

Lawyer in landmark suit opens his own law firm

He's battling a top Wall Street firm that once fired him. He's taking on the state and Big Tobacco for a lawyer friend trying to get paid.



Beasley

And in the midst of it, Jim Beasley has decided to start his own law firm.

Not enough on your plate, Jim?

"Honestly, I want to have more control over my own life," said Beasley, now a partner in Tew & Beasley with his old pal, Tom Tew. "I just want to be completely independent."

Starting in December, Beasley and former associates David Leacock and Robert Hauser will be known as Beasley Leacock & Hauser in West Palm Beach.

Beasley and Tew have a history together, first when Beasley joined Tew's law firm, Tew Jordan Schulte & Beasley in the 1980s. He joined up with Tew again after a rocky stint at Cadwalader Wickersham & Taft, a Wall Street firm with a former Palm Beach presence.

Beasley made legal history when he sued and won millions from the firm after a judge ruled it had improperly fired him in 1994. Both sides now are locked in an appeal.

Beasley also represents Bob Montgomery in his effort to get the state to pay him what it promised for his work on a lawsuit against tobacco companies.

Tew, who has a Miami office, said he plans to keep the West Palm Beach office open and staff it with more attorneys.

— ALEXANDRA CLOUGH