

Former SEC Private Funds Branch Chief Joins Morgan Lewis

By Alison Knezevich

Law360 (April 24, 2023, 4:45 PM EDT) -- A former branch chief with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission has joined Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP in Washington, D.C., as the firm continues to draw attorneys with government regulatory backgrounds.

Christine Ayako Schleppegrell joins the firm as a partner in the investment management practice, Morgan Lewis said Monday. She will advise clients on federal securities regulations and enforcement, focusing on private fund advisers.

Schleppegrell started at the SEC in 2020 as a senior counsel. She later served as acting branch chief of the private funds branch of the Division of Investment Management and as a branch chief in the division's chief counsel's office.

She told Law360 Pulse on Monday that she was drawn to Morgan Lewis "because of the breadth and depth of their investment management platform, especially in the private funds space."

"I think it's a really exciting time for the industry," she said. "There are so many new rules and proposals out there. I really wanted to head back to private practice, and help advisers and investors navigate those rules" and implement them.

While with the SEC, Schleppegrell counseled staff on regulatory actions and participated in significant rulemaking initiatives, including those involving investment adviser marketing and outsourcing.

Schleppegrell, who left her SEC role earlier this month, previously worked in private practice at Schiff Hardin LLP — which became ArentFox Schiff LLP in 2022 — and Dechert LLP.

She said she would focus her practice at Morgan Lewis on helping clients comply with new regulations, comment on proposed rules, and navigate examinations and investigations.

Firm leaders said her experience with the government and in private practice will help her advise clients in a changing regulatory environment.

"Christine's insight into the rulemaking process while at the SEC, which has pursued an aggressive



Christine Ayako
Schleppegrell

regulatory agenda in recent years, will reinforce our regulatory capabilities for our financial services clients," Morgan Lewis chair Jami McKeon said in a statement.

Schleppegrell attended law school at the University of Washington and earned her bachelor's degree from Vassar College.

She is an adjunct professor at Fordham University School of Law, teaching students about topics such as corporate governance and the laws regulating investment advisers.

She is the latest former SEC attorney who has headed to Morgan Lewis in recent months.

Other hires from the commission include Frederick Block, a former supervisory trial counsel in the enforcement division, in January, and the firm's 2022 additions of Kelly Gibson, a former acting deputy director of enforcement and leader of the Climate and ESG Taskforce, and Erin Martin, a former legal branch chief in the commission's corporation finance division.

In addition, the investment management practice in November brought on Christopher M. Paridon, a former Federal Reserve counsel, and Kristin Lee, former assistant general counsel and senior vice president for Citibank's bank regulatory group.

--Additional reporting by Jack Rodgers. Editing by Dave Trumbore.