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NEWS

Weber Gallagher Snags Vaughan Baio Leader in Bid to Broaden Litigation Portfolio

Madeline Baio's current work in commercial litigation on behalf of transportation companies sits outside of the firm's primary focus on general liability.

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Commercial Litigation



Amanda O'Brien



What You Need to Know

- In the firm's latest bid for growth, Weber Gallagher has brought on former Vaughan Baio & Partners named partner Madeline Baio along with three other attorneys from the firm.
- The group of seven, which includes a partner from Marshall Dennehey and an associate from litigation firm Morgan Akins & Jackson, will work out of Weber Gallagher's Philadelphia and New York offices.
- The lateral move comes weeks after Weber Gallagher announced a new office in Florida and just days following Vaughan Baio's expansion into Cherry Hill and Long Island.

Weber Gallagher Simpson Stapleton Fires & Newby has nabbed former Vaughan Baio & Partners name partner Madeline Baio, looking to deepen its business practice bench in Pennsylvania and New York.

Baio, who will be based in Weber Gallagher's Philadelphia office, is joined in the move by associate Marissa Hill, also of Vaughan Baio, and former Marshall Dennehey partner Joanna Buchanico. Former Vaughan Baio partner Ryan McKeon and associate Rachael Reeves are joining Weber Gallagher's New York office, along with an unidentified partner and associate Jack Imbornoni from Southeast-based Morgan Akins & Jackson.

The laterals arrive in the weeks following Weber Gallagher's opening in Coral Gables, Florida, and just days after Vaughan Baio announced its expansions into Cherry Hill, New Jersey, and Long Island.

"We're very cautious about who we bring into the firm. We don't want to disrupt who we are and our internal culture," said Weber Gallagher chairman Andrew Indeck. "However, Madeline's group moved very quickly by our standards, although maybe not quick by Madeline's. ... We have a fairly long history with [her, which] made it that much easier."

Compounding the speed of the move was the firm's ability to immediately staff up per Baio's practice needs. A defense

litigator for 40 years, Baio currently focuses on work involving transportation and the gig economy.

"I was in need of an opportunity to land at a place allowing me to grow my bench," Baio explained. "Building a team is super important to me. I needed to be able to find great candidates and vet them properly."

According to Indeck, the firm was able to help recruit and onboard Baio's team based off of an "excellent 2023."

"It was the best year we ever had," Indeck said. "It did allow us a little comfort to be able to bring in groups such as Madeline's and Mike Garcia."

"I'd like to say it was all foresight," he continued. "There was maybe a little luck and a lot of determination and planning ... we have a streamlined infrastructure that is efficient [and] allows us to be profitable with different ranges of groups. That has allowed us to be able to fully staff out a group such as [Madeline's] immediately."

"Before she walked in the door, her team was already established, so that there's no disruption in the service she's supplying her clients," Indeck concluded.

In terms of the firm's larger strategic plan, Baio offered Weber Gallagher the opportunity to enter a new practice area.

"Madeline does represent a practice area we're not entrenched in," Indeck said, suggesting that the practice could "become its own group within the firm, rather than [be] subsumed within the general liability group."

"Depending on how this goes, and no doubt it goes well, it's likely it becomes its own practice area led by Madeline and Ryan," Indeck suggested.

Ultimately, however, Indeck said that the firm was more focused on adding depth to its current array of practices than adding on new ones.

"Other than our business practices, we are pretty happy with our current configuration of practices," Indeck said. "The business component is definitely more commercial litigation, business law, transactional business. It's something we're trying to expand upon."

Behind the firm's drive to deepen its business practices, Indeck continued, is a long-term strategy to fully service its preexisting clients.

"The key for us as a litigation shop will be to leverage our client relationships in such a way that they start seeing us as their full-service shop outside of litigation," he explained. "We represent major national and international corporations. We want to be able to offer them the business side of their needs."

"We have the clients that could support it," Indeck said. "[But] you need the bench strength to do that."

In response to a request for comment, founder Joseph Vaughan of Vaughan Baio & Partners said in an emailed statement "Madeline is a skilled attorney and we wish her and her team success at their new firm."

Marshall Dennehey declined to comment.

Morgan Akins did not return a request for comment.

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