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## Shook Hardy's Houston Office Starts 2022 With a New Office Leader

**New Houston office managing partner John Lewis Jr., former chief litigation counsel at the Coca-Cola Co., who joined Shook, Hardy & Bacon in 2019, wants to build the business litigation practice in Houston.**

BY BRENDA SAPINO JEFFREYS

### What You Need to Know

- John Lewis Jr. is new managing partner of Shook, Hardy & Bacon's Houston office.
- He said one goal is to build the firm's business litigation practice in Houston.
- He also wants to develop the Houston office as a firm laboratory for diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Three years after he joined Shook, Hardy & Bacon in Houston, business litigator John Lewis Jr., a former Coca-Cola Co. chief litigation counsel, is now managing partner of the office.

Lewis said a primary goal for 2022 is to build the business litigation practice in Houston. Also, he said, as firmwide chair

of Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Initiatives, Lewis wants to position the Houston office as a laboratory for initiatives at the firm.

Lewis moved into his new role on Monday, succeeding Jennise Stubbs, who will continue to represent national pharmaceutical and medical device clients.

Madeleine McDonough, chair of Shook Hardy, wrote in a press release that Lewis is a "transformational leader" and an effective strategist in the courtroom and boardroom.

"We welcome his business acumen," she wrote.

Since joining the firm, Lewis said he has been the only lawyer in Houston in the firm's national



Courtesy photo

**John Lewis Jr., managing partner of the Houston office of Shook Hardy.**

business litigation group, but he wants to grow the practice in Houston, an office launched in 1995 for the firm's national products liability, tort and intellectual property litigation practices.

"The first thing is to market it internally within the firm, to grow that business litigation muscle in the city," he said.

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Building the business litigation practice involves both expanding the work the firm is already doing through cross-selling, and also adding numbers to the practice both through lateral hires or by developing associates in the area, he said.

Lewis, who does bankruptcy work as part of his trial practice, said the firm may add to its bankruptcy and restructuring practice in Houston if there is a spike in filings. He also sees employment law and commercial litigation as potential growth areas in 2022.

As for diversity and inclusion, Lewis said recent events, such as the murder of George Floyd,

have raised the stakes for what firms do to improve diversity and inclusion.

His plan is to position the Houston office as a laboratory for diversity and inclusion initiatives within the workplace, in the community, and in hiring.

“What we are finding in on-campus interviews and discussions with lateral candidates is we are having different discussions ... about culture,” he said.

As the firmwide chair of Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Initiatives at Shook Hardy, Lewis said he is an ex officio member of the firm’s associates committee and its search committee.

Lewis, who has been working in both the Houston and Atlanta offices, said that along with his other responsibilities as Houston office managing partner, he will be dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and the surge of cases due to the omicron variant.

Lewis joined Shook Hardy in his hometown of Houston in 2019, coming from Atlanta boutique Lawrence & Bundy, which he joined in 2016 after leaving Coca-Cola. In addition to chief litigation counsel at Atlanta-based Coca-Cola, Lewis also served as the company’s global chief diversity officer.