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Former Ambassador David Huebner Joins JAMS in LA

By Steven Crighton
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David Huebner, a U.S. ambassador to New Zealand and the Independent State of Samoa during the Obama administration, has joined JAMS Inc. at its Los Angeles office, the company announced Wednesday.

Huebner, who served as ambassador from 2009 to 2014, was a partner at Arnold & Porter LLP for two years prior to accepting the JAMS position. Huebner said Wednesday that he'd predominantly handle international arbitration matters in his new post, which has been the focus of his practice for 25 years.

JAMS provided an ideal venue for the move, he said, as he wouldn't have to worry about the conflicts that often come from working in big law.

"What attracted me to the international aspect of the arbitration practice is the complexity that these cases bring — different kinds of people with different backgrounds, different rule sets. I really enjoy it," Huebner said.

When parties in a dispute hail from different jurisdictions, Huebner said it can complicate matters already complex enough on their own merit.

If there's a contract dispute between Chinese and American parties, for example,

there could be an issue where three Chinese characters take on a significantly different meaning when translated into English. Huebner's dedicated his practice to ironing out the creases those barriers can cause.

"The dynamic is very similar internationally and domestically, but when you've got these layers of different legal structures, different business environments, different financial imperatives, you might be neglecting to think about the way things could go wrong and how you go about addressing that," Huebner said.

Huebner's practice placed an emphasis on intellectual property-based disputes and energy and construction issues, two areas with substantive international roots based in Southern California.

"A lot of us in Southern California haven't fully recognized the degree to which energy, construction and intellectual property are globalized local industries," Huebner said. "If one is focused on just the part of the chain where the property is produced, they may not be focused on the need to protect that property in more than 100 global jurisdictions."

Huebner has overseen more than 100 arbitrations in two dozen jurisdictions worldwide, and in 2016, he was chosen by President Barack Obama as one of



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four American designees for a panel of arbitrators for the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes. He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and a law degree from Yale Law School.

"Ambassador Huebner's experience combines public service, diplomacy, and international prowess," Chris Poole, president and CEO of JAMS, said in a statement. "We're very pleased to have him join our panel."

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