

Ex-Lewis Brisbois Hospitality Ace Joins Signature Resolution

By James Mills

Law360 (March 19, 2025, 4:21 PM EDT) -- Alternative dispute resolution service Signature Resolution is bringing in a recently retired Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLP hospitality industry litigator to join its panel of neutrals.

Litigator David Samuels, who retired at the end of 2024, has joined the service after more than 30 years as an attorney, Signature Resolution announced Tuesday. He was a partner with Lewis Brisbois for the past eight years, and was with Michelman & Robinson LLP for 17 years before that.

Samuels will work out of the downtown Los Angeles and Century City offices, but will also handle virtual cases as well.

In a Wednesday morning interview, Samuels told Law360 Pulse that he has long known that when he retired from litigation, he would become a neutral.

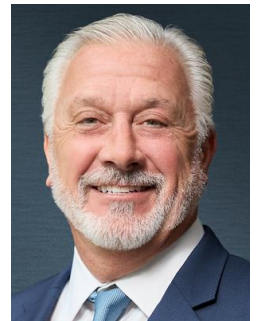
"I was a hardcore litigator for almost 35 years," Samuels said. "35 years of litigation is enough. I made the decision a year ago that it was going to be my last year of litigation. My plan for a couple of years had been to eventually stop litigating and transition to mediation."

He enjoyed working with Signature as a litigator and is excited about becoming one of Signature's neutrals.

"When I spoke with Dario [Higuchi, Signature's founder and managing member], it just became a no-brainer that was where I should go," Samuels said. "As a litigator, I had done a whole bunch of mediations with mediators at Signature. So, I was very familiar with the company, familiar with quite a few of their neutrals and just felt it was the right fit for me."

Samuels thinks his experience in the hospitality industry, specially with hotels, will help him in mediating disputes in hospitality, business and commercial litigation, premises liability, and other complex business matters.

"I think what caught Dario's attention was the fact I've spent the past 25 years really focusing my practice on the hospitality industry," he said. "I don't know of any other mediators who are on the market who have depth and breadth of experience in the hospitality industry that I do. It puts me in a unique position in respect to hospitality related cases."



David Samuels

He expects to get a lot of personal injury cases — another area where he has a lot of experience.

"Over my career, I've done almost every kind of personal injury, both plaintiff and defense. That's where my bread and butter is, mediating personal injury cases," Samuels said. "I certainly understand the issues on both sides and I have the ability to effectively connect with the parties, with their attorneys and help them work their way to common ground and get to a resolution."

Signature Resolution was founded in 2017 and has six California offices: downtown Los Angeles, Century City, San Diego, Oakland, San Jose and San Francisco, plus virtual services.

"We are thrilled to welcome David Samuels to Signature Resolution," Higuchi said in a statement. "David's deep understanding of the hospitality and hotel industry makes him a unique addition to our team. Having known David for many years, we are confident that he'll deliver the highest level of service to our clients with his thorough, empathetic mediation style."

Samuels, who grew up in Southern California, earned his law degree in 1991 at Pepperdine University School of Law after earning his bachelor's degree in English and physical education at the University of California, Davis.

He worked two-and-a-half years as a research attorney for the Los Angeles County Superior Courts, then joined Fonda and Hilberman LLP as an associate for five years, according to his LinkedIn profile.

He moved briefly to the Law Offices of Allen Sigel, then in 2000 joined Michelman & Robinson shortly after it launched.

"I was the fourth lawyer to join Michelman & Robinson back in 2000," Samuels said. "I was there on the ground floor with those guys in the beginning helping to build that place."

Then in 2017, he moved to Lewis Brisbois.

Although the majority of Signature's neutrals are retired judges, Samuels thinks being a litigator turned neutral will help him do the job well.

"I think as a seasoned litigator, having participated in thousands and thousands of mediations over my career, I think it has developed in me a skill set that judges never get sitting on the bench," Samuels said.

"As a judge sitting on the bench, you're deciding stuff, you're telling people what to do, you're making those decisions. That's not being a mediator," he said. "Being a mediator is finding the common ground, finding a way to help people resolve those disputes without wearing the robe and saying this is the way it's got to be. I think that actually gives me leg up over judges that are doing the same thing."

--Editing by Emily Kokoll.