

Ex-Freshfields M&A Head To Co-Chair MoFo's Corporate Dept.

By **Benjamin Horney**

Law360 (April 17, 2020, 11:59 AM EDT) -- Mitchell Presser, who earlier this week exited Freshfields after more than five years as U.S. head of mergers and acquisitions, has landed at Morrison & Foerster as a partner and co-chair of the firm's global corporate department, MoFo said Friday.

The announcement that Presser has joined Morrison & Foerster LLP comes only two days after news leaked that he was leaving Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP. Presser will work out of MoFo's New York office as part of the firm's M&A and private equity investments and buyouts practices, according to a statement. He'll co-chair the firm's global corporate department alongside fellow co-chairs Eric McCrath and Jackie Liu.



Mitchell Presser

Larren Nashelsky, chair of MoFo, said in the press release announcing Presser's hiring that the firm is "thrilled to welcome Mitchell to our firm."

"Mitchell's proven leadership and his extensive experience in high-profile private equity deals and M&A, including his three decades of experience in public and private M&A, as both a lawyer and a principal, will greatly benefit our clients and make him an exceptional addition to our firm and to our New York office," Nashelsky added.

Presser brings with him an impressive resume that includes three decades of experience in private equity and M&A transactions. In addition to about five and a half years as a leading M&A partner at Freshfields, he previously co-founded private equity firm Paine & Partners LLC, which has since changed its name to Paine Schwartz Partners. Before that, he was a partner at Wachtell Lipton Rosen & Katz from 1989 to 2006.

Presser said in the press release that MoFo's "exceptional culture and collegiality were a large draw for me."

"The opportunity to help lead a global network of 400 lawyers in the firm's corporate department across 17 offices, an M&A group that has advised on transactions with a total value of roughly \$117 billion in 2019 alone, and a robust and growing private equity footprint, is very exciting," Presser said. "It was clear that MoFo provided a unique opportunity for me to add value to a premier platform that had leading practices in forward-looking sectors, such as agriculture, life sciences and technology, where I

have deep experience, and that my practice could be a catalyst to accelerate growth and leadership in these areas."

Freshfields, meanwhile, is not mourning the loss of Presser. The firm wished him well earlier this week when the news broke that he was leaving, and is confident that the loss will not result in any major hit to its own M&A practice. In fact, Freshfields feels it is in a strong position, including because it recently brought in a group of veteran M&A lawyers led by Ethan Klingsberg, who currently serves as head of M&A in the U.S.

Matt Herman, U.S. managing partner at Freshfields, told Law360 Friday that the firm's U.S. M&A practice is performing well, and that its client base is continuing to grow.

"We are seeing strong demand from clients in the U.S. and I'm proud of the breadth and depth of our resources they are accessing," Herman added. "Our capabilities to support them on transactions, governance, restructuring, litigation, finance, and regulatory is unparalleled."

--Editing by Katherine Rautenberg.

Update: This story has been updated with more information and comments.