

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Johnson Pope Bolsters Expertise with Addition of Renowned Criminal Defense Team**

**TAMPA, FL – [August 1, 2025]** – Johnson Pope is pleased to announce the integration of the highly respected Todd Foster Law Group, a leading criminal defense boutique firm, into its practice. This strategic addition significantly expands Johnson Pope's capabilities in criminal defense, offering clients unparalleled expertise in both state and federal cases.

The Todd Foster Law Group, founded in 2012, brings a wealth of experience to Johnson Pope. Todd Foster, who will join as an Equity Partner, has been a member of the Bar for over 40 years. His career began as an FBI special agent focusing on organized crime and narcotics, followed by 11 years with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Houston and later Tampa, before entering private practice.

Joining Todd Foster at Johnson Pope are Kevin Darken as Partner, Melissa Kwitko as Associate, Rachel Wise as Associate, and Seth Bell as Investigator. The team will be based in Johnson Pope's Tampa office.

The Todd Foster Law Group is well-known for its core areas of criminal defense practice, including white-collar offenses, complex civil litigation, drug offenses, financial/securities litigation, Qui Tam litigation, and professional defense in state and federal criminal and enforcement areas. Mr. Foster has historically handled large, complex federal and state cases, with a particular focus on allegations of fraud in federal courts.

"The power the state or federal government when directed against an individual can be overpowering and overwhelming," said Todd Foster. "I have always worked to even that playing field on behalf of clients, and our proactive approach is just one example of how we affirmatively and aggressively represent clients and do not lay back to be overpowered".

Mr. Foster's notable case results include the dismissal of an indictment in

- **U.S. v. Aisenberg** – In this nationally publicized case, the Aisenbergs were accused of kidnapping their own child. The charges were ultimately dismissed after the defense, led by Todd, exposed false statements made in law enforcement's wiretap applications. As a result, the U.S. Department of Justice paid over \$1 million in attorneys' fees and costs, marking one of the first times the federal government was required to compensate a defendant.
- **U.S. v. W** – One of the first criminal trials brought under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA). The FCPA prohibits certain individuals and entities from

making payments to foreign officials to obtain or retain business. After a jury acquitted the defendant on all but one charge, the government moved to dismiss the remaining count.

- **U.S. v. Seawatch of Panama City** – A case involving a corporation and sons of owners charged with federal conspiracy premised upon misconduct of rogue employees. After a month long trial, the jury returned full acquittals within two hours. The defense secured a full jury acquittal for the corporation and the sons of its owners.
- **U.S. v. XX** – A local attorney and owner of law firm was charged with federal wire fraud and conspiracy associated with the operation of client's law firm. After four days of jury trial, the government moved to dismiss all charges with prejudice following Todd's cross examination of the two star accusing witnesses.
- **U.S. v. ZZ** – An attorney was federally indicted for fraud-related offenses connected to the provision of U.S. aid to a foreign nation. Following contentious pretrial litigation and a successful motion to compel evidence from FBI files, the government dismissed the case with prejudice.
- **U.S. v. VV** – A California-based supplier of construction products was indicted for product substitution fraud involving materials provided to NASA. The case resulted in a full acquittal.

A significant part of his practice involves pre-charge representation, working to prevent charges from being filed.

Mr. Foster was motivated to join Johnson Pope to offer his clients access to the firm's diverse areas of expertise. He also sees this as an opportunity to expand his market share in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County, leveraging Johnson Pope's growing presence there. For existing clients, the move will provide access to a wider range of legal expertise and more effective collaboration across different practices.

Todd Foster's commitment to his clients is deeply personal. "My philosophy is that my clients deserve the same commitment that I would expect a lawyer to give to a family member or close friend of mine," he stated.

Among his recognitions, Mr. Foster served on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) for six years. Earlier this year, he received the Hillsborough County Bar "In the Trenches" award, recognizing his trial litigation ability.

This integration reinforces Johnson Pope's commitment to providing comprehensive and high-quality legal services across a broad spectrum of practice areas.

**About Johnson Pope:**

Johnson Pope Bokor Ruppel & Burns, LLP is a full-service Florida law firm with offices in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Clearwater. With a history of delivering exceptional legal counsel since 1973, the firm provides comprehensive services across corporate, litigation, real estate, tax, estate planning, healthcare, intellectual property, and criminal defense. Johnson Pope is committed to delivering high-quality, client-focused representation to individuals, businesses, and institutions throughout the state and beyond. Learn more at [www.jpfirm.com](http://www.jpfirm.com).

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