

Cooley Promotes NY Office Leader to Global Litigation Department Chair

By Samson Amore

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What You Need to Know

- Cooley promoted Ian Shapiro to global litigation practice head.
- Shapiro takes over the role from Michael Attanasio, who assumed the role in 2013 and will resume private practice full-time.
- Recruiting AI, crypto, life sciences and social media businesses as clients is a priority, Shapiro said.

Cooley has promoted New York partner-in-charge Ian Shapiro to chair of its global litigation practice, the firm announced Tuesday.

Shapiro will take over the role after roughly a year as vice chair of the department. He succeeds Michael Attanasio, who held the role for 12 years. Attanasio will continue in his role on Cooley's board of directors and will resume his litigation work full-time following the change.

"Having a New York partner serve as Cooley's litigation department chair for the first time in the firm's history is emblematic of our evolution from a firm with its roots in California to



Courtesy photo

Ian Shapiro of Cooley

a nationally renowned litigation heavyweight," Attanasio said. "Our growth and success will continue, and I couldn't be happier to contribute by returning to my roots in the courtroom as a trial lawyer while supporting the firm and the department in every way possible."

Shapiro has been at Cooley for more than 21 years, beginning his career as an associate at Cooley in 2003. He was named partner in 2010.

"My overarching ambition is to continue Cooley's unmistakable emergence as the elite

litigation practice for tech, life sciences, and other innovative and disruptive companies,” Shapiro said in an email to *The American Lawyer*. “We intend to grow the practice, as we have for the last several years, by promoting and recruiting the best next-generation litigators in all of our practices.”

The litigation Shapiro handles runs the gamut from trade secret, trademark and advertising to shareholder and merger disputes, employment litigation, and internal or government investigations. He also works on bankruptcy cases and complex commercial litigation including consumer class action suits.

Shapiro’s clientele includes Yardi Systems, a real estate software provider that became a majority owner of WeWork last April following the office leasing startup’s filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Shapiro and a team of other Cooley attorneys advised Yardi on the global

restructuring of WeWork’s finances and international operations, which was completed in June 2024.

“We are consistently at the center of the most important cases affecting disruptive businesses, including artificial intelligence, social media, crypto, and life sciences companies,” Shapiro said when asked which industries he was keeping an eye on. He noted that he believed clients gravitate towards Cooley “because no firm has as much experience navigating the legal challenges confronting innovators, including those presented by government regulation and enforcement.”

Shapiro holds a bachelor of science degree in philosophy which he earned from Yale University, and a law degree from Harvard University Law School, which he completed in 2000.