

# Insights

## **Krieg DeVault Announces Steven M. Merkel as Firm's New Chief Operating Officer**

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December 10, 2025

Krieg DeVault LLP is pleased to announce that Steven M. Merkel has been named as the firm's new Chief Operating Officer ("COO"). Merkel will focus his efforts on overseeing the day-to-day operations of Krieg DeVault's six offices, as well as identifying strategic growth opportunities for the firm. Steve Merkel replaces Tom Kmiecik who has served as Krieg DeVault's COO since 2018. Kmiecik will remain with the firm until his retirement at the end of this year.

Prior to joining Krieg DeVault, Merkel served as Chief Operating Officer at Barnes & Thornburg, overseeing the firm's administrative and operational functions while partnering with leadership on long-term planning and growth.

Before his tenure began in legal operations, Merkel served a distinguished 30+year career in the United States Army, retiring at the rank of Colonel. His service included leading large, complex organizations and mission-critical operations. He served as Chief of Operations at the U.S. Military Academy (West Point) and as a brigade commander; he was Chief of Operations for a multinational security force in Kabul, Afghanistan; and he served as Chief of Operations for First U.S. Army. Merkel's earlier commands included brigade command at Camp Atterbury in Indiana and battalion command of a field artillery battalion in Hinesville, Georgia. Across these assignments, Merkel led teams ranging from small units to well over 4,000 personnel, managed multimillion-dollar budgets, and coordinated fast-paced, multijurisdictional environments. He also saw combat in Kosovo, Iraq, Afghanistan, and along the Turkey-Syria border.

"We are excited that Steve has joined Krieg DeVault," said Michael J. Messaglia, Krieg DeVault's Managing Partner. "Steve is a strong leader with a natural cultural alignment with our firm. He has shown throughout his career that he builds trust, empowers teams, and drives operational excellence in everything he touches. He brings a deep appreciation for culture, clarity, and collaboration to Krieg DeVault, and I am confident he will make a significant and lasting contribution to both our clients and our team."

"It is a privilege and honor to serve as the new COO at Krieg DeVault," said Merkel. "Krieg DeVault's recent growth and law firm acquisitions make it an exciting time to take on an integral leadership role with a well-respected firm."

### **About Krieg DeVault LLP**

Krieg DeVault LLP is a diversified law firm representing a range of local, regional, and national clients. Financial institutions, global manufacturers, national healthcare providers, successful organizations of different sizes and market focus, and individuals all rely on Krieg DeVault for solutions that create success. Krieg DeVault prides itself on delivering exceptional and innovative client service as a diverse, inclusive and collaborative team by living its CORE Values of Commitment, Ownership, Respect, and Excellence. The firm currently has offices in Indianapolis, Carmel, South Bend/Mishawaka, and Crown Point, Indiana, as well as



Chicago, Illinois. The firm will open its sixth office in Fort Wayne, Indiana, as part of its merger with Rothberg Logan & Warsco LLP on January 1, 2026.