

Former NJ Judge, Prosecutor On Starting Their Own Practice

By [Nick Muscavage](#) | May 26, 2021, 4:33 PM EDT

After careers in public service, the husband-and-wife pair of Monmouth County prosecutor Christopher Gramiccioni and Ocean County Superior Court Judge Deborah Gramiccioni are opening their own full-service boutique law firm handling issues ranging from white collar criminal defense to national security.

Kingston Coventry LLC will have two locations in Manasquan and Parsippany, New Jersey. The couple are licensed in both New Jersey and New York.



Christopher and Deborah Gramiccioni

The opening day for the law firm, which is named after the two streets the couple each grew up on, will be on June 1, the effective resignation date of Christopher as prosecutor.

Deborah's last day on the bench of the family division of the Ocean County vicinage was Tuesday.

"Looking at it, it's a leap of faith," Deborah told Law360 Pulse in a joint interview on Wednesday. "But it's a leap of faith with the person who I trust most in this world. I think there's no better time than now."

The Gramiccionis say their varied backgrounds will make their new firm stand out from the crowd.

Deborah, who was tapped for the bench by Gov. Chris Christie, had been Christie's deputy chief of staff.

She also has been deputy executive director of the [Port Authority of New York and New Jersey](#), worked as an assistant U.S. attorney and as the head of the criminal justice division in the New Jersey attorney general's office, and was executive director of the Center on the Administration of Criminal Law and adjunct professor of clinical law at [New York University School of Law](#).

"Both of us have handled complex fraud cases, we have undertaken massive government investigations, we've held sensitive positions," Deborah said, "so I think both of us understand the intersection of prosecuting authority, the media and the public."

Christopher was appointed acting Monmouth County prosecutor in 2012 and took the post in an official capacity in 2015, according to his bio on the county's website. For nine years before that, he was a federal prosecutor in New Jersey, where he worked in the special prosecutions division handling public corruption cases, the organized crime and drug enforcement task force unit, and the terrorism unit.

He also had a stint as a special assistant U.S. attorney in the District of Puerto Rico, where he prosecuted cases arising from protests on the island of Vieques, according to his bio. In 1997 he joined the [U.S. Navy](#) where he was assigned tours as a military prosecutor, defense attorney and legal assistance adviser. He still serves as a commander in the Ready Reserves.

"We have amassed a variety of experiences that we believe can be beneficial to others," Deborah said. "For example, we've been federal prosecutors; we've been state prosecutors at the highest level; we've been in private practice and in robes on the bench; we've deployed in hot zones; we've advised military personnel around the world; we've handled sensitive media inquiries; we've advised politicians at very high levels."

The fact Kingston Coventry is owned by a woman and a veteran also sets them apart from the pack, Christopher said.

"There's a lot of law firms across the region in New York and New Jersey," he said. "I like to believe one of the attractive things to prospective clients is, if you were to hire our law firm, you get us. There's not going to be a paralegal and, with due respect to these folks, a junior associate. It's me and Deb. You're getting us and our full and undivided attention."

That's not to say the firm couldn't grow in the future.

"We'd love to grow," Christopher said. "If the business is there, of course we'd want to try to grow this into a larger practice, but not lose that personal touch we want to provide."

"And that's important to us, that personal touch," Deborah added. "We're going to be answering our own phones, and I think there is something really exciting about that."

Although they envision the firm to be full-service in its capabilities, there are certain areas where they say their expertise will shine, such as national security and cybersecurity.

"I think Chris is uniquely equipped, not only given the fact that he's a commander in the U.S. Navy, but also was deployed, while he was the prosecutor, with the Navy SEALs in 2014 to Afghanistan," Deborah said. "Before that, he was in the terrorism unit at the U.S. attorney's office. We believe that certainly provides the foundation for a national security practice."

Drawing on her background as a judge, Deborah is planning on providing alternative dispute resolution, mediation and special master services.

They'll also handle white collar criminal defense at the state and federal level, Christopher said, in addition to outside general counsel work.

The pair, who have three children, met while working together at the New Jersey U.S. attorney's office. They say they are confident they can build a successful law firm together with their legal background and their managerial and multitasking skills.

"You should have seen what she had went through in 2014," Christopher said. "At the time, Debbie was the deputy executive director of the Port Authority, I was overseas in a combat zone, she's got three young kids. If she can get through that, she can get through anything."

And although a private practice is a divergence from their public roles, they say they can get the job done while also raising their family.

"We're going to be working just as hard," Deborah said. "No one has a better work ethic than my husband anyway, but we also have been achieving the work-life balance for the better part of the last 14 years since we had children, and we don't see that changing now."

And "this isn't the first time we've worked together," she added.

"Debbie and I have been together for 18 years, married for 16, and this is something we've always kind of harbored professionally," Christopher said. "Candidly, and not to embarrass her, I can't imagine going into business with anybody better than the best attorney that I know. It was not a hard decision for us."

--Editing by Brian Baresch.

Correction: An earlier version of this article misstated the location of one of the firm's offices. The error has been corrected.