

Group Of 8 Jenner & Block Partners Move To MoFo

By Patrick Boyle

Law360, Washington (April 18, 2016, 3:12 PM ET) -- Morrison & Foerster LLP on Monday announced a “significant expansion” of its government contracts and litigation practices with the lateral move of an eight-member partner group from Jenner & Block LLP.



The new Morrison & Foerster attorneys are top row, from left: Kevin Dwyer, Jay DeVecchio, Alex Ward; bottom Row, from left: Daniel Chudd, Kevin Mullen, Jessie Liu, Damien Specht, David Churchill.

The partner group will focus primarily on aerospace, defense, government and professional services, health care and information technology industries, the firm said. The partners, who joined the firm’s Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia offices Monday, are David A. Churchill, W. Jay DeVecchio, J. Alex Ward, Kevin P. Mullen, Kevin C. Dwyer, Jessie K. Liu, Daniel E. Chudd and Damien C. Specht.

“We have markedly expanded our government contracts depth and client base as a result of the group joining us,” Morrison & Foerster Chairman Darren M. Nashelsky said in a statement. “The combined practice is among the strongest in the world.”

Churchill and DeVecchio, the former co-chairs of Jenner & Block’s government Ccontracts practice, will, along with Ward, join Brad Wine as co-chairs of Morrison & Foerster’s government contracts and public procurement practice, the firm said.

“We now have some of the world’s leading attorneys in this practice area, with one of the deepest benches,” Wine told Law360.

The new partners will help Morrison & Foerster expand its practice of significant, complex litigation matters and trials, including large bid protests, False Claims Act and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act matters and general commercial disputes, Wine said. He said that the additions will also enable the firm to grow its work in mergers and industry consolidation.

The partners made the move because after building the practice group at Jenner & Block, they sought a new home to continue growing and diversifying their work, Churchill told Law360.

“We needed a very broad and very deep platform, with offices across the country, offices globally,” he said.

He said that Morrison & Foerster proved to be the right fit because of its well-established practices not only in government contracts and procurement, but also in mergers and acquisitions and in white collar investigations. Added to that, Ward said, were intangible factors such as the collaborative culture at the firm.

“I’ve been so impressed at the way lawyers across all the offices, all the geographic areas and all the practices work together,” Ward said. “They really approach clients and matters with a team mentality.”

Churchill and Ward identified several key trends and issues affecting clients that do business with the government: the changing national security environment, with evolving budget priorities, requirements and technology needs; the increasing role of performance assessments and investigations of how contracted work is implemented; and the expanding importance of foreign markets as the U.S. works with more closely with overseas partners.

“Internal and government investigations can be very expensive and very disruptive for clients,” Churchill said. “The idea of dealing with compliance issues on the front end and nipping in the bud issues that could become big distractions is very important.”

Each partner can point to achievements in various cases, decisions and transactions, and Churchill said that the move to Morrison & Foerster reflects a proud accomplishment they all share: building a nationally renowned contracts and practice group. That pride is magnified by the importance of their clients’ work, Ward said.

“Our clients are doing some of the most important work in the world,” he said. “The government plays an immense role in the lives of all U.S. citizens and people around the world. We want to help our clients support the government in doing its job and doing it the right way.”

As for the brain drain, Jenner & Block Managing Partner Terrence J. Truax said that it was “not unexpected.

“We wish them well in their new endeavors,” Truax said in a statement to Law360. “We remain committed to our government contracts practice and will have more to report about that in the near future.”

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