

CHICAGO LAWYER®



**TODD SMITH – PARTNER,
SMITH & LACIEN**

Launching a new firm during a pandemic? Todd Smith is surprised the timing didn't hurt his plans. The long-time plaintiff's attorney — and *Chicago Lawyer's* Person of the Year in 1998 — was amidst building out the new office at 70 W. Madison when the Daley Center went dark. The time out gave Smith and partner Brian LaCien time to help more on the build out.

"I don't take any pleasure in having

a pandemic, obviously, but to have the timing (of it) was better perhaps for me than others," he said. "We didn't have an office permanently yet, just temp space."

Despite Smith and his LaCien's stature in the community, Smith appreciated having a longer runway to get things humming at the launch of their firm.

"There was so much unknown at the time about what the courts could even do, even to this day it's difficult to say," Smith said. "You want to make sure people know you're available and out there. ... You never stop letting people know you're available."

As all the plaintiffs' attorneys have found the positives of working remotely, Smith is ready to get back into the office. He says it's important to have and be in an office near the Daley Center. Smith has dreams of being back downtown sometime this year.

"I'm generally an optimist. You have to be, for me anyway, as a trial lawyer. You have to believe in your cases and what you're doing," Smith said. "It's been an evolution to try and figure out the best way to do things. It's not natural for me to sit at the computer and do a deposition."

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