

Office Snapshot: Honigman's New DC Digs

By Alison Knezevich

Law360 (December 9, 2022, 2:32 PM EST) -- After Honigman LLP entered the Washington, D.C., market in September 2020, just months after the upheaval of the pandemic made remote work the new normal, the small team of attorneys it was building up in the city had little need for a physical office beyond a temporary shared workspace.

So when it came to finally securing office space in the district — its first location outside the Midwest — the Detroit-founded firm had plenty of time to find a great fit. As they embarked on their search, firm leaders said they wanted a place that would make visitors truly feel like they were in the nation's capital.

"There are lots of space opportunities in D.C., but few that make you feel like you're here," Harold Fox, an intellectual property attorney and managing partner of the Washington office, told Law360 Pulse. "So we wanted to narrow our focus down on places that are central to D.C."

This spring, its staff moved into a spot on New York Avenue near the White House.

Because Honigman's team in D.C. is relatively new to the firm, the physical space has also been important for bringing people together and building camaraderie. Two years after arriving in the city, Honigman now has eight attorneys practicing out of the office in areas ranging from IP to white collar investigations.

With room for about 20 attorneys in the new space, "we expect that the office will grow," Honigman CEO David Foltyn told Law360 Pulse.

THE LEADER

Fox is a veteran IP attorney who joined Honigman when it established its D.C. presence in 2020. He came to the firm after nearly 17 years with Steptoe & Johnson LLP, where he led the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office practice.

Foltyn said Jonathan O'Brien, the firm's IP department chair and firm vice chairman, had known Fox for a long time before Honigman brought him aboard that September. The firm had been growing its IP practice, and Foltyn said it initially decided to launch in D.C. because it's where Fox was based.



"All of our expansion has been talent-based," Foltyn said. "We thought that

Harold would be a person to build around, not just in the IP area, but generally in D.C. He's a wonderful guy."

Fox counsels clients in areas including chemistry, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, nanotechnology, mechanical engineering, medical devices and business methods.

He graduated from Boston University School of Law and earned a doctorate in chemistry from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

THE LOCATION

The firm's 12,000-square-foot office is on the second floor of 1440 New York Ave. NW, which was originally built in 1927, according to a real estate listing.

Honigman moved there in May, Fox said. The space has large windows and looks out at the Treasury Department building. Visitors can also catch a sliver of the Washington Monument, Fox said.

Honigman is asking attorneys to come into the office twice a week, although the D.C. office has been averaging more than that, Fox said.

"At least half of our attorneys are here four or five days a week," Fox said. "So we're using the space. That's because we're new to the firm, we're new to the office, and we're new to each other. And so there's a lot of energy and excitement around that."

THE TEAM

12 TOTAL EMPLOYEES

4 Partners

1 Senior Attorney

1 Associate

2 Review Attorneys

4 Staff

THE WORK

Intellectual property work has been a cornerstone of the new office. In addition to Fox, another partner, Rachel Hofstatter, and a senior attorney, Gretchen Miller, are also focused on IP.

"The firm is very strong in IP in the Michigan and Chicago offices, and building on that in D.C. is natural," Fox said. "There are a lot of D.C.-based IP attorneys."

But the work isn't limited to that. This year, the office added Brandy Bruyere as a partner in the firm's corporate department, and Denise Barnes as a partner on its white collar team. Corporate associate Owen Agho focuses on issues including technology transactions and data privacy.

Elizabeth Njuguna and Lizbeth White from Honigman Review Solutions — an in-house group of review attorneys who specialize in due diligence work for the firm's transactional teams — are also based out of the D.C. office.

Other practice areas the firm is exploring in D.C. are real estate and affordable housing, antitrust and government contracts, Fox said.

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Three partners have joined the office since Fox's arrival at Honigman.

The firm hired Hofstatter, who previously spent 16 years with Steptoe & Johnson, for the IP practice in the fall of 2020.

In January, Honigman added Bruyere in its corporate department, where she counsels credit unions on consumer financial services laws and public policies. Bruyere was formerly the vice president of regulatory compliance at the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions.

Barnes joined the investigations and white collar defense practice in May. Barnes, who focuses on white collar and regulatory investigations, compliance and complex commercial litigation, was previously a trial attorney with the fraud section of the U.S. Department of Justice's commercial litigation branch.

--Editing by Orlando Lorenzo.