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## He's a 'minister of culture'

Polsinelli's local managing director aims to maintain small-firm feel at growing office

BY JOHN FLYNN ROONEY  
Law Bulletin staff writer

As managing director of Polsinelli P.C.'s local office, Anthony J. Nasharr III sees himself as a bridge between firm leadership and the heads of various practice groups.

"I try to be a facilitator as needed or requested by my colleagues," Nasharr said. "I do that by connecting people in the office as new lateral additions are made or as a particular client project requires."

He doesn't manage an office budget, though, because the firm is managed across practice groups.

"I'm essentially the liaison between firm management and practice group chairs from other offices as they consider growth opportunities for their respective practice groups," Nasharr said.

The Kansas City, Mo.-based law firm consists of 650 lawyers working out of 16 offices across the nation.

The firm's Chicago office opened in 2006 with Nasharr and five other lawyers. It has since grown to 80 lawyers.

Polsinelli lawyers provide a wide range of legal services in areas including health care, life sciences, financial services, commercial real estate, corporate matters and commercial litigation.

"I assist them with whatever their needs might be," Nasharr said of the firm's lawyers.

Nasharr and five colleagues launched Polsinelli's Chicago office after working together at Nasharr & Shea, where he was a firm leader. The operation there focused on corporate and banking transactions, along with commercial litigation.

"Polsinelli was looking for a footstep into Chicago," Nasharr said.

Nasharr said he was attracted to Polsinelli because of the firm's

"Midwest temperament" and its focus on middle-market clients.

John J. Curry Jr., a Polsinelli shareholder, has known Nasharr since they worked together in the mid-1980s.

"The experience of (Nasharr) being in management, first with a smaller firm ... and expanding into a major office of a national law firm has reflected his strong management capabilities and has served our Chicago law practice well," Curry said.

Polsinelli also has collegiality across offices, Nasharr said, and uses "a very collaborative leadership style."

The firm is overseen by a 13-member board of directors that manages its overall plan and goals. Nasharr served on that board from 2007 until 2012, when his term ended.

Nasharr also sees his role as that of a "minister of culture. We still have a small-firm feel and our people are team-oriented."

Since early 2012, Polsinelli hired 18 lawyers in its Chicago office. Two or three more lawyers may be added this year, Nasharr said.

"My role is more as a facilitator as needed to achieve plans for occasional lateral recruitment in Chicago and sometimes elsewhere. Because of the success of the Chicago office, we are a model of what the firm would like to do" in terms of overall growth, he said.

"We don't grow by acquisitions of other law firms so much as we grow organically through lateral hires of one, two or three lawyers at a time," Nasharr said.

When Polsinelli opened its Chicago office, it had 3,700 square feet. After expanding that space six times and moving once, the local office now takes up 60,000 square feet at 161 N. Clark St.

Matthew J. Murer, a Polsinelli



Anthony J.  
Nasharr III

Managing director, Polsinelli P.C.'s local office

- **Location:** Chicago
- **Size:** Firmwide revenue of \$275.5 million in 2012
- **Lawyers:** 80 in Chicago, 650 firmwide
- **Age:** 54
- **Law school:** The John Marshall Law School, 1983
- **Organizations:** Founding director, Wounded Heroes Foundation; Executive committee member, Rush University Medical Center Associates Board
- **Interests:** Following his kids' sports activities, taking long-distance motorcycle rides

shareholder and chairman of its firmwide 75-lawyer health-care practice group, said Nasharr "has been really supportive of our growth."

Nasharr isn't out to boost "his ego or his own self-satisfaction" as managing director, Murer said.

And while the Polsinelli lawyers here work hard, they also know how to blow off steam. Nasharr established a monthly cocktail hour gathering in the firm's lounge, Murer said.

"It's just a great way for us to spend time together in an informal setting," he said.

Nasharr concentrates his full-time practice on banking and financial services, general corporate

transactional matters and commercial real estate.

Among the matters he worked on was the sale of Chicago's entire South Water Market District. That 2003 deal involved 160 different parcels with 63 different owners bought by a single residential real estate developer.

The main challenge facing Nasharr as managing director of Polsinelli's local office involves allocating his time between clients and firm management issues. Nasharr credited his wife and three children for part of his success.

"If I have to work a longer day to get things done, they are understanding," he said.

Nasharr also urges Polsinelli lawyers, including associates, to drum up business.

"We encourage business development, and one of my roles is to help lawyers with that," he said.

Nasharr was born in Chicago and is the oldest of five siblings.

While taking a business law class as an undergraduate at Miami University in Ohio, he thought about law as a career.

After getting a degree in business administration in 1980, he enrolled at The John Marshall Law School, which he graduated from in 1983.

After gaining admission to the Illinois bar, he worked at Thomas W. Fawell & Associates P.C. in Oak Brook. That firm merged with Katten, Muchin, Rosenman LLP in 1987.

The following year, he joined Kemp & Capanna Ltd. and remained there until 1992. He next joined the firm that became known as Nasharr & Shea.

Outside of the office, Nasharr serves on the Wounded Heroes Foundation board of directors.

Last month, he participated in a group motorcycle ride to visit wounded soldiers at a military hospital in Missouri.

"If you look at what Tony does for the veterans ... he's obviously a very caring compassionate guy," said Michael L. Gesas, an Arnstein & Lehr LLP partner and friend of Nasharr's since law school.

Nasharr said his work with the foundation is meant to support men and women who made sacrifices for their country.

"It is a way of giving thanks and appreciation for their service," he said, "including those who've been injured in that service."