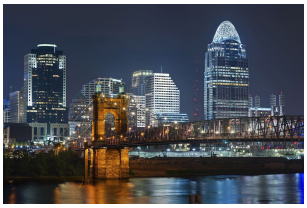

Frost Brown Todd celebrates 100-year anniversary

Oct 25, 2019

Categories:

Press Releases

Authors:

Christopher S. Habel

The evolution of Cincinnati and its businesses over the last 100 years is impressive and one law firm has been right there helping it grow — Frost Brown Todd. Frost & Jacobs was founded in 1919 by then Cincinnati Vice Mayor Carl Jacobs and prominent attorney and civic leader Henry Frost. The two had a simple goal — meet the changing needs of companies and the city.

Many of the original clients are still clients. In the 1920s, the firm represented Cincinnati & Suburban Bell Telephone Company on right of way cases and we still represent Cincinnati Bell today. The firm successfully represented the Saunders Drive it Yourself System as it fought a 1923 ordinance requiring a license fee of $20 for "driverless automobiles," what were the first rental cars. Today the firm is recognized nationally for its auto industry expertise. In the 1940s Frost & Jacobs defended Wright Aeronautical on significant cases at its aircraft engine plant in Evendale and today we represent, and several of our alumni work for, what is now GE Aviation.

In the 1950s, Frost & Jacobs handled the acquisition of the Cincinnati Enquirer by its employees. Attorney Frank Dale went on to become Publisher of the Enquirer. In the 1960s, Dale led a group that bought the Reds to keep the team in Cincinnati and he took on the role of President of the Cincinnati Reds while the Big Red Machine was being built. United Shoe Corporation, Armco, Cincinnati Gas & Electric and their legacies like LensCrafters, AK Steel and Duke Energy have all benefited from decades of the work of the firm's attorneys. Over the years, the Firm has played significant roles in the real estate, financing and construction aspects of Riverfront Stadium, Covington Landing, The Banks, the Aronoff Center and the transformation of OTR to name just a few iconic Cincinnati projects.

"We get so focused on the day-to-day needs of our clients, this 100th anniversary has let us step back and observe the impact Frost Brown Todd has made on Cincinnati's business community,"

2026 FBT Gibbons LLP. All rights reserved. ADVERTISING MATERIAL.

FBT Gibbons

said Member-in-Charge Chris Habel. “While we are proud of the century of exceptional legal service we provided, it’s our philanthropy and leadership in moving the community forward that means the most. The transformative initiatives, boards and organizations that our attorneys and alumni have led to make Greater Cincinnati greater over the past century are too many to count. While we have experienced substantial growth over the past century, our culture has not changed. In the first winter of the Great Depression, Henry Frost led a group that donated railcars of coal to the Community Chest, now United Way, so needy families could heat their homes. For the past several years, Frost Brown Todd has been the only law firm in the Top 25 of United Way donors.”

A leader in “firsts” and diversity, the firm named the city’s first black partner in 1993, and the first openly LGBTQ partner in 2004. The firm had partners on flexible schedules in the 1990s before the term work-life balance existed. Today, the firm continues to be at the forefront of breaking the walls of inequality. Its ongoing efforts include tracking diversity by seeking a Mansfield 3.0 certification, providing diversity scholarships to students each year, and regularly ranking at the top of diversity and inclusion awards. FBT is a “Top 100 Law Firm for Women,” a “Best Place to Work” for LGBTQ Equality, seven-time “Gold Standard Law Firm” to name a few.

The foundation Frost & Jacobs built in Cincinnati has helped the firm grow to an AmLaw200 firm in 13 markets and nine states. Frost & Jacobs merged with Brown, Todd and Heyburn in 2000, forming what is now known as Frost Brown Todd. On the 100-year anniversary, the firm expanded to Ann Arbor, Mich. where the office will focus on startup, emerging company, and venture capital fund clients in the mobility and transportation, manufacturing, technology and health care industries.

© 2026 FBT Gibbons LLP. May be considered attorney advertising in some jurisdictions.

2026 FBT Gibbons LLP. All rights reserved. ADVERTISING MATERIAL.

FBT Gibbons