

## Morgan Lewis' New Philly Managing Atty Makes Himself At Home

By James Boyle

*Law360 (November 1, 2024, 3:40 PM EDT)* -- While he may not originally be from Philadelphia, Aaron Suh did not need much time to fully embrace the city's rich history, diverse culinary scene and emotionally tumultuous sports culture before being named managing partner of Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP's Philadelphia office.

The Iowa-born Suh came to Philadelphia in 2016 when he joined Dechert LLP, making the move from New York with his wife, the Philly-born attorney Meredith Suh, and their family. In the eight years he's been here, Suh experienced a Super Bowl-winning football team, a baseball team that almost won a World Series, and a basketball team that's become a perennial playoff contender even if it hasn't been able to get past the second round.

"It's been enjoyable overall, we caught them at a good time," Suh said in a recent interview with Law360 Pulse. "My kids are Philly sports fans, and that has been fun. It is a really enjoyable place to raise a family."

Suh was tapped over the summer by Morgan Lewis chairwoman Jami McKeon to take on the leadership position at the Philadelphia office, taking over from Sarah Bouchard, who served as office managing partner since 2018.

"It was sometime in midsummer when Jami called me," Suh said. "There were a lot of moving pieces for the leadership change, and the firm announced the change at the beginning of our fiscal year on Oct. 1."

He jumped at the opportunity to lead an office he has called home since June 2019, even if he acknowledges the sizable shoes he'll have to fill following Bouchard. Suh credits his predecessor with keeping the office on a steady bearing throughout the construction of its new headquarters at 2222 Market St., and ensuring a smooth transition as attorneys and staff consolidated from offices at 1701 Market St. and 1801 Market St. into the freshly built 305,000 square-foot, 19-floor building in Center City, he said.

"People are really cherishing the building," Suh said. "It is about more than the office space; it is in the way it is used."

Suh hopes to use the new building as part of his plan to strengthen Morgan Lewis' community relationships throughout the city, making it available as a resource for the firm's clients and partners. He



Aaron Suh

also plans to expand the office's pro bono efforts, with renewed attention on transactional opportunities. In this vein, he found success in 2022 when he represented the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts Inc. on a pro bono basis for the formation of a new parent company that owns the Center City venue the orchestra calls home.

"I want to continue to grow our presence on the transactional side of our pro bono work," Suh said. "We can do that by helping a new non-profit startup get organized or help them through governance related issues."

Suh recently spent some time with Law360 Pulse to talk about making Philadelphia his home and his plans as the managing partner for Morgan Lewis' office in the city. Responses have been edited for length and clarity.

### **Why did you want to take on the role of managing office partner for the Philadelphia office?**

For me, Morgan Lewis is a place that really has become a real home for me. I feel like the culture is something I cherish and enjoy being a part of, and I want to help continue to shape it. When I got this opportunity from Jami, I was all in. I saw it as an opportunity to lead and do a little more to help shape the culture here in Philadelphia, which is an important market. I was pleasantly surprised and excited all at the same time.

### **What are some of your top priorities as you start?**

The thing I want to build on is that we have an incredibly strong community and a set of partnerships throughout the community. We have a brand new building, and I want that to be a resource for our clients first and our community partnerships as well. I would love to help develop an even stronger pro bono presence and participation rate in the Philadelphia market. We have 100% of all lawyers worldwide providing 20 hours or more in pro bono work. That is a strong foundation to build from, and this is a great time to strengthen our efforts in Philadelphia.

### **You are taking over for Sarah Bouchard. Are they big shoes to fill?**

Very much so. Sarah Bouchard led the move to 2222 Market, which is where we are today. We remained a strong community partner throughout the move, and it went incredibly smoothly. People are really cherishing the building. It is about more than the office space; it is in the way it is used.

For example, we have two outdoor rooftop areas that give us the opportunities to bring in clients and host events. In our efforts to encourage a return to work, we want to make the workplace feel like as much of home as possible. This was a project 10 years in the making, between the vision and design. I just wanted to mention Sarah's predecessor, Tim Levin, and his contributions. I am incredibly grateful to have them right here, either a phone call or a knock on the door away. They have been incredibly helpful.

### **Sarah is more on the litigation side, you are more transactional. Does that translate into different managing styles?**

She is in the labor and employment practice group. I don't anticipate our practice group orientations to translate into a difference in our management styles. I believe in continuity and I am hoping to maintain the culture while focusing on different aspects.

For example, I recently had the chance to take on a pro bono case that was more transactional in nature. I want to continue to grow our presence on the transactional side of our pro bono work. We can do that by helping a new non-profit startup get organized or help them through governance related issues. At the same time, I recognize that we have one firm culture that is collaborative in nature. I want to keep as much continuity on that front as possible.

### **You are not originally from Philadelphia. How did you find yourself here?**

The quick overview is I grew up in Iowa, I'm a Midwest guy. I went to the University of Michigan for college then Northwestern for my JD and MBA, so I spent a few years in Chicago. Once I got my degrees, it was a coin flip on whether I stay or jump to the East Coast.

I thought to myself, "If I don't do it now, I'll never do it." I was looking to be a transactional attorney, and there were nice opportunities in New York.

I joined Cravath Swaine & Moore in New York and spent the next six years doing M&A work. I met my wife, who was an associate there and originally from Philly. We were living in the city and had our first child. We were trying to figure out if we should stay in Brooklyn or would we want to take a train down to Philadelphia. There was no better way to find out than to see the city for myself. I started interviewing in Philadelphia and eventually got set up at Dechert in June 2016.

### **What do you enjoy about working in Philadelphia?**

For me, what I love about the city is the passion. It has such a rich history, but the passion goes beyond that and into the city itself, the food scene, the sports scene. That love is easy to be a part of. It is one of the most welcoming places I've ever lived in. After living in Chicago and New York, I didn't know what to expect. I visited Philadelphia, but never lived there.

It is very enriching in its culture and culinary experience. My kids are Philly sports fans, and that has been fun. It is a really enjoyable place to raise a family.

--Editing by Adam LoBelia.