

# The Legal Intelligencer

## More Notable Hires: The 2024 Runners-Up

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The top lateral moves list included several important hires from across the state. But there were 10 more jumps that took place over the course of 2024 that deserve another look.

The runners-up list includes several interesting moves. Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young added a former Vanguard GC to lead its investment management practice, Saul Ewing snagged two corporate attorneys from Armstrong Teasdale, bolstering the firm's bench in the mid-Atlantic region, and former Cosby prosecutor Kristin Gibbons Feden left Saltz Mongeluzzi Bendesky, joining Anapol Weiss to start new sexual abuse and civil rights litigation practices there.

Many of these attorneys made these moves to help extend the reach of their practices. Essentially they were looking for better opportunities for growth. Business development, finances, hospitality and health sciences were among the practices featured in these moves.

### Eckert Seamans Snags Reed Smith Global Financial Intelligence Director

Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott nabbed a Big Law alum to join its C-suite back in December, bringing on Mark Peterson, the former Reed Smith global director of financial intelligence, as chief financial officer.

Peterson, who left Reed Smith after spending 21 years in five different information technology and analytics roles there, was the second Big Law C-suite addition for Eckert Seamans in 2024. The firm brought on a chief operating officer from DLA Piper at the start of the year, the first COO it has appointed in 10 years.

“Our prior CFO [Kevin Krese] lives in Cleveland and decided to take a job closer to home [with Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease],” said Eckert Seamans CEO Scott Cessar at the time of the move. “We went out to interview and Mark really touched all the bases, all three legs of the stool [that we were looking for].

“He has the financial background and expertise to serve as CFO ... but beyond that, he brings some really first-rate experience in analytics and law firm profitability, including attorney profitability, practice group and office profitability,” Cessar continued. “He can help us step our game up to the next level.”

As part of his experience at Reed Smith, Peterson founded the firm's financial intelligence unit, which helped provide financial dashboards and insights, and also served as chair of its enterprise data strategy team.

#### Stradley Bolsters Investment Management Practice With Vanguard Hire

Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young added a former Vanguard associate general counsel who headed the investment giant's enterprise growth legal team to its firm's investment management practice as a partner in Philadelphia. The firm was looking to bolster its regulatory expertise on exchange-traded funds.

Brian Murphy worked at Vanguard for just over a decade, leading three different legal teams at the company under his tenure; previously, he served as counsel at the U.S. Securities and Exchange commission for 10 years, allowing him to accumulate both industry and regulatory knowledge that he will use to help clients.

"My expertise at the SEC, where I learned about funds regulations, and Vanguard, where I learned about the funds business, provides a really great vantage point to help clients navigate those two aspects," Murphy said in an interview. "I've spent a lot of my career managing legal issues and understanding the law."

The job at Stradley Ronon was Murphy's first stint in private practice.

#### Norton Rose Business Development Head Moves to Ballard

Norton Rose Fulbright global head of business development Ian Ribald joined Ballard Spahr as its new chief marketing and business development officer in August.

The move was the latest leadership loss for Norton Rose Fulbright, ranked 15 in the Am Law 200, after its CEO abruptly retired in September 2023. Following that retirement, several of the firm's global management team departed to other platforms, including Allen & Overy, Linklaters, and London-based shop Stewarts.

"I have all the respect in the world for Norton Rose," Ribald said of his decision to move. "This was less about Norton and more about Ballard and where I'm at in my career."

"Ballard has a national practice similar to my experience with Norton in the United States," he said, nodding to his experience helping manage Norton Rose's disputes practice over the course of nine total years spent at the firm. Yet Ribald also highlighted Ballard's ambitious aims for growth was another of his reasons to join.

"Their interest in growth and development was something that was a highlight for me—it was important to me," he said. "And having met with all the leadership and senior partners, it was very clear that marketing and business development was a hyperfocus for them."

#### Duane Morris Adds Whiteford Hospitality Chair

Duane Morris expanded its offerings in Pittsburgh by adding Gosia Kosturek, a Whiteford, Taylor & Preston hospitality group chair, to its litigation-centric office in August.

Bringing on Kosturek and her clients added a transactional flavor to the office, with Kosturek tapped to handle both buyer and seller side transactions, management and franchise agreements, and operational issues in the hospitality industry.

Kosturek, who spent a large part of her career with Eckert Seamans prior to joining Whiteford, Taylor & Preston in 2022, rejoined several former Eckert Seamans colleagues who moved to Duane Morris in 2021, including Pittsburgh office managing partner and litigator Kevin Allen.

"I joined here three years ago with a group of four from Eckert. ... We had the pleasure of working with Gosia there," Allen said in an interview. "She started there as an associate out of law school, and we saw her rise, very quickly, all the way to equity partner and leadership roles at Eckert. We're excited to add her to Duane Morris."

In an interview at the time of her move, Kosturek said she was looking for a larger platform and she knew of lawyers who had successfully moved from Eckert a couple of years ago. "There are a lot of cross-selling opportunities for me and my practice here ... and I had a lot of synergies with [things] that people were already doing at Duane Morris in the industry. I have the opportunity to connect some of those dots and help people with their practice."

### **Armstrong Teasdale Dealmakers Jump to Saul Ewing**

**Saul Ewing snagged two corporate attorneys from Armstrong Teasdale, bolstering its bench in the mid-Atlantic region.**

**Attorneys Julia Taylor and Michael Petrizzo joined the Philadelphia-founded Am Law 200 firm as partners effective June 3, bringing their clients along with them in the move.**

**"Saul Ewing is really an excellent opportunity for us to better serve our existing and future clients," Taylor said. "They have an excellent footprint and wonderful professionals; we're excited to be at the firm."**

**Petrizzo was tapped to be based in the firm's Philadelphia and New York offices, while Taylor moved into the firm's Washington, D.C., office.**

**"We are very excited to have Julia and Michael join us. They are both top-notch corporate lawyers and will really be terrific additions to our Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia offices and Saul's nationwide corporate and M&A practice," Saul Ewing corporate practice co-chair Michael Gold said in a statement in June.**

**Both attorneys focus on midmarket clients and have observed a fair amount of industry-dependent deal flow, although not quite reaching the high-water marks of 2021 and 2022. The cannabis industry in particular, Taylor said, had become sluggish, with clients reevaluating their presences in less-profitable states.**

**Harrisburg Boutiques Combine, Doubling Head Count**

Harrisburg boutiques SkarlatosZonarich and Mette, Evans & Woodside merged in a combination in April. The merger doubled their respective head counts in a move that intended to emphasize innovation and collaboration as well as expand practice expertise.

The combined 25-lawyer firm retained the name Mette, Evans & Woodside.

"As a business owner and a principal in a law firm, you're constantly looking for strategic opportunities in the marketplace to position yourself better for your clients, for your employees, and to continue to grow the firm and just do better day after day," said SkarlatosZonarich managing member John B. Zonarich. "It became very apparent after that first meeting [with Mette] that the conversations were easy, that the strategy and the outlook made sense, and that there was a real actual opportunity to explore here."

Zonarich was incorporated into the combined firm's board of directors alongside Mette, Evans & Woodside leaders Ben Ried and Tom Archer. Ried and Zonarich confirmed that the two firms merged in their entirety with no attorneys or staff opting to move elsewhere. The combined firm included about 10 shareholders, 15 associates and 25 staff members.

The merger also introduces new practices to Mette, specifically elder law, special needs planning, and tax law.

"This was an opportunity to take two law firms that have been around for decades and really look at the best practices of both law firms, taking the combined talent and forming something new and revitalizing both organizations with this new entry," Zonarich said.

#### Ex-Cosby Prosecutor Leaves Saltz Mongeluzzi for Anapol Weiss

Former Bill Cosby prosecutor Kristen Gibbons Feden left Saltz Mongeluzzi Bendesky to start new sexual abuse and civil rights litigation practices as a shareholder at Anapol Weiss back in March. Feden, the fourth attorney to join Anapol Weiss so far this year, was preceded in the move by another former Saltz Mongeluzzi attorney, Marni Berger, who joined the firm on Feb. 14.

"We are really thrilled with the direction the firm is moving and the strength and depth we've added," Tom Anapol, son of firm founder Paul Anapol and firm shareholder, said in an interview. "We've turned a corner and are going to go full steam ahead and focus on the future."

Feden rose to national attention following her role in both of Cosby's sexual assault trials in Montgomery County in 2017 and 2018, making further headlines in 2023 after scoring two eight-figure verdicts in one day, including a \$10.5 million award for six harassment and intimidation claims against rapper R. Kelly.

#### Former GSK Patent Leader Moves to Troutman Pepper

Former GlaxoSmithKline vice president of U.S. pharmaceutical patents Duke Fitch announced his move to Troutman Pepper Hamilton & Sanders (now Troutman Pepper Locke) as a health sciences intellectual property partner in the Philadelphia suburbs.

Fitch, who worked with GSK for over 20 years, joined Troutman Pepper's Berwyn office on Feb. 7, 2024.

Prior to joining Troutman, Fitch held a number of positions at GSK, starting out at the pharmaceutical company as a medicinal chemist before joining the company's patent department in 2008 and concurrently attending Temple University's Beasley School of Law.

"My career advancement opportunities were limited [if I stayed] in the scientific world," Fitch explained. "It seemed like there were much greater opportunities and a chance to have a bigger impact on programs within the company as a patent attorney as opposed to a scientist."

From there, Fitch joined the company's general counsel team and worked his way up to VP of pharmaceutical patents, where he led a team of attorneys and bore overall responsibility for GSK's discovery portfolio.

Now, Fitch is entering into his first private practice position at Troutman Pepper.

"It was a really fantastic opportunity to work with some really great people," Fitch said. "This gave me a great opportunity to look outside the four walls of a place where I had been for a really long time."

#### Vaughan Baio Opens New Offices

Midsize business litigation and insurance defense firm Vaughan Baio & Partners opened new offices in Long Island and Cherry Hill, New Jersey, with firm founder and managing partner Joseph Vaughan hinting at more new offices to come in 2024.

Vaughan brought on workers' compensation attorney Charli Baldinger from New York boutique Terry Katz & Associates to manage the Long Island location in mid-January, just days before adding on another workers' compensation attorney, Justin Callow, from personal injury firm Malamut & Associates to the firm's preexisting Newark office.

Adding its growth in the new year, the firm then hired real estate and transactions attorney George Matteo Jr. from Connell Foley to spearhead the new Cherry Hill location in an effort to expand the firm's practice offerings as well as cross-sell services to Matteo's clients.

"We do a wide swath of practice areas. Until now it has been mostly on the business defense, insurance defense side of things for casualty lawsuits," Vaughan explained. "With George, we embark on a more regional practice outside of those core areas, but they overlap in many ways, such as land use, real estate and banking."

"I am somewhat of an outlier from how the firm has grown in practice areas," Matteo acknowledged. "I was looking for greater support in this market ... a lot of my clients are businesses that tend to and do, from time to time, need some of the other services that the firm provides."

#### Ballard Spahr Data Privacy Co-Chair Jumps to Blank Rome

Blank Rome added partner Philip Yannella to its Philadelphia office as co-chair for the firm's privacy, security, and data protection practice.

Yannella was tapped to co-lead Blank Rome's team alongside partner Sharon Klein, who helped found Blank Rome's Orange County, California, office three years ago in a group lateral move. Yannella joined the firm from Ballard Spahr, where he also served as a privacy and data security department co-chair.

"It was just a great opportunity that was presented to me. Blank Rome has a tremendous reputation particularly in the privacy space," Yannella said of the move. "The firm does a lot of the sort of cutting-edge, sophisticated work that, frankly, I wanted to do more of."

"It's a bigger and better platform for me to be able to expand my work," he added.

A litigator by training, Yannella began doing privacy work in 2006, although his field of work has broadened in the years since.

"Over the years, my work has just grown and grown from EU data privacy issues to really everything under the sun that relates to data," he said. "I'm really a data and digital technology lawyer who specializes in the litigation space."