

MoFo opens Boston office with local finance firm hires

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Boston's Back Bay area, where MoFo's new office will be located (Credit: iStock.com/DenisTangneyJr)

Morrison & Foerster has opened a Boston office with a quintet of new finance and restructuring partners, and hired a Latham & Watkins partner for its London finance department.

The firm announced on 7 February that **Christopher Kandel** would be joining from Latham & Watkins in London “in the coming days”.

Kandel's hire comes only days after the firm announced on 4 February that its new Boston office was open for business.

The new Boston office will house over 30 lawyers practising in diverse areas, particularly technology and life sciences, emerging companies and venture capital, and subscription lending – among them 23 new hires from Boston-headquartered finance firm Riemer & Braunstein.

Those new hires include partners **David Ephraim**, who will be the office's managing partner, **Charles “Chuck” Stavros** and **David Givner**. All three have restructuring and workout experience, as does **Alex Rheume** who represents commercial banks and financial institutions in debt restructurings and secured lending transactions.

Another partner from Riemer & Braunstein with out-of-court restructuring experience, **Jonathan Jacobs**, will be joining Morrison & Foerster in New York.

The Boston office will also now provide a permanent home for partner **Dennis Jenkins**, who left WilmerHale for MoFo after nearly 20 years in December 2016. He will now permanently relocate to Boston, where he has already been advising clients for a while, splitting his time between Massachusetts and the firm's New York office.

Jenkins' past work includes acting for the Chapter 11 trustee of defunct futures broker MF Global, and as US counsel to Icelandic bank Landsbanki's winding-up board. He was also counsel to creditor committees in the Chapter 11 cases of Energy Future Holdings and Peabody Energy.

More recently, he acted for IT consulting and outsourcing group Ciber in its Chapter 11, advising on the 363 sale of its North American and Indian assets for US\$90.7 million – nearly double the initial stalking horse bid.

"Boston is a leading hub for finance with some of the largest institutional investors, from venture capital and private equity funds to some of the world's largest mutual funds," Jenkins told GRR. "We will continue to work with our existing clients here and are well-positioned to help new clients with our industry-leading finance and debt-restructuring practices."

He adds, "as a premier global firm that leads on market-shaping technology and life sciences matters and offers innovative solutions to our clients, it is a natural extension for us to open an office in Boston, a city known as a hub for innovation and technology and the epicenter for life sciences on the East Coast."

Ephraim was previously head of Riemer & Braunstein's fund finance and technology and life science financing practices. He said in a statement the new arrivals "look forward to leveraging Morrison & Foerster's broad US and global platform to further support and grow our practice."

"We are also excited to help the firm build a substantial presence in Boston and to work with many of the firm's clients on their financial transactions and strategies," he added.

Ephraim and Stavros have both spent their entire professional careers – around three decades – at Riemer & Braunstein since graduating from The University of Connecticut School of Law and Boston College of Law, respectively.

Givner, another Boston College of Law graduate, has been at Riemer & Braunstein since 2004. His past experience includes advising on international financing transactions with companies all over Europe and in Canada, Israel, the Caribbean, Singapore and Australia.

Rheaume, who spent 11 years at Riemer & Braunstein, is a specialist in creditors' rights, including real estate foreclosure and so-called friendly foreclosure through secured-party sales under article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code. He has also appeared for lenders before bankruptcy courts.

"MoFo couldn't have been a better, more complementary fit for us because of its technology and life science focus, as well as its multiple offices in Asia, Europe and California," Rheaume tells GRR. "The firm's collaborative culture was also very appealing to us."

Finally, new New York partner Jacobs has worked on out-of-court restructurings and debtor-in-possession financings. He was previously at Schulte Roth & Zabel from 2005 to 2011 before joining Riemer.

London

Kandel, MoFo's new London hire, is a graduate of Yale and Cornell Law School, and qualified in England and Wales, California, the District of Columbia and Maryland.

His finance practice has included restructuring transactions as well as leveraged finance and complex international acquisition finance. His recent work has included a US\$1.2 billion debt financing for Nokia's purchase of the balance of its joint venture with Siemens, and a US\$3.29 billion bond offering by Japanese conglomerate SoftBank, Asia's largest high-yield bond offering.

His arrival comes on the heels of the London office's 2018 [hires](#) of **Caroline Jury** from Clifford Chance and **Benoit Lavigne** from Ropes & Gray.

Kandel says the acquisition finance market is "looking for more choice" and praises Morrison & Foerster's "standout US/London restructuring practice – the vision here is compelling".

GRR has contacted senior bankruptcy partner **Alan Braunstein** at Riemer & Braunstein and London partner **Simon Baskerville** at Latham & Watkins for comment.