

Munger Tolles Litigation Duo Departs for Proskauer Rose

By Scott Flaherty

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Bolstering its litigation ranks in Los Angeles, Proskauer Rose announced Tuesday that it hired Bart Williams and Manuel Cachán from Munger, Tolles & Olson to serve as partners in Proskauer's white collar defense and sports law practices.

Proskauer chairman Joseph Leccese welcomed Williams and Cachán in a statement.

"They have worked together successfully for many years, and are highly regarded in the civil litigation and trial arenas," Leccese said. "Their depth of experience provides significant value to the firm, its clients and the industries we serve."

Williams, a former co-managing partner of Munger Tolles from January 2005 to December 2007, brings substantial trial law experience to Proskauer, where he'll serve as a co-chair of litigation in Los Angeles. Williams has served as lead trial counsel for Wells Fargo Bank in multiple cases, including a proposed class action that accuses the bank of unlawful sales tactics. He's also counted the Motion Picture Association of America and Phillip "Dr. Phil" McGraw as litigation clients in the past.

Earlier in his career, Williams served as an assistant U.S. attorney in California's central district, prosecuting criminal business fraud, racketeering and money laundering cases. He said he's excited to join Proskauer and help the firm grow on the West Coast.

"Proskauer's prestigious client base, with synergies across a number of key industries, provides an excellent platform for us to grow our practice and continue to defend clients' interests," Williams said in a statement.

Cachán is a seasoned trial lawyer in his own right, having served as second-chair counsel alongside Williams in a case accusing Wells Fargo of mismanaging pension investments. He also served as second chair in another Williams-led trial, defending NBCUniversal in a high-profile age discrimination suit brought by former NBC news producer Frank Snapp.

The litigators' decision to leave Munger Tolles marks a relatively rare occurrence for the firm, which doesn't lose many partners to lateral moves. Munger Tolles has, however, had a smattering of high-profile departures over the past several months.

In March, the global legal giant Dentons announced that it had hired Jeffrey Bleich, formerly a Munger Tolles litigation partner in San Francisco and one-time U.S. Ambassador to Australia.

Former Munger Tolles corporate partner Maria Seferian, a longtime outside counsel to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, left the firm in January for the Menlo Park, California-based wealth management firm Hillspire. Munger Tolles also recently lost former partner Sean Eskovitz, who is now a name partner at the newly-formed litigation boutique Wilkinson Walsh + Eskovitz.