

The Hour

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Goldman, Gruder & Woods marks 20 years in Norwalk



Photo by Michael Thut

Goldman, Gruder & Woods principals Michael Goldman, Ken Gruder and Matt Woods in front of the shark tank at the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk during the firm's 20th anniversary celebration on Thursday.

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NORWALK -- With plenty of champagne, a visit to the shark tank, a proclamation from Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling, and a donation to a local charity the law firm of Goldman, Gruder & Woods celebrated its 20th anniversary with a party at the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk on Thursday evening.

Goldman, Gruder & Woods, located at 200 Connecticut Ave., opened in Norwalk in 1995 with four employees. It now has 30 full-time employees and satellite offices in Greenwich and Trumbull. It practices in areas of law such as business and corporate law, litigation, injury, real estate, health care, and estate planning.

"Statistics from the SBA (Small Business Academy) show that 50 percent of all new businesses are gone after five years and only a third are still around after 10 years," said Michael Goldman, one of the

company's principals said. "That's why we're celebrating 20 years. It's hard to last that long, especially when everyone is a lawyer. We're more disagreeable than most people.

"Besides, life is too short to not have a party for good things," he added.

The firm announced on Thursday that it would be donating a number of graphing calculators to the Carver Foundation of Norwalk. The Carver Foundation assists local youth with services such as after-school programs, summer camps, and college scholarship funds. It puts on a strong emphasis on STEM subjects in its learning programs.

"It's a great gift for kids who wouldn't be able to afford these calculators. It would be a handicap for the kids to not have them. They are over \$100 each," Novelette Peterkin, executive director of the Carver Foundation, said at the celebration Thursday. "These calculators will be a big help."

Goldman said: "What better way to help the future of Norwalk than by helping the people who will be the future of Norwalk."

Goldman said the firm wanted to help a local nonprofit since the firm has been located in Norwalk since its founding.

"Norwalk has been very good to us," Goldman said. "Norwalk is not just client and brokers. It's home to us."

The night also included a proclamation signed by Rilling. Norwalk Common Councilman John Igneri read the proclamation in Rilling's absence.

The proclamation reads, in part: "the lawyers ... are at the forefront of their respective fields of practice. ... The firm is a regular and generous supporter of several Norwalk-based charities and organizations. The City of Norwalk appreciates (the firm) for contributing to and supporting the City."

Ken Gruder, another principal at the firm, said Goldman, Gruder & Woods is the now the largest law firm in Norwalk.

"We are a business that came to Norwalk with a total of five full time employees in 1995 and in the 20 years we've been here, we've grown into the largest law firm in the city, with more than 30 employees here," he said. "We now have additional offices in both Trumbull and Greenwich and our ability to serve clients in Fairfield County -- as well as throughout the state and beyond -- continues to grow."

Local real estate agent Betty Bondi, who attended Thursday's celebration as a guest, said she has always has good experiences working the with firm.

"They are local people and they provide great service," Bondi said. "They are there when you need them. I've worked with them on a lot of my deals and they always keep it together. They are a great asset to our community."