DAILY REPORT

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Saul Ewing Adds Smith Gambrell IP Partner to New Atlanta Office, and Kilpatrick Lands Kirkland Litigator in Dallas

Also, Phelps Dunbar adds a longtime in-house tax attorney to growing Nashville office.

6 minute read | November 02, 2026 at 04:17 PM By Thomas Spigolon



Matthew "Matt" Warenzak (left) of Saul Ewing and Ethan Levinton of Kilpatrick. Courtesy photos

What You Need to Know

- Saul Ewing added a seasoned intellectual property partner in Atlanta.
- Matthew Warenzak joined the firm last week from Smith Gambrell & Russell, where he practiced for 15 years.
- Kilpatrick added Kirkland & Ellis litigator Ethan Levinton in Dallas Monday with a class-action defense practice.

Firms new to Atlanta and with long roots in the city added veteran expertise in intellectual property and class action defense in recent days in two cities.

Saul Ewing added a seasoned intellectual property partner in Atlanta as the firm

begins the process of growing its month-old office to reflect the national firm's breadth while strengthening a core practice area.

Matthew Warenzak joined the firm last week from Smith Gambrell & Russell, where he practiced for 15 years after rising from senior associate to partner.

Domingos Silva, chair of the firm's IP practice, said potential clients for Warenzak include research institutions, emerging companies and global businesses.

"His experience across patent, trademark, copyright and trade secret matters adds important depth to our capabilities in Atlanta and nationally," Silva said in a statement.

Atlanta office managing partner Steven Reingold has said the Am Law Second Hundred firm's strategy for its Atlanta office is to grow its practice areas to reflect what the firm offers nationally, especially in industries like higher education.

Warenzak said he believed his addition was part of Saul Ewing's growth strategy for its IP practice in Atlanta and firmwide.

"I feel that I can help them grow that presence here, especially with my connections in the IP community, and make Saul Ewing a more recognized name here in the market, especially on the IP side," Warenzak said.

The addition of Warenzak follows Saul Ewing's early recruiting process in Atlanta that has included transferring its own attorneys from other offices or adding single laterals in different practice areas who had lengthy stints with other firms.

The firm opened its office in September with real estate and environmental attorney Rebecca Davis from Arnall Golden Gregory; labor and employment litigator Peter Hall from Holland & Knight; and Scott Rafshoon from Squire Patton Boggs with a practice focusing on public-private partnerships involving all levels of government.

Reingold already had practiced remotely with Saul Ewing for four years in Atlanta before being promoted to serve as the office managing partner, while consumer financial services attorney Patrick Tracey relocated from Saul Ewing's Boston office to help open the Atlanta outpost.

After serving clients in Georgia for about a decade, the firm opted to open immediately in a permanent space—the Promenade Central building on Peachtree Street—with a long-term lease rather than a temporary location as other national firms had done after entering the Atlanta market, Reingold said.

Warenzak said in an interview his IP practice grew from solely focused on patent prosecution, to a mix of general IP litigation covering trademarks, copyright and trade secrets, he said. He has worked in industries including telecommunications, flooring, software, recreational gear and more, according to the firm.

He said a majority of his clients—some of whom include research institutions and consumer products manufacturing—were moving with him to Saul Ewing. The firm's nationally-known brand and reputation in IP and higher education could help him grow his practice faster than his former firm—which had developed as more of a regional focus with an IP practice not as well known nationally, he said.

Warenzak said Saul Ewing "had a very strong IP practice and reputation outside of the Southeast.

"I was not looking to move or anything along those lines," he said. "An opportunity was presented to me that I had never had before, which was to help grow a new office in Atlanta.

"Given the reputation of Saul Ewing, especially in my area of practice, intellectual property law, with a focus on patents, and the chance to help grow something associated with that brand, it was something that I just couldn't pass up," Warenzak said.

In addition to Smith Gambrell Russell, Warenzak also previously practiced with Ballard Spahr, Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton and Robbins Geller Rudman & Dowd.

Smith Gambrell Russell did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In Dallas and New York City, Kilpatrick focused on deepening its complex commercial litigation team bench in recent days with partners joining from other Am Law 100 firms.

The Atlanta-founded firm added Kirkland & Ellis litigator Ethan Levinton in Dallas Monday with a practice that includes defense of companies in class actions, False Claims Act matters and government investigations.

Tom Clyde, co-leader of Kilpatrick's complex commercial litigation team, said Levinton "brings experience that complements a number of Kilpatrick's core strengths and creates meaningful opportunities for collaboration across our litigation, regulatory, privacy, and intellectual property practices."

"His arrival further positions us to help clients navigate complex challenges that rarely fit neatly within a single practice area," Clyde said in a statement. "He also adds trial depth to our Dallas team as we continue to grow in the market."

In New York City, the firm added commercial litigator George Soumalevris Oct. 19 from Venable with a practice that focuses on structured finance litigation, commercial real estate finance disputes, and distressed debt disputes.

Gwendolyn Payton, co-leader of Kilpatrick's complex commercial litigation team, said in a statement the addition of Soumalevris strengthens the firm's ability to serve capital markets clients in New York, "one of the most important jurisdictions for commercial real estate and structured finance litigation, while expanding the firm's capabilities nationally."

Meanwhile, another Am Law 200 firm, Phelps Dunbar, had its sights set on growing in Nashville in recent weeks.

Phelps Dunbar added veteran in-house tax attorney David Gilinsky as a partner in the Music City last week in a move that "strengthens the firm's ability to support clients in structuring transactions, managing tax risk and pursuing other business endeavors."

Gilinsky joined the firm from a job as senior director of tax planning for multinational auto parts company LKQ Corp., and vice president of tax planning for Restaurant Brands International that owns the Tim Hortons, Burger King, Popeyes and Firehouse Subs brands. He is the fourth partner in the firm's business group in Nashville to join Phelps this year

Doug Wolford, Phelps' Nashville office managing partner, said in a statement Gilinsky "is an important part of our continued expansion in Nashville, where we have added experienced lawyers in mergers and acquisitions and real estate to give our clients cohesive middle-market deal support across Tennessee and throughout our platform."