

## Shook Hardy to 'Connect the Dots' With New Hartford Office

The firm continues its expansion in the Northeast after planting roots in five other locales over the last three years, including New York and Boston.

By Andrew Maloney  
May 2, 2022

Following a run of new offices, Shook, Hardy & Bacon will now “connect the dots” in Connecticut, announcing a new shop in Hartford with a lateral from Carlton Fields.

The defense litigation firm announced this week that trial lawyer Robert Simpson has joined as managing partner of a new office in the Constitution State, expanding the firm’s bench in the Northeast after planting roots in five other locales over the last three years, including New York and Boston.



**Robert R. Simpson,**  
managing partner with  
Shook Hardy & Bacon.

Courtesy photo

Simpson, who focuses on high-stakes cases in the pharmaceutical, medical device, automotive and consumer product industries, said he’s worked with Shook lawyers for years, and that the move feels like “coming home.”

He also said he expects about five more additions “at all levels” to the new office in the near future, adding that he wants to focus on “smart growth—consistent with what



Courtesy photo.

**Shook Hardy & Bacon's office.**

Shook has done over the last few years” as office manager.

Simpson further noted that he has connections to other lawyers in the state with vibrant practices, saying, “To the extent we’re able to attract others that fit within the growth model of the firm, that would make sense.”

Simpson said three of the last four trial teams he’s been on have included Shook lawyers, so he already has a lot of connectivity with the firm.

“It’s hard for clients to place their trust in a team of lawyers who have a dearth of trial experience,

which I believe for me is part of the attraction to Shook Hardy & Bacon,” he said. “Just looking at the last few years, it’s over 100 cases they’ve tried to verdict. I think that’s pretty unique for any firm.”

He also said he expects to continue trying cases himself, and that he expects his clients to join him at his new platform.

“I have a stable of clients here in Connecticut that would benefit from the national trial platform that Shook provides,” he said. “And when you look at Shook’s natural growth over the last two years, you see they’ve opened offices in New York and Boston, and this helps connect the dots, so to speak.”

The firm noted that Simpson has served as first- or second-chair trial counsel in more than 30 cases that have gone to verdict, in addition to acting as lead counsel, national counsel and local counsel for many global manufacturers.

Shook increased revenue by nearly 14% last year, while also increasing profits per partner 26.7%, to just over \$1.26 million and net income by 30%, to more than \$177.6 million.

The firm’s client base includes numerous Fortune 500 companies in products liability matters. Simpson declined to name specific clients, but noted that in addition to top pharma and medical device companies, he’s also represented large healthcare

institutions and some of the largest auto parts manufacturers in the world.

The firm has also opened offices in St. Louis, Los Angeles and Atlanta within the last three years. Firm chair Madeleine McDonough earlier this year told *The American Lawyer* that, while it wanted to focus on building in places it already had a presence, the firm would add new geographies in litigation hotbeds or places where clients needed help, as well as in places where the talent made sense.

“So sometimes it’s very litigation-driven, but other times it’s person- or group-driven,” McDonough said.

Bill Geraghty, a Miami-based partner for Shook who had worked with Simpson prior to his arrival, called him a “kindred spirit.” He said Shook was not looking specifically at getting into Hartford, but the firm felt Simpson’s value was too good to pass up.

“Opening a new office in a new city is always something conservative law firms carefully consider, because it’s an investment,” Geraghty said in an interview. “But we think Rob and the people he’s going to bring with him are really, really worth the investment.”

In a statement, Gary Sasso, president and CEO of Carlton Fields, said the firm has “enjoyed having Rob with us for the last few years, and we wish him well.”