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Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Morgan Lewis Opens 34-Person Office In Seattle

By Anna Sanders

Law360 (June 27, 2022, 9:47 AM EDT) -- Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP announced the opening of an office in Seattle on Monday as part of the BigLaw firm's first foray into the Pacific Northwest, including hiring away more than a dozen attorneys from litigation boutique Calfo Eakes LLP.

The new office will have a 34-member team, including 14 lawyers and 15 professional staff from Calfo Eakes and five Morgan Lewis attorneys who are already established remotely in the Emerald City, according to the firm.

"Morgan Lewis has been serving clients in Seattle for decades, and we are looking forward to becoming more involved in this vibrant legal and business community with this extremely talented group," Morgan Lewis Chair Jami McKeon said in a statement. "This is the first step in what we anticipate will be an expanded offering in Seattle."

The office is meant to expand the firm's reach on the West Coast and capability to serve the technology, life sciences, health care, retail, financial services and energy industries, the firm said. It is expected to handle a range of matters involving commercial and intellectual property litigation, employment disputes and white collar criminal defense and investigation.

"By opening a new office with a strong 34-member team across our litigation, labor and employment, corporate, intellectual property, employee benefits, and tax practices, we are poised to make an immediate impact for the major companies that call Seattle home," firm Managing Partner Steve Wall said in a statement.

Morgan Lewis already has more than 60 clients with "substantive Seattle operations," and more than 20 of them are based in Washington state, the firm said.

"We share many clients with Calfo Eakes, as well as a vision and commitment of how to exceptionally serve our Seattle-based companies and community while prioritizing a diverse, inclusive, and collaborative culture," McKeon said. "We are very excited to be launching this venture with them."

Morgan Lewis is not fully acquiring or absorbing Calfo Eakes, but a Morgan Lewis spokesperson said the Seattle firm is winding down operations. Morgan Lewis will take over Calfo Eakes' lease at 1301 Second Ave. in downtown Seattle but is not acquiring all assets.

"Having a group of experienced lawyers join us who share clients and who seamlessly integrate with our

existing practices allows us to be fully functioning on day one — a benefit to clients, the firm, and the incoming lawyers," Wall said.

Morgan Lewis named partners Angelo Calfo and Patty Eakes as co-leaders of the Seattle office.

Calfo is a former federal prosecutor and represents companies and individuals in high-stakes criminal proceedings and investigations, as well as commercial disputes, according to Morgan Lewis. Eakes, a former prosecutor in King County in Seattle, represents Fortune 500 companies and executives in complex commercial litigation, employment disputes and white collar criminal defense.

Calfo Eakes partners Alicia Cullen, Damon Elder, Harold Malkin and Molly Terwilliger are also joining the new office. Morgan Lewis also hired two of counsels, five associates, one senior attorney, eight paralegals and paralegal assistants, and seven other professional staff.

"These lawyers have handled sophisticated matters and trials and have had esteemed federal court clerkships," Morgan Lewis said. "The team of litigators has deep ties to Seattle and is recognized for handling complex commercial litigation, such as representing Fortune 100 companies in multidistrict and class actions matters and representing local businesses in a class action against the city of Seattle."

The office will also become home to five existing Morgan Lewis attorneys: intellectual property associates David Bernstein and Matthew Walker, corporate transactions associate Chris Ronne, senior tax attorney Tony Cipriano, and employee benefits and executive compensation associate Claire Rowland.

--Editing by Brian Baresch.