

## Mintz Snatches DC/NY Insurance Team From Squire Patton Boggs

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By David Thomas  
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Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo continued its hiring streak Wednesday, bringing on a group of five litigators from Squire Patton Boggs who specialize in insurance and reinsurance matters.

Deirdre Johnson, Paul Kalish and Ellen MacDonald Farrell have joined Mintz's Washington, D.C., office as members, while Suman Chakraborty will be based out of the firm's New York office. The fifth lawyer from the group—Elaine Panagakos—will be a special counsel in Mintz's D.C. office. A legal assistant also made the jump with them, Chakraborty said.

"There's a substantial overlap in our client list, with the clients Mintz currently works with in the insurance and reinsurance space," Johnson said. "In many ways, our practices are complimentary of what Mintz currently has. Both Mintz and our group saw areas where we could help each other and build out."

Johnson and Chakraborty said they expect their clients, which include Lincoln Financial Group, Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and One-Beacon Insurance Group, to come with them to



Mintz. Johnson described the group's shared book of business as being "a substantial, diversified and well-balanced portfolio."

"Insurance is traditionally viewed as a coverage practice, but our practice goes well beyond that. We certainly have strength in insurance coverage, and we handle all sorts of disputes insurance and reinsurance companies face and risks they face as well," said Chakraborty, who noted that insurance companies are also businesses with their own issues.

With the exception of Chakraborty, the other lawyers in the group had all been at Squire for

two years or less and were all alumni of Crowell & Moring. Johnson and Kalish were practice leaders at Crowell when they joined Squire in February 2018. Farrell joined Squire in October 2018 from an in-house role at Markel, an insurance company, while Panagakos followed them from Crowell in May 2019.

Chakraborty was part of a group from the now-shuttered Dewey & LeBeouf who migrated to Squire Patton Boggs in April 2012, a month before Dewey filed for bankruptcy.

Leaving Squire for Mintz was the opportunities that the latter offered for their practice, Johnson said. They also have a personal connection to one of Mintz's members—Marc Abrams, another litigator with an insurance practice. Abrams, Chakraborty and Johnson were all associates who practiced together at LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae, one of Dewey's predecessor firms.

Mintz has been on a hiring spree lately. Within the past couple of weeks, the firm has poached a complex civil litigator who counted Sony and filmmaker Ron Howard as clients from Boies Schiller Flexner and a pair of communications industry lawyers from Davis Wright Tremaine. Johnson described Mintz as being in a "clear growth mode," pointing to the rising revenue the firm has seen since 2011.

Since 2011, Mintz's overall revenue has risen by 57%, from \$292.5 million in 2011 to \$460.3 million in 2019. The firm has also seen both its revenue per lawyer and profits per equity partner metrics rise over the past five years as well, according to ALM Intelligence. In 2015, the firm's RPL and PPEP stood at \$805,000 and \$1.065 million, respectively; in 2019, those figures were \$965,000 and \$1.41 million.

Both Mintz and Squire have taken measures in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic to stay afloat, including reductions in compensation and the latter furloughing some staffers. Chakraborty and Johnson said none of those measures affected their decision-making. Their practice has been quite busy during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There's a lot of activity that is COVID-19 specific, but for insurers, ordinary business did not stop in any respect," Johnson said.

A spokesperson for Squire said, "We wish our former colleagues the best of luck in their new roles."

*I'm a reporter covering the business of law, with an emphasis on national and global law firms for The American Lawyer, Law.com and other ALM publications.*