



Portfolio Media. Inc. | 230 Park Avenue, 7th Floor | New York, NY 10169 | www.law360.com
Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Cooley's Bench-Growing Bet On More Gov't Scrutiny Paid Off

By **Andrea Keckley**

Law360 (November 15, 2024, 4:01 PM EST) -- Five years ago, Cooley LLP decided to grow its litigation bench in anticipation of rising federal and state government scrutiny, especially toward its technology-heavy client base.

Today, the firm's newly expanded team is reaping the benefits of that foresight as litigation work in the area has surged.

Since 2019, Cooley has hired more than 40 litigation partners in the United States and Europe, often in Washington, D.C., and other East Coast locations. The firm credits its work for innovative companies for much of its success in achieving its goal to expand the group.

"That has fueled a lot of our growth — the idea that if you come to Cooley, you will work with the most innovative and disruptive companies in the world," Michael Attanasio, chair of the litigation department, told Law360 Pulse.

Only two of those lateral additions have since left the firm.

One of them, Lindsay Jenkins, became a federal judge in the Northern District of Illinois. The other, Elizabeth Prelogar, is now solicitor general of the United States, the second woman ever to hold that title.

"Stepping back, when we set out to build an appellate and Supreme Court practice, we landed on a leader who we thought we could recruit to do that, and her name was Elizabeth Prelogar," Attanasio said. "And it worked very well for 13 months until President Biden and Merrick Garland had other ideas."

When Cooley needed to find a leader for the congressional investigations practice it launched earlier this year, Attanasio said it used the same strategy it had used to find Prelogar: "Find the best and brightest, appeal to the candidate based on Cooley's place in the industry as the go-to firm at the intersection of law and technology, and then recruit."

They found former Kaplan Hecker & Fink LLP partner Susanne Grooms, who has held counsel roles in Congress, the U.S. Department of Justice and the Internal Revenue Service.

"We've seen many of our clients receive requests from congressional committees and subcommittees

for information and testimony," Attanasio said. "We've seen many investigations of innovative and disruptive companies. So, we thought it was important to have expertise and bench strength in that area. The addition of Susanne Grooms to our team in D.C. has been a grand slam for Cooley and for our clients."

The practice launch came as the pace of congressional oversight drove competition for attorneys in this space. More than two dozen BigLaw firms have established congressional investigations practice groups in recent years.

"I believe that people we recruit are very enthusiastic about the types of clients that Cooley represents and the opportunity to work with those clients on novel legal issues because our clients face increasing scrutiny from government agencies and from Congress, but a lot of the time that scrutiny is based on challenges or skepticism about innovation," Attanasio said.

Many of Cooley's litigation hires over the past five years are former prosecutors, including several DOJ division leaders. Others came from federal agencies, like Elliot Kaye, who previously chaired the Consumer Products Safety Commission. Kaye, former senior vice president at food relief organization World Central Kitchen, joined the firm in June.

The firm has also invested in this growth with CooleyREG, the regulatory platform it launched last year, to help such clients stay on top of evolving regulations.

CooleyREG "has also added a new dimension to the firm's offering by focusing on different agencies that affect our clients," Attanasio said.

A nine-year veteran of the DOJ, Attanasio said he "couldn't be more thrilled" with how the litigation department is performing today.

"They are excellent trial lawyers and litigators in their own right who can do anything because [many] have that excellent training that comes with [public sector] experience, and they have been enormously successful in the courtroom for Cooley," he said.

--Additional reporting by Ryan Boysen and Emily Field. Editing by Robert Rudinger.