

Cooley Adds to East Coast Bench With Two ‘Insurtech’ Pros

Heidi Lawson and Greg Hoffnagle are leaving Mintz Levin to join Cooley as the latter seeks to build out litigation, regulatory and insurance expertise in Boston and New York.

By Meghan Tribe

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Just as the financial services industry underwent massive disruption due to technological advancements, the insurance industry is experiencing a similar renaissance.

Cooley is looking to capitalize on that growth with the addition of two insurance technology specialists from Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo.

Heidi Lawson, a Mintz Levin partner and co-chair of the firm’s insurance, reinsurance, investigations and risk management practice, and of counsel Gregory Hoffnagle are joining Cooley’s insurance and reinsurance practice as of counsel and special counsel, respectively. Lawson will be based in Boston, while Hoffnagle will work out of New York.



Heidi Lawson

Lawson moved to Chadbourne & Parke. In 2012,

Lawson, a former insurance broker, began her legal career more than two decades ago at White & Case in New York. After nearly six years at the firm, she became international counsel in Debevoise & Plimpton’s London office. In 2010,



she joined Mintz Levin stateside as a partner in its litigation group.

“[Our] insurance practice is growing tremendously and Cooley has the perfect platform and position in the market to support the growth of that practice,” Lawson said.

A virtually nonexistent segment of the insurance marketplace decades ago, insurance technology, or insurtech, has now ballooned into one of the fastest-growing areas of investment, with the global deals in the space totaling \$2.3 billion in 2017, according to an analysis by consulting firm Accenture Inc.

“We’re really looking at helping both insurers and insurtech startups, which tend to be smaller companies, start to integrate technology into the day-to-day business of insurance,” Lawson said.

Insurance companies that had old antiquated systems are now looking for new ways of underwriting using data, artificial intelligence and developing new insurance products, Lawson said.

“Our insurance practice is truly the next-generation insurance practice and I think we’re way ahead of any other comparable practices out there,” said Lawson, who is also currently serving as outside counsel to the city of Los Angeles on risk management and insurance issues in connection with its hosting of the 2028 Summer Olympics.

The move to Cooley, whose Silicon Valley roots extended to New York following its 2006 acquisition of Kronish Lieb Weiner & Hellman, will allow both Lawson and Hoffnagle to leverage their new firm’s client base, including with companies outside the technology space.

“We do [all] things insurance, so we tend to work with colleagues and feed off of firms’ current clients to provide insurance services,” said Hoffnagle, a former associate in the New York office of Edwards Wildman Palmer, which merged with Locke Lord in early 2015. “We feel that Cooley’s attorneys and clients are second to none.”

Hoffnagle will reunite with several former colleagues at Cooley, which opened a London office three years ago with a large group of Edwards Wildman Palmer lawyers. Hoffnagle cited current Cooley insurance partners David Kendall, Mark

Everiss and Richard Hopley, all of whom are based in London, as individuals that he expects to work with once again.

“London, outside of New York, is the largest insurance market in the world,” Hoffnagle said.

Having a team on the ground in London and a connection to Lloyd’s of London Ltd., the world’s leading insurance exchange, helps drive litigation work in the United States, he said. Hoffnagle added that his work with a specialized insurance product known as the Bermuda Form, an expertise behind some other recent notable lateral moves, necessitates having a presence in New York and London.

While Mintz Levin had a record financial year in 2017, the firm scaled back its London office a few years ago when several intellectual property lawyers decamped for Cooley.

Lawson and Hoffnagle are the latest lateral additions by Cooley, which last year passed the billion-dollar benchmark for gross revenue.

Earlier this year, Cooley expanded its cybersecurity, data protection and privacy team with three new hires, including Boris Segalis and Dave Navetta, the co-chairs of Norton Rose Fulbright’s U.S. data protection, privacy and cybersecurity practice group. Cooley also opened an office in Beijing with the addition of Ropes & Gray counsel Xun Zeng.

Meghan Tribe is a reporter covering the changing face of Big Law, from lateral moves and work-from-home programs to diversity initiatives. Contact her at mtribe@alm.com. On Twitter: @TribeMeghan