

Veteran ERISA And Employment Litigator Howard Shapiro And Team Join Proskauer Rose

Linden Alschuler & Kaplan, Inc. 212-575-4545 on October 11, 2004

October 11, 2004 - Proskauer Rose LLP, a leading law firm comprising over 600 lawyers in eight offices throughout the U.S. and Europe, announced that Howard Shapiro, long recognized as one of the "deans" of the ERISA litigation bar, and a team of senior attorneys will join the firm, further expanding Proskauer's national employee benefits and ERISA litigation practice. The New Orleans-based group creates Proskauer's second new office this year, following Boston, which opened in March.

"The addition of Howard Shapiro and his experienced team increases our firm's ability to handle a larger number, and wider variety, of complex class action and other mega-ERISA cases currently being confronted by our large clients," said Alan S. Jaffe, Chair of the firm.

"Howard Shapiro brings more than 25 years of experience, most recently in the area of major class actions arising from benefit plan investment losses, which often involve potential liabilities of anywhere from several hundred million to billions of dollars," said Rory Judd Albert, Co-Chair of Proskauer's Labor and Employment Department and Chair of its Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation Group. "Proskauer now will have nearly fifty attorneys practicing employee benefits law exclusively, making us one of the largest fully-integrated employee benefits groups of its type in the country, and matching the depth, experience and reputation of our nationally renowned labor and employment practice."

Recognized as one of the nation's "marquee" ERISA litigators, Shapiro and his colleagues -- all of whom were formerly at the New Orleans office of Shook, Hardy & Bacon -- focus on defending national and global employers on a wide variety of sophisticated ERISA issues. Shapiro has handled a broad array of complex claims, including fiduciary liability; prohibited transactions; plan investment losses; executive compensation; and ESOP litigation.

Named one of the "Top 40" benefits lawyers in the United States by the National Law Journal, and listed for many years in The Best Lawyers in America, Shapiro was one of the founding fellows (and initial members) of the Board of Governors of the American College of Employee Benefits Counsel and is a Fellow of the College of Labor and Employment Lawyers. In addition to currently serving as the Chair of the American Bar Association Section of Labor and Employment Law, Mr. Shapiro is a past Chair of the ABA's Joint Committee on Employee Benefits.

"Proskauer has been long recognized as having the premier labor and employment practice in the country, as well as formidable strength in ERISA litigation and employee benefit matters," said Mr. Shapiro. "Our capabilities and reputation will enable Proskauer to further enhance its reputation in these legal disciplines. In addition, given the depth and breadth of Proskauer's numerous other practice groups, we look forward to expanding representation of our clients by providing 'one stop shopping' for them," Shapiro added.

Joining Shapiro are senior counsel Robert Rachal, Charles F. Seemann III and René E. Thorne as well as several associates.

Robert Rachal's work has included traditional labor and employment law, such as employment discrimination claims, collective bargaining and union election challenges, and focuses now on complex ERISA litigation. Robert has teamed with Shapiro in handling many ERISA class action cases throughout the country. He speaks and writes extensively, including serving as chapter editor for BNA's Employee Benefits Law and chapter author for BNA's ERISA Litigation.

Charles Seemann's practice also emphasizes ERISA litigation, as well as employee benefits and employment law. Over the course of his career, he has participated in the resolution of complex class action matters in various federal courts throughout the nation, including claims involving ESOPs and directed trustees for 401(k) plans. Prior to joining Shook, Hardy & Bacon, Charles was a partner in the commercial litigation section of a large New Orleans firm, where his practice also included professional liability, corporate control, intellectual property and other commercial matters.

René Thorne divides her practice between ERISA litigation and traditional employment law, such as discrimination and harassment lawsuits, and has been actively involved in numerous ERISA and employment law class actions. René is a frequent lecturer and author on employment and ERISA litigation topics, including ERISA preemption, jury selection in employment cases, internal investigations, employment practices liability insurance, and privacy issues in the workplace. She is an active member of the ABA/EEO Liaison Committee of the American Bar Association and teaches at the National Institute for Trial Advocacy.

Proskauer's Labor, Employment and Employee Benefits Department is one of the oldest and, at almost 200 lawyers strong, largest in the nation. It was described recently by Chambers USA's America's Leading Business Lawyers as "one of the premier employment practices nationwide," with a "deep bench" that puts Proskauer "in a league of its own and home to a number of the sector's best known figures."