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Joel Tantalo “always had this itch” to be an entrepreneur. But a successful legal career working for high-profile employers in Los Angeles seemed to preclude becoming his own boss. Last October, however, the 1996 graduate decided the time had come. After much discussion with his wife, Rebecca, a corporate attorney, he launched Tantalo & Adler, a boutique law firm with an address on famed Wilshire Boulevard in Beverly Hills, Calif.

A service fellow at Xavier, Tantalo studied law at Georgetown University. While there, his closest law-school friend convinced him to take an internship in Los Angeles. Tantalo was hooked. “I fell in love with L.A.,” he says.

So, following graduation, Tantalo moved to Los Angeles to work for Gibson Dunn & Crutcher, a large international firm, where he focused on high-stakes litigation in entertainment and legal malpractice. In July 2005, Tantalo became a production attorney—essentially a consulting role—for NBC Universal Television Group. Along the way, Tantalo was twice named a Southern California Rising Star by *Law & Politics* and *Los Angeles Magazine*.

But the entrepreneurial itch finally demanded to be scratched. Tantalo’s new firm, which specializes in complex business disputes, media and entertainment, intellectual property, legal malpractice defense, appellate litigation and corporate transactions, allows opportunities for more hands-on litigation, which he likes. And it offers other advantages as well.

“It ties back to my days at Xavier,” he says. “In a big firm, life can feel like your time is no longer your own. One of my goals is to become more involved in community and volunteer work like I did at Xavier. Having the time to be the soccer coach or the basketball coach played a significant role in the decision to make a go of this.”

GREG SCHABER