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If I ever need a Texas lawyer  
again, I'm going to call him.

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**Clients Tell Their Stories**

### ♥ Loyalty Matters

"How many lawyers do you know who would forego becoming part of a great firm like Andrews & Kurth so that they could see a client through a complicated and prolonged trial?" asked **Martha Williams**, general counsel of the Port of Houston Authority (PHA).

**Michael Connelly**, **Debra Baker**, and **Bill Jackson**, who were partners with the firm of Mayor, Day, Caldwell & Keeton prior to its Oct. 1, 2001 merger with Andrews & Kurth, did just that. They represented PHA in its efforts to investigate and file suit against several companies associated with a pesticides plant accused of contaminating property owned by PHA.

At the time of the proposed merger, Andrews & Kurth represented one of the defendants in the case. Because of the conflict of interest, Connelly, Baker, and Jackson could not join Andrews & Kurth and continue representing PHA in the case. It was also apparent that PHA's representation would be compromised if it had to change counsel. So, PHA's counsel formed their own firm of Connelly, Baker, Wotring & Jackson, L.L.P. and remained with their client. (**Ernest Wotring** was also a partner in Mayor Day, and joined the PHA team when the new firm was formed.)

"They are smart, honest, dedicated, and, most important, they did not abandon us," said a grateful Williams of the PHA

legal team. "By the time of the merger, [PHA] had invested two years on this case, and it would have been a hardship for us to start with new lawyers."

Williams, who has a master's degree in economics from St. Mary's University and a J.D. from the University of Texas School of Law, explained that the case is exceptionally complicated, and that a trial date of January 2004 is still several months away.

There have been more than one million pages of documents produced in the case, involving 50 years of pesticides production at a plant that has been owned and operated by a variety of U.S. and foreign interests through the years.

"They have done painstaking research and an exceptional job in analyzing the documents for this case," said Williams. "It's been a grueling process. We have a meeting every two weeks as a group.

"And talk about devotion? They literally have given us the clothes off their backs," said Williams. "In the middle of a meeting with Michael Connelly and Debra Baker, our environmental department manager Laura Fiffick got a sudden call that she had to give an environmental briefing to some VIPs. Laura was in jeans and a sports shirt. She and Debra are the same size, and Debra, who was dressed in a business suit, swapped clothes with her. Laura was off to meet with the VIPs — now, that is exceptional client/attorney service."

#### *Michael Connelly comments:*

*There are times when attorneys must choose between their own professional interests and client loyalty. The right choice was clear to all of us: we had an obligation to our client. As it turned out, the choice was also the best professional decision for everyone at Connelly, Baker, Wotring & Jackson, L.L.P.*