

## Cooley Picks Up Former Republican FCC Commish McDowell

By **Natalie Olivo**

*Law360, New York (November 2, 2016, 7:10 PM EDT)* -- Former Republican Federal Communications Commissioner Robert M. McDowell, who has experience in complex regulatory, legal and business issues in the telecommunications, media and technology sectors, has joined Cooley LLP as a partner in the firm's Washington, D.C., office, the firm said Wednesday.

At Cooley, McDowell will be co-leader of the firm's global communications practice, according to a statement from the firm. While at the FCC, he led "fundamental policy changes that affected all manner of communications technologies," including the two largest wireless spectrum auctions in U.S. history at the time, the firm said. He joins Cooley from Wiley Rein LLP, where he was a partner.



Robert McDowell

"I am excited to have the opportunity to leverage my public policy, legal and business background to counsel some of the world's most exciting and innovative tech, media and telecom companies," McDowell said in a statement provided by the firm. "Cooley is a great platform for my practice and I am thrilled at the prospect of working with the team in such an exciting space."

According to the FCC, McDowell was first appointed to a seat on the commission by President George W. Bush and unanimously confirmed by the Senate in 2006. When he was reappointed to the commission in June 2009, McDowell became the first Republican to be appointed to an independent agency by President Barack Obama. He was unanimously confirmed by the Senate later that month.

Cooley's statement noted that while at the FCC, McDowell led efforts to create a ban on racially discriminatory practices in broadcast advertising. He also worked on several large and complex mergers, including those between Sirius Satellite Radio and XM Satellite Radio, and Comcast's purchase of NBC Universal, the firm said.

Also while at the FCC, McDowell was part of a unanimous decision in January 2013 to approve a change to the commission's experimental device rules, giving medical, health care and other wireless device makers more flexibility to test experimental equipment without needing permits for each planned device.

In its decision, the commission adopted a proposal to streamline its rules to allow for easier development of experimental wireless equipment, including authorizing the issuance of "program licenses" to cut down on red tape around research and testing, as well as the issuance of specific testing licenses for manufacturers and users of medical and health care equipment to develop test beds for their own wireless devices.

"What we do at the FCC, folks need to understand, actually does a lot to improve the human condition," McDowell said at public meeting discussing the proposal on the day it was approved.

Prior to the FCC, McDowell was senior vice president for CompTel, the Competitive Telecommunications Association, where he led advocacy efforts before several government agencies, the White House and Congress, the firm said.

McDowell graduated from Duke University in 1985 and received his law degree in 1990 from William & Mary's Marshall Wythe School of Law.

McDowell could not be reached for an interview late Wednesday.

--Additional reporting by Daniel Wilson. Editing by Jack Karp.