

McKool Snags 7 Ex-Kasowitz Insurance Trial Attorneys

By **Kat Greene**

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A team of seven insurance attorneys with trial experience in class actions, intellectual property, securities, environmental and product liability cases is decamping to McKool Smith Hennigan LLP from Kasowitz Benson Torres & Friedman LLP, the latest in a series of notable legal team moves.

Robin Cohen, who made Law360's list of insurance MVPs in 2015, is leading a gaggle of ex-Kasowitz lawyers departing to launch McKool Smith's insurance recovery litigation practice, bringing their experience obtaining more than \$5 billion in insurance-related recoveries for their clients, McKool Smith said Tuesday.



Robin Cohen

The New York-based team will focus on maximizing corporate policyholder insurance recoveries, the firm said, exercising their "trial-ready" approach in covering claims ranging from mass tort liabilities to securities claims, class action settlements, environmental claims, intellectual property issues and other matters, according to the firm. The team is also bringing along its Rolodex of clients, McKool said.

"As a trial lawyer, I was naturally drawn to McKool Smith's reputation as one of the country's most-respected and prominent trial firms," Cohen said in a statement. "Such an impressive trial record, combined with a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a close-knit culture make for an ideal home to continue to grow my practice. This is a great fit for our team and a win for our clients."

The terms of the team's transition from Kasowitz, and specifically the timing of the transition, are still being negotiated, the firm said.

"Robin and her team are first-rate trial lawyers who have secured a number of massive wins for their clients," Mike McKool, firm co-founder and chairman, said in a statement. "Their addition to the firm not only launches our insurance recovery practice, but adds significant depth to our already deep bench of first-chair trial lawyers."

Cohen has played a key role in major wins for corporate policyholders, including Givaudan Fragrances Corp., which in August won the right to seek more than \$500 million in coverage from insurers for pollution claims, landing her among Law360's Insurance MVPs.

Joining Cohen at McKool are Elizabeth A. Sherwin, Adam Ziffer, Kenneth H. Frenchman, Keith McKenna, Natasha Romagnoli, and Burt M. Garson.

The whole team's departure from Kasowitz comes on the heels of the news Friday that 22 Schiff Hardin LLP partners, including a former chairman and managing partner, had submitted their resignations and said they would form a new firm.

The new firm, Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila, will operate out of Chicago, New York and San Francisco and will be led by former Chairman Robert Riley; former managing partner Ronald Safer; Patricia Brown Holmes, the co-chairwoman of the firm's white collar defense and government investigations practice; and Joseph Cancila, co-head of Schiff Hardin's national class action practice, according to Safer.

Among the 18 other partners leaving the firm are heads of Schiff Hardin's general litigation, intellectual property and product liability and mass torts practices.

And in January, smaller groups of partners left Dickstein Shapiro LLP amid buzz the firm is in merger talks with new suitors after a deal with Bryan Cave LLP fell through at the end of 2015.

Los Angeles litigation boutique Browne George Ross LLP has tapped Jeffrey Mitchell, who has handled Tiffany's long-running trademark dispute against Costco, as well as Judith Cohen and Erin Burns, to open a New York office, according to an early January announcement. And New York-based Binder & Schwartz LLP announced it had snapped up Eric B. Fisher, a bankruptcy litigation powerhouse and former assistant U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, along with associate Lindsay A. Bush.

A few days later, the head of Dickstein's Los Angeles office and co-head of its litigation department and three other attorneys said they'd joined forces with LA boutique Eisner Jaffe APC.

And Barbara "Biz" Van Gelder, who has been leading Dickstein's congressional investigations practice and is co-leader of its white collar criminal defense and investigations practice, joined Cozen O'Connor's ranks on Monday.

--Additional reporting by Y. Peter Kang, Sindhu Sundar and Natalie Rodriguez. Editing by Kelly Duncan.