About Us

As Schiff Hardin has grown from one office to seven and from two attorneys to nearly 300, there is no doubt that our full-service firm looks different than it did a century and a half ago.

For starters, we got serious about diversity before it was fashionable; today we set the pace in recruiting, hiring, and promoting diverse talent. And our efforts have not gone unnoticed—we are regularly recognized as a leader among law firms.

We have also expanded shrewdly, building new offices to meet specific client needs with strategic talent acquisition. From a top construction practice operating in Chicago and New York to an agile San Francisco intellectual property team to a Washington D.C.-based team of regulatory heavyweights, all our offices offer strengths that serve each of our clients—whether that client is down the street or across an ocean.

Yet there is one thing about Schiff Hardin that will never change: Our clients count on us for the knowledge, creativity, and candor that only decades of legal and business experience can provide. Our attorneys can always be found side by side with their clients, providing the practical yet creative counsel for which our firm is known.

The Inaugural Years

Hitchcock and Dupee founded the firm in Chicago in 1866—five years before the Great Fire turned a growing city to ash and one after Illinois’ Lincoln united a broken nation. Since those early years, our focus has been on growing with our clients; we began counseling many of our current banking and industrial clients in the 1870s and 1880s.

Although their practice was small, the founders formed several client partnerships that the firm still serves today, including Northern Trust and Amsted Industries. Hitchcock and Dupee were also instrumental in defending the Chicago Board of Trade after the great Chicago fire of 1871, implementing Chicago’s first rapid transit by way of steam-powered cable car, and signing the Chicago Bar Association’s original charter in 1874.

Innovations in Business and Law

The turn of the 20th century marked great advances in industry, and our firm gained a reputation for creativity in the financing and corporate organization of energy companies and public utilities, a practice area that remains one of our largest today. We also counseled several large industrial combinations including U.S. Steel, International Harvester, and Allis-Chalmers.

It also created innovative air rights techniques that permitted the construction of the Prudential Building, paving the way for our leading real estate and construction practices.

Schiff Hardin’s sports law legacy began when the firm counseled Bill Veeck—a well-known franchise owner and promoter of Major League Baseball—in his ownership of the St. Louis Browns, Cleveland Indians, and Chicago White Sox. This tradition continues today with our role as counsel for the Chicago Bears, including complex financing and governmental relations to renovate Soldier Field in 2003.

In 1974, Schiff Hardin had just worked to obtain regulatory approval for the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE) when our Chicago office moved into the newly completed Sears Tower (now the Willis Tower). And our evolution did not stop there.

Evolving with Our Clients

Schiff Hardin began establishing a national footprint in 1977, opening our second office in Washington, D.C. to focus on energy and market regulation work (a growing requirement of our many utility clients). In the early 1990s we opened a New York office, turning our attention to overseas clients by building several key practices and recruiting new partners.


We opened our Ann Arbor office in 2012, reflecting our increasingly sophisticated complex commercial litigation capabilities.

As we have extended our reach across the country, our firm’s inclusive culture remains the cornerstone of our identity. Our differences enrich our personal and professional relationships, strengthening the work we do for our clients and in our communities. In 2015, we elected our first female managing partner, and we will continue to lead the market in cultivating diverse talent.
Always forward-looking, Schiff Hardin continues to evolve to best serve our clients today, tomorrow, and for the centuries to come.