

Business

Merchant & Gould veteran to form new firm

By Neal St. Anthony
Star Tribune Staff Writer

Alan Carlson, a 31-year veteran of Merchant & Gould and a leading attorney in intellectual property and patent litigation, is leaving the firm he once ran to start his own practice this month with several veterans of M&G and other firms, it will be announced today.

"I had a great time there, a great run," said Carlson, 57, the seventh lawyer hired at Merchant & Gould in 1971 and chairman from 1989 to 1995. "This is not about money. We just wanted our own firm.

"Entrepreneurs, whether at law firms or elsewhere, oftentimes want to do their own things. We have a group that

wants to step out and make its own mark. There isn't a lawyer here that has a harsh word for Merchant & Gould."

The new downtown Minneapolis firm — Carlson, Caspers, Vandenburg, Lindquist — will focus on intellectual property litigation and related work.

The Merchant & Gould veterans who are founding partners are Carlson, Phil Caspers, Derek Vandenburg and Tim Lindquist.

"We're just going to litigate and counsel," Carlson said. "We're not going to do the obtaining and registration of patents and trademarks. And that's a huge part of Merchant & Gould."

The lawyers previously won a \$30 million jury verdict for

Malt-O-Meal after Rubbermaid broke a contract and joined with competitor Quaker Oats to use a plastic container in packaging cereal.

Most recently, Carlson's team obtained a \$30 million settlement for ADC Telecommunications involving certain jacks and modules from competitor Thomas & Betts of Tennessee.

Carlson, also a mechanical engineer, has successfully represented clients ranging from bra maker Maidenform to a company that established that John Deere can't bar competitors from coloring their tractors green.

— *Neal St. Anthony is at
nstanthony@startribune.com.*