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Morgan Lewis Names New Chair as McKeon Closes Out 12-Year Tenure

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What You Need to Know

- Labor and employment practice leader David McManus will serve as the next chair of the global firm.
- Jami McKeon will step down from her seat in September and retire from the firm at the end of the year.

Morgan Lewis & Bockius has named a new chair, picking the successor to long-serving leader Jami McKeon.

David McManus will work alongside McKeon during a handover phase before officially assuming the chair in October on a five-year term.

A Morgan Lewis lawyer for more than 30 years, McManus, who rose to partner in 2002, has been the firm's labor and employment practice leader since 2024. He is based in New York and Boston, taking the chair role outside of Philadelphia where McKeon is based.

McKeon, meanwhile, will step down in September, rounding off a 12-year tenure.

After a period of gathering feedback, McManus' candidacy was recommended



Photo by Nicholas Redmond / TC Shadowlight

Jami McKeon, David McManus, Morgan Lewis & Bockius.

by the firm's advisory board, and, following a partnership vote that concluded Friday, McManus was named the next chair.

For McKeon, who has been at the firm since 1981, it rounds off a premiership that has seen the firm grow its top line from under \$2 billion to more than \$3 billion, helped by successive bursts of adding scale, most notably in

2014 when the firm absorbed hundreds of lawyers from Bingham McCutchen and, more recently, a team of 54 lawyers in Paris from legacy Kramer Levin that preceded that firm's combination with Herbert Smith Freehills.

McManus, who has enjoyed leadership positions as part of the firm's advisory board and compensation committee, said the process involved "identifying the partner who is in a position to be the best steward of the firm" who could "carry on the legacy that Jami has built."

The advisory board consists of 21 partners on three-year terms that can extend to two successive terms. It has a number of responsibilities, including to advise the chair, who sits on and is chair of the advisory board. The chair also selects and oversees the firm's management committee and practice group leaders. McManus said that he has yet to make any determinations on other leadership positions across the firm, though said he has much to draw from the current roster.

In a statement, McManus added: "On behalf of the entire partnership, I want to express our deep gratitude to Jami for her extraordinary impact on Morgan Lewis. She has been an inspirational and passionate leader and mentor, guiding our firm with vision, integrity

and an enduring devotion to our clients and our people—while shaping a culture that will continue to propel our future successes."

"I have seen firsthand how that momentum has evolved, and I look forward to partnering closely with Jami in the months ahead to ensure a seamless transition and build on the foundation she set forth—reinforcing what makes us distinctive while developing in ways that position our firm for the future."

McKeon said: "It has been a true privilege to serve as chair of Morgan Lewis and to work alongside such talented and dedicated colleagues around the world. I am incredibly proud of all that we have accomplished together."

She described McManus as an "exemplary lawyer and practitioner;" "strategic, thoughtful, creative, compassionate, and collaborative" who "embodies the qualities that our clients and partners value most".

"I look forward to working closely with David over the next six months and I share the confidence of our partners that he is the right person to lead Morgan Lewis into the future," she said.

McKeon and managing partner Steven Wall are to retire from the firm at the end of this year, a person close to the matter said.