Hall Estill Adds Reed Smith Partner Leah Rudnicki as Oil and Gas Practice Expands

Hall Estill of Oklahoma is expanding its oil and gas practice with the addition of **Leah Rudnicki** to the firm's Oklahoma City office.

"Leah's distinctive background as in-house counsel, leader of an oil and gas company and extensive litigation experience will further enhance our expanding oil and gas practice," Michael D. Cooke, Hall Estill's managing partner, said. "She will provide our clients valuable strategic business advice along with superb litigation counsel."

Rudnicki, who was most recently a partner at Reed Smith in Houston, is an Oklahoma native who graduated from the University of Oklahoma College of Law in 2001.

"I have a long history with Hall Estill beginning in 1997 with a summer job while completing my undergraduate degree at the University of Oklahoma, and I'm grateful to be back," Rudnicki said. "Hall Estill has a solid vision and robust strategy for the future, and I look forward to serving our clients on issues that are important to their business."

Less than 10 years after law school, Leah was president of a private independent oil and gas operator with operations assets in Oklahoma and Texas. Under her management, the business grew from 17 operated wells in Oklahoma to nearly 300 operated wells in Oklahoma and Texas and from two to more than 30 employees.

In a release, Hall Estill said that, as a litigator in private practice, Rudnicki has represented, counseled and advised a diverse range of clients, from small independent businesses to

Fortune 500 companies in various disputes in front of state courts, federal multi-district panels, arbitration panels, and local and federal administrative agencies. Most recently, her practice has focused on general advice, litigation, and dispute resolution for oil and gas clients, including, landowner/joint venture disputes, drilling in city limits, alleged breach of joint operating agreements and lease agreements, issues related to horizontal drilling, fracking and disposal wells (water pollution/earthquakes), and royalty/JIB accounting disputes.

Rudnicki previously worked as in-house litigation counsel for a Fortune 500 oil and gas services company. In this position, she advised the company’s corporate litigation department and health, safety, environment, and security departments on a wide range of issues, including responding to potential new regulations affecting the oil and gas service industry. She was instrumental in updating, implementing, and communicating internal policies, preparing a strategy for effectively managing a national toxic tort docket and assessing successor liability claims.