

TEXAS LAWYER

Shook Launches Corporate Practice in Houston With Culhane Meadows M&A Chair

By Brenda Sapino Jeffreys

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What You Need to Know

- Culhane Meadows M&A and corporate practice chair James Mayor joined Shook, Hardy & Bacon as a partner in Houston.
- Mayor launches the M&A and corporate team in Houston.
- Shook, primarily a litigation firm, is focused on expanding its corporate team across offices.

Litigation-focused law firm Shook, Hardy & Bacon, primarily a litigation firm, has added an M&A partner in Houston as the Missouri-founded firm focuses on expanding its corporate team across offices to better serve clients.

“We want to be able to do these kinds of transactions for our clients,” said Sandra Hawley, a partner in Kansas City, Missouri, who chairs Shook’s corporate services practice.

Shook hired Culhane Meadows partner James Mayor on Tuesday as an M&A and



Photo: Brenda Sapino Jeffreys/ALM

James Mayor of Shook, Hardy & Bacon.

corporate partner in Houston. Mayor was the corporate and M&A practice chair at Culhane Meadows, a roughly 70-lawyer law firm with 11 offices across the U.S.

Mayor said he is excited to help build a corporate practice in Houston for Shook, which has a large network of offices and clients in a range of industries. Plans call for the firm to add other transactional lawyers in Houston, he said.

In fact, the firm has been focused for over a year on expanding its corporate team, Hawley said, but said there is no timetable

set, because “it’s a process.” The firm, she said, aims to hire more transactional lawyers in Kansas City and Houston, but also in Los Angeles, New York and Chicago. The firm is also looking to open an office in Delaware with corporate lawyers, she said.

“The fact that we don’t have a lot of folks has been an impediment, frankly,” she said.

A 37-year veteran of Shook, Hawley said she does general transactions, corporate, real estate and lending work, but Mayor brings deep experience in M&A, joint ventures and start-ups. The new Shook partner practiced at Baker Botts for more than 22 years before he joined Culhane Meadows two years ago.

“James is a great addition for us,” Hawley said.

Shook chair Madeleine McDonough wrote in a press release that Mayor is a “game-changer” for the firm in corporate services.

Mayor said much of his work over the years has been in the energy sector, but

he’s also had clients in health care, technology, engineering, financial services and retail. He sees great cross-selling opportunities because of the breadth of Shook’s client list.

He declined to identify clients, but according to his Culhane Meadows biography, Mayor has done work in the past for McDermott International, Carrizo Oil & Gas, BWX Technologies and Transocean.

As for demand for M&A, Mayor said, “It’s a little off what it’s been the last two years,” but he sees opportunities in the market.

Kelly Rittenberry Culhane, a founder and managing partner of Culhane Meadows, did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Mayor’s departure.

Am Law 100 firm Shook posted strong financials in 2022, with revenue up nearly 10% to \$454.6 million, and profits per equity partner came in at about \$1.38 million, up 9.7% when compared with 2021.