

Shook Hardy Bolsters New NY Office With Partner Hire

By Emily Lever

Law360 (February 17, 2021, 3:39 PM EST) -- Shook Hardy & Bacon LLP has rounded out its recently opened New York office with a litigation partner, the firm announced Wednesday.

William Vita will join the firm's general liability litigation group, working with attorneys across the firm on products liability, employment, toxic torts and commercial litigation.

"I've worked with Shook Hardy attorneys for over 25 years as co-counsel and I've gotten to know dozens of attorneys at Shook. I was always very impressed not only with their legal skills, but also the culture and collegiality," Vita told Law360.

Vita has previously served as the New York-based counsel for Shook Hardy clients such as Compass Group, Foot Locker and engineering firm HNTB.

The attorney, along with associate Joe Lemma, joins Shook from Nassau County, New York-based commercial law firm Westerman Ball Ederer Miller Zucker & Sharfstein LLP. He handled a variety of matters at that firm, including products liability for power tool companies, medical device companies and others, as well as contract disputes and employment litigation.

He began his legal career in the office of the Brooklyn district attorney, where he was a prosecutor from 1983 to 1988, taking on organized crime and economic fraud cases — including prosecuting members of the Five Families.

"Bill knows his way around New York courts," general liability litigation co-chairs Robert Adams and Paul Williams said in a joint statement. "He's a welcome addition as we continue to serve clients in New York and throughout the Northeast."

Among upcoming trends in his practice, Vita predicted a raft of COVID-19-related lawsuits, including employment cases and contract litigation, particularly related to force majeure clauses.

Shook Hardy established its New York office in January, anchored by two partners focused on life sciences, Tom Sheehan and Kimberly Penner — the latter of whom overlapped with Vita in the Brooklyn DA's office for two years. The move to Manhattan comes as Shook Hardy resumes a strategy of



William Vita

expansion after a 2020 lull. It opened new offices in Atlanta and Los Angeles in 2019, adding to its presence in Washington, D.C., Boston, and Philadelphia.

Among other litigation, Shook recently represented Pfizer in an MDL over EpiPen pricing, GlaxoSmithKline in an MDL over the heartburn medication Zantac, and Toyota and associated companies in a proposed class action over alleged Prius brake failures.

--Editing by Aaron Pelc.

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