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Force behind police consent decree picks boutique firm

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When your old boss calls you one of the most brilliant people she's worked with, and your new employer acknowledges you had your pick of gigs, you're probably in a good spot in your career.

That's where Cara Ann Hendrickson found herself after leaving the Illinois Attorney General's office to join Massey & Gail LLP.

The former public interest division chief left the AG's office in March and officially joined the commercial-litigation boutique on April 22.

Former attorney general Lisa M. Madigan, who led the office for all but the last two months of Hendrickson's five years there, called her "one of the most brilliant lawyers I've ever worked with" and praised her for leading the effort to revamp the Chicago Police Department.

"Her leadership, dedication and intelligence were vital to reaching a consent decree governing Chicago police reform," Madigan said in a statement.

Massey & Gail co-founder Leonard A. Gail also said Hendrickson could have gone to "just about any law firm of

substance and would have been considered a significant addition."

In an interview, Hendrickson was quick to return the compliments. She said she's humbled by the praise, calling the work in the attorney general's office "incredible" and calling Madigan and current Attorney General Kwame Y. Raoul brilliant themselves.

She said after the sweeping decree that covers Chicago police practices was approved by a federal judge in February, it was a natural time to think about next steps.

"Because the firm has a deep bench of lawyers with impressive credentials and experience and they handle high-stakes matters and provide terrific service to their clients, and that's really what I was looking for in a legal environment and that made this place a perfect choice," she said.

Hendrickson worked in private practice for eight years at Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym Ltd. before going to the public sector. She practiced constitutional and commercial litigation and said she's not surprised she landed in private practice again.

She said she expects her practice to include a mix of complex commercial matters



Cara Ann Hendrickson

as well as government relations and regulatory work.

She oversaw seven bureaus and 60 lawyers during her stint in government.

Besides the police decree, Hendrickson also led the attorney general's office in negotiations resulting in an \$18.5 million settlement with Peoples Gas in 2016. The settlement came after claims the utility's parent company withheld information from regulators to get a merger approved.

Hendrickson also supervised a significant number of the office's responses to actions by the Trump administration in the last two years, calling it "very challenging and very fast-paced."

She said she hopes her work in the office "brings value to

my clients, in that I have the breadth of experience to work on a number of different subject areas, but also worked in high-stakes, high-pressure situations and looked at problems from a number of different angles."

Carolyn E. Shapiro, a professor of law at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law and former state solicitor general, knew of Hendrickson before they began at the attorney general's office in 2014 within a week of each other. Her husband was a law partner of Hendrickson's at Hughes Socol.

"He thought very, very highly of her," Shapiro recalled. "He told me he was jealous I was going to get to work with her."

Shapiro said Hendrickson was able to juggle a lot of balls while still being decisive and deliberate. She said they both sat in on senior staff advisory sessions for Shapiro's entire tenure, weighing in on big-picture strategies as well as more detailed questions, such as which cases to file or what amicus briefs to join. She said Hendrickson was never one to speak without giving a lot of thought to a question.

"She's outstanding," Shapiro said. "She's a wonderful colleague, a terrific lawyer. They're lucky to have her."