

# Midlands Business Journal

Founded 1975

JUNE 8, 2018

THE WEEKLY BUSINESS PAPER OF GREATER OMAHA, LINCOLN AND COUNCIL BLUFFS

VOL. 44 NO. 23

## Cline Williams grows with expertise across six offices

by Richard D. Brown

Cline Williams, one of the region's oldest law firms with roots going back to the legislation written by its founder to abolish slavery in the then-Nebraska territory, has evolved over 161 years into a statewide law firm with four Nebraska offices — and in recent years — expansion into Fort Collins and Holyoke, Colo.

The firm with 135 employees will create four new legal positions this fall — two in litigation, one in business transactions and one in estate planning and taxation.

Cline Williams has 21 attorneys and 12 support staff in its 12,000-square-foot Omaha office suite at Sterling Ridge, 12910 Pierce St. Another 35 attorneys and 25 support personnel operate out of the firm's 25,000 square foot offices at 233 South 13th St.,



From left, Partners Mike Pallesen, Tara Stingley and Thomas Huston ... Expanding reach with Colorado offices and additional attorneys. (Photo by MBJ / Becky McCarville)

his third year of law studies. Huston and partner Tara A. Stingley, an 11-year veteran with the firm said Cline Williams — which has 34 of its lawyers listed among the most notable on “best lawyers” lists published nationally — has had success using a compensation system that encourages maximum sharing of expertise among the firm's lawyers, whether they are relatively new associates or among the most seasoned veteran partners.

“It derives from the idea that we're true partners and that a rising tide will rise all boats,” Huston said. “The true partnership teamwork done here means much more than a team of individual experts.”

He said the firm's structure with attorney expertise in specialty areas is being used to better serve the client. For example, Huston, a specialist in real estate/finance, has gone to Stingley who has greater knowledge of how employment questions are being addressed under the Affordable Care Act.

Earlier this year firm Partner Jonathan Papik left Cline Williams to become the youngest justice on the Nebraska Supreme Court.

Partner Mike Pallesen, a Lincoln native and '91 graduate of the University of Nebraska College of Law, said his 14 years with Cline Williams have enabled him to work with business startups, as well as with estab-

resenting management for a myriad of clients ranging from small nonprofits to large corporations with operations throughout the country. Strong areas for the practice include wage and hour disputes and other issues regarding the Fair Labor Standards Act, disability and sexual harassment, among others.

“We're teaching clients to act proactively to the Americans With Disabilities Act,” she said. “Complaints need to be taken seriously.”

Ramps, doors, and handicapped restroom access are among the topics of accommodation.

Stingley, who clerked in Cline Williams' Lincoln office in 2005, said the firm has differentiated itself over the past 11 years by offering a series of four-hour employment forums for human resources directors of area firms in venues that include Fort Collins and Kearney — in addition to Omaha and Lincoln.

Specific topics have included current issues in health care, the impact of employment law developments on health care employers, Medicare enrollment updates, information security and privacy, health care marketing do's and don'ts and medical malpractice.

Attendance at the forums has tripled over the past five years.

“Our labor and employment law section has doubled in the past 10 years and now has 18 members,” she said. “We represent private and public employers of all sizes, in all aspects of the employment relationship.”

Huston said Cline Williams' Lincoln location is under renovation to essentially transform an office in a 1969 building from analog space into the digital world.

Huston has represented real estate developers and contractors planning and building affordable housing projects in six states. That, he said, is but one example of how Cline Williams expanded beyond its Omaha and Lincoln roots.

“It has been organic growth and we've been able to meet our clients' needs with the right people as the opportunities have presented themselves,” he said.

Reprinted with permission  
from the publisher of MBJ Inc.  
from the June 8, 2018 issue of the

**Midlands Business Journal**

This permission is for photo and article reproduction or placement on your Web site. Under no circumstances, because of spanning and other issues, will permission be granted to transmit our stories by e-mail.

### Cline Williams

**Phone:** 402-397-1700

**Address:** 12910 Pierce St., Suite 200, Omaha 68144

**Services:** regional law firm

**Founded:** 1857 by Turner Marquett in Plattsmouth

**Employees:** 135

**One-year goal:** Renovation of Lincoln office to convert analog space to digital in growing practice.

**Industry outlook:** While software can replace some of what lawyers do, the most successful firms will still need to attract and retain experts in each area of the practice because software doesn't exercise judgment.

**Website:** [www.clinewilliams.com](http://www.clinewilliams.com)

Suite 1900 in Lincoln. Since 2000, additional branch offices have been opened in Aurora and Scottsbluff.

Last year a five-person office was opened in Holyoke, Colo. A seven-person office in Fort Collins, which opened in 2005, recently added its fourth attorney.

“For us a large part of our success is because what we've built here is a true partnership — we emphasize teamwork and the results are much more than a group of individual experts could accomplish,” said Partner Tom Huston.

Huston, a native of Broken Bow, Neb., joined Cline Williams in 1986, following graduation from the University of Nebraska College of Law. He clerked at the firm during

# Midlands Business Journal

Cline Williams

**Reprinted with permission from the publisher of MBJ Inc.**

from the June 8, 2018 issue of the Midlands Business Journal.

This permission is for photo and article reproduction or placement on your Web site. Under no circumstances, because of spamming and other issues, will permission be granted to transmit our stories by e-mail.