

Montgomery McCracken Vice Chair Elevated To Top Role

By **Dan Packel**

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Montgomery McCracken Walker & Rhoads LLP on Monday said that its new chairman will be former vice chairman and executive partner Louis Petroni, a specialist in higher education law and commercial litigation who said he plans to grow the firm's presence in New York and also open on the West Coast.

The Philadelphia-based firm said that Petroni had been elected to succeed Richard Scheff, who held the position since 2009 and guided its expansion into New York.

"I am honored to continue in a leadership role with the many superb professionals at Montgomery McCracken," Petroni said. "This firm has always prided itself on providing the highest level of responsiveness and professionalism to our clients, and it is my goal to build on the great work of my predecessor. Rich has set the bar very high for me."

Petroni's practice focuses on higher education law, and he also represents national and regional companies on a variety of financial, contract and commercial litigation matters. He also served as co-chair of business development for the firm.

He said the firm is readying for further growth in New York in the coming months and that expansion to the West Coast is also a possibility.

"We're primarily looking at groups of five to 15, in the short term," he said.

His predecessor, Scheff, directed Montgomery McCracken's move into New York City through a 2012 merger with Kurzman Karelsen & Frank LLP. Under Scheff's tenure, the firm also added lateral talent in the maritime, corporate, real estate and white collar practice areas.

Petroni said that the firm's plans for continued growth in New York also focuses on those areas.

"It has been a privilege to lead Montgomery McCracken for the last seven years," Scheff said in a statement. "Lou has a wonderful reputation in both the legal and business community, and I am confident that he will continue to be a tremendous asset to the firm in his new role."

The firm has been contemplating a presence on the other side of the country for several years



“We do not have an office on the West Coast, but we believe our class action practice and our maritime practice would benefit greatly from being on the West Coast,” Scheff told Law360 in 2014.

Apart from Philadelphia and New York, Montgomery McCracken currently has offices in suburban Philadelphia, South Jersey, the Jersey Shore, and Wilmington. The firm has over 120 lawyers.

Petroni said that he also intends to continue his focus on business development, which is manifested in a philosophy that everyone in the firm — from the youngest associates to the most senior partners — should be thinking about ways to bring in business.

“It’s just an attitude I’d like to instill in everyone across the firm,” he said.

--Editing by Stephen Berg.

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