

Former US Solicitor General to Lead Cooley's SCOTUS, Appellate Practice

By Patrick Smith

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What You Need to Know

- She will lead Cooley's Supreme Court and appellate practices from Washington, D.C.
- The firm has noticed that many of its clients want the appellate aspect of their legal work involved earlier in the process than in previous iterations, making the arrival of Prelogar all the more valuable.

Elizabeth Prelogar, who served as the 48th solicitor general of the U.S. during the Biden administration, is joining Cooley to lead the firm's Supreme Court and appellate practices from Washington, D.C.

Prelogar had been a partner at Cooley for a little over a year before leaving to become the acting solicitor general and principal deputy solicitor general in January 2021. She was the solicitor general of the U.S. from October 2021 until January 2025.

"It has been our aspiration for a number of years to emerge as one of the best litigation practices in the country, and we think we have," Ian Shapiro, chair of Cooley



Courtesy photo

Elizabeth Prelogar of Cooley.

litigation department and head of its New York office, said in an interview. "Elizabeth's return reinforces that and adds even more momentum. If you want to have a great litigation practice, you need to have a great Supreme Court practice."

Kathleen Hartnett and Adam Gershenson, who led Cooley's SCOTUS and appellate practice while Prelogar was in public service, will "continue to collaborate with Prelogar and the rest of the appellate team," the firm said in a release.

Prelogar, who was also an associate at Hogan Lovells earlier in her career, said the

decision to return to private practice was one she made while teaching at Harvard over the past six months.

"I taught for a semester, but realized I am a litigator at heart," she said in an interview. "I love being in court and love advocating on behalf of clients. I knew the next step was to get back into private practice and lead a group." That group ended up being at Cooley.

"I had been at the firm before and know them quite well," she said. "There is a priority on collaboration and results for clients. They are good, creative problem solvers with a client base of some of the most innovative and disruptive clients."

As solicitor general, Prelogar was in charge of the U.S. government's litigation in the Supreme Court. She argued dozens of cases, the firm said, and was the executive branch's principal legal adviser. "If you are litigating

in the Supreme Court, you need to be a generalist because the docket is so varied and comes from all quarters," she said. "You need to have a cross-disciplinary approach and match litigation skills at all levels. You need to have deep experience in appellate law writ large."

Shapiro said the firm has noticed that many of its clients want the appellate aspect of their legal work involved earlier in the process than in previous iterations, making the arrival of Prelogar all the more valuable.

"They want someone who can help shape litigation strategy early on," he said.

In a statement, CEO Rachel Proffitt said Prelogar's experience advising the federal government on significant legal issues and defending the interests of the U.S. before the Supreme Court "will be invaluable for our many innovative and disruptive clients."