



Shook Bolsters Civil Rights and Racial Justice Practice

HOUSTON (June 21, 2023) After winning a high profile prisoner’s rights case in St. Louis in 2022, Shook, Hardy & Bacon is dedicating much of the fee award recovery to the expansion of the firm’s civil rights and racial justice pro bono efforts. Initially, the practice will focus primarily on prisoners’ civil rights and abuse-of-force litigation, but the firm anticipates that the scope could expand in the years to come.

Spearheading the program will be Michael Harrison, a civil rights division prosecutor in the Harris County District Attorney’s Office in Houston, who will join Shook as senior counsel. Harrison will work closely with Shook Partner Charles Eblen to transform the firm’s current work in this space into a nationally recognized practice.

“We are excited about what the future holds and the lives we will change by doubling down on our civil rights and racial justice efforts,” said Shook Partner and Pro Bono Director Scot Fishman, who moved to the firm in 2021 to help nationalize Shook’s pro bono mission. “Michael is an incredibly gifted trial lawyer, and he will complement the pro bono program that we are building at Shook.”

Under Eblen’s leadership, Shook [obtained](#) an \$8.5 million award for the firm’s client as the representative of her late brother, a federal detainee at the Phelps County Jail in Rolla, Missouri. The jury returned a verdict against a doctor, nurse and Advanced Correctional Healthcare, Inc.—the largest health care provider for jails in the U.S.—for a Section 1983 deliberate indifference claim and medical negligence.

“We made the strategic decision to do something monumental with this fee award,” said Shook Chair Madeleine McDonough, who noted that the firm already has a team of attorneys and support staff who focus full time on pro bono matters. “This decision is a commitment to the future and will harness the firm’s trial strength to help those who do not have a voice. With both Scot and Michael now on board, Shook can make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who seek relief from injustice.”

For the past eight years, Harrison has served the community as a civil rights division prosecutor where he investigated and prosecuted law enforcement excessive force and corruption cases.

“I am excited to join Shook and continue working in this important area of law alongside the firm’s experienced team of attorneys and support staff,” said Harrison.

Harrison is also an adjunct professor of law at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law. He earned his law degree from the Florida A & M University College of Law.

“Michael is looking forward to joining a firm with a national trial reputation and getting right to work, helping us build something special,” Fishman said. “With Michael’s leadership, we will be able to strengthen our advocacy for some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society.”

To speak to a Shook attorney on this new initiative, contact Shook Director of Communications Heather McMichael, 816.389.0419, or hmc michael@shb.com.

About Shook, Hardy & Bacon

Founded in 1889, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. has 18 offices in the United States and London, with attorneys and professional staff serving clients in the health, science and technology sectors in areas ranging from product liability defense and commercial litigation to intellectual property prosecution and litigation, environmental and toxic tort, privacy and data security, and regulatory counseling.