

Consumer Class Action Trio Joins Morgan Lewis From Crowell

By Tracey Read

Law360 (April 15, 2024, 1:00 PM EDT) -- Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP said Monday that it has added three partners from Crowell & Moring LLP to its consumer class action and product liability practice.

April Nelson Ross and Rachel Raphael are based in Washington, D.C., and Mohamed Awan is in Chicago.

"The genuine nature of Morgan Lewis' ethos and the solid level of sophisticated practitioners are uniform," Ross told *Law360 Pulse* in an email on why she joined the firm. "Given the scope of our work, we regularly need to tap into a variety of reliable and action-ready cross-practice and cross-office teams. We're confident from what we've experienced in our seamless day-one integration that we're positioned to deliver the full scope of resources now at our fingertips to clients."

The partners work on consumer class action, mass tort and product risk management cases, focusing on the transportation industry.

"Our new colleagues' experience in defending a full range of class action and MDL matters aligns with our strengths and the advocacy we provide to clients in controversy-related matters," firm chair Jami McKeon said in a statement.

Ross has been national coordinating counsel in numerous multidistrict litigation proceedings and has led more than 50 class action matters, including defending certified class actions through bench and jury trials and on appeal before federal and state courts. She specializes in matters involving automotive, transportation, healthcare, chemical and consumer products.

At Crowell & Moring, Ross litigated complex healthcare, tort and commercial disputes. She had worked at that firm since 2006, according to her LinkedIn profile. Before graduating from Duke University School of Law, she was a molecular biologist for the biotechnology company AGY Therapeutics, focusing on drug development research for neurobiological diseases, the firm said.

Raphael defends clients in complex product liability and consumer class action litigation, and advises on consumer protection issues such as product safety and regulatory compliance. She also handles inquiries



April Nelson Ross



Rachel Raphael



Mohamed Awan

from, and enforcement actions by, state attorneys general, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and other regulators around the world, the firm said.

Raphael had two stints at Crowell & Moring. She first joined that firm as an associate after graduating from Harvard Law School in 2013. After over four years there, she became a senior attorney at Squire Patton Boggs before rejoining Crowell & Moring in 2019 as counsel and eventually partner.

Awan litigates class actions in federal courts across the United States, including multiple warranty claim class actions for one of the leading automobile manufacturers in the country. He represents clients in high-stakes financial services, mergers and acquisitions, class action and complex commercial disputes. He is also national counsel to a leading technology innovator, advising the company on statutory issues arising under the Communications Decency Act, the firm said.

He also has expertise in advising investment fund sponsors on fund formation strategy and dispute prevention.

Awan had been a Crowell & Moring partner since August 2022. Before that, he was a partner at Honigman LLP and an associate at Kirkland & Ellis LLP and Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP. After graduating from American University Washington College of Law, he became a law clerk to U.S. District Judge Lawrence P. Zatkoff in the Eastern District of Michigan, his LinkedIn profile states.

McKeon called the trio a natural fit with the related work the firm is doing in the transportation and logistics industry for auto manufacturers, rail, trucking and aviation, including navigating electric vehicle-related regulations and advising on government enforcement actions involving the Highway Safety Act, the Railway Safety Act and the Consumer Product Safety Act.

"Each brings deep courtroom experience involving an array of complex litigation issues, including both class and MDL actions," J. Gordon Cooney Jr., leader of the firm's global litigation practice, said in a statement.

"We appreciate the contributions that April, Mohamed and Rachel made to our firm and our clients," Crowell & Moring told Law360 Pulse. "We wish them well."

The new partners follow the April 8 addition of transportation and logistics regulatory partner R. Latane Montague in Washington, D.C., who now co-leads Morgan Lewis' global automotive and mobility practice.

--Editing by Marygrace Anderson.