at a small firm in Santa Monica that had very large institutional clients," Rice said in reference to their past stint at California's Gilchrist & Rutter law firm. "We're kind of going back to something we practiced together at in (the) L.A. (area)."

Added Silbey: "It's a business model we both felt was an attractive one in terms of a small, very focused boutique."

Coupled with Reuther, who has worked with Rice since she began practicing law in 1990, and Sullivan, who joined Jones Vargas in 2001, the foursome plans to initially share their new firm's business through a concerted effort to keep things small.

"We don't intend to grow a law firm," Rice said. "We're going to have to get bigger than we are now just because of the clients that are coming with us, but I don't think we'll ever grow bigger than 10 or 12 attorneys at the most."

"Jones Vargas is the best firm in the state for a general practice, big law firm. But we're leaving because we want to practice in a different environment; we don't want to re-create what we just left."

Jones Vargas has approximately 60 attorneys, Rice added.

Though Rice Silbey Reuther & Sullivan will remain small by design, its client list includes representatives from industries that range from auto sales and land development to pharmaceuticals and concrete manufacturing. Most clients had prior relationships with the members of Rice Silbey Reuther & Sullivan and opted to follow the partners to their new company.

Clients include Basic Management Inc. and its affiliates; Henderson-based developer Rich MacDonald; Findlay Automotive Group; Theravance pharmaceuticals; and Aggregate Industries, a United Kingdom-based company that last November purchased a \$64.1 million interest in the 530-acre Sloan Mountain Quarry just south of Las Vegas.

The firm also recently signed a deal to represent The Related Cos., the New York-based company behind Manhattan's new \$1.7 billion Time Warner Center. Related is also overseeing construction and financing for the \$1 billion World Market Center under construction near downtown Las Vegas and hopes to grow its portfolio in Southern Nevada.

Fort Worth, Texas-based Crescent Real Estate Equities, which in November acquired Las Vegas' Hughes Center office development as part of a multimillion deal with Rouse Co., also moved its legal business from Jones Vargas to the new firm.

Though Crescent is one of the nation's largest publicly held real estate investment trusts, Regional Vice President Bob Boykin said Wednesday it had no reservations working with a small, unestablished firm because Crescent already enjoys a strong relationship with Rice.

"We wanted local counsel and local representation and have really enjoyed working with Steve Rice," Boykin said. "We're very confident in (Rice's) abilities ... and are looking forward to a long relationship with him and his new firm."