

Cozen O'Connor Announces Michael J. Heller as Chief Executive Officer In Planned Leadership Transition Amid Growth

Tuesday, September 25, 2012

Cozen O'Connor, among the 100 largest U.S. law firms, announced today that its Board of Directors has voted Michael J. Heller as firm President and Chief Executive Officer, effective Jan. 1, 2013. Mr. Heller currently serves as the firm's President & Executive Partner. Current Chief Executive Officer Thomas A. Decker will become a Vice Chair of the firm and will also remain actively involved in the firm's strategic growth initiatives, as well as become actively involved in Cozen O'Connor Public Strategies, an ancillary business of the firm that provides bipartisan government relations services. Vincent R. McGuinness, Jr. will continue in his role as the firm's Managing Partner.

The evolution follows the firm's strategic plan, developed under the guidance of Msrs. Decker, Heller and McGuinness, to create a smooth leadership transition. In October 2011, the firm announced that Mr. Heller, then Chair of the firm's Business Law Department, would take on additional management responsibilities as President and Executive Partner.

"Over the last decade, Cozen O'Connor has aggressively broadened and strengthened its practice offerings to create a full-service platform for clients," said Mr. Decker. "Michael has been a key architect of this growth, and under his stewardship, we expect to continue to strategically expand throughout our geographic markets."

"I am honored that the firm has placed its trust in me," said Mr. Heller, who was the first lateral business attorney to join Cozen O'Connor. "I know I speak for the entire firm in thanking Tad for his vision and leadership over the last ten years, as we have moved from a first-generation firm to one of the largest firms in the country. Since joining the firm in 1995, I have been committed to helping the firm achieve smart, sustainable growth. We are a dynamic firm, and I believe this deliberate transition of leadership is exemplary of the advancement opportunities here at Cozen O'Connor."

Firm Managing Partner Vince McGuinness added, "I have worked with both Tad and Michael for many years, and they have been extremely instrumental in steering the firm to success in a legal market that has become increasingly competitive. I have every confidence that this transition will enable the firm to move forward with the same vigor in the next decade as we have in the past."

Broad-Based Business Solutions

Mr. Heller joined Cozen O'Connor from the law firm of WolfBlock, and leveraged his high-level move to help recruit others from his former firm. In 2009, 65 attorneys from WolfBlock joined Cozen O'Connor, bringing experience in practice areas including IP, corporate and securities, real estate, trusts and estates and government relations.

Mr. Heller has helped structure much of the firm's growth. In the last year alone, Cozen O'Connor expanded its IP practice in April by adding nine intellectual property lawyers from Duane Morris, across its New York, Chicago, Washington, DC and Atlanta offices. This follows the addition of 19 IP lawyers in New York from the IP litigation boutique Cohen Pontani Lieberman & Pavane in 2011. The firm also has expanded its IP capabilities as well with a number of high-level individual lateral additions across a number of its offices, including Washington, D.C. and Chicago.

Also in April of this year, Cozen O'Connor added three lawyers from Dewey & LeBoeuf to the firm's energy, environmental & public utility practice. Last year, the firm acquired a 14-lawyer group in Houston from Epstein Becker Green Wickliff & Hall with practices in the areas of labor and employment, energy and litigation.

"Our goal in growing the firm has been to build upon Cozen O'Connor's strengths in insurance law and litigation, while expanding our business practices to provide full-service capabilities for our clients," Mr. Heller said. Before stepping into firm management, Mr. Heller developed a practice in the representation of venture capital, private equity funds and emerging growth companies.

Emphasis on Culture

Much of Cozen O'Connor's successful growth can be attributed to the focus on firm culture, firm leaders say. The firm emphasizes collegiality, has made extensive investments in attorney training, and goes to great lengths to ensure the smooth transition of laterals.

The firm has been recognized in a number of areas including:

- Cozen O'Connor was ranked #1 in the country in the American Lawyer's AmLaw 2012 Summer Associate Survey.
- 28 Cozen O'Connor lawyers are recognized by Chambers USA as leaders in their fields, including Corporate/M&A & Private Equity, Litigation, Real Estate, Insurance and Labor & Employment
- The firm was ranked fifth nationally, and first in Philadelphia, in American Lawyer's Midlevel Associates' Survey.
- Cozen O'Connor was named a finalist in the 2012 PA Litigation Department of the Year, featured in *The Legal Intelligencer*.

A principal strategic goal is to provide a platform for attorneys to grow their practices and obtain leadership opportunities, Mr. Heller says.

About Cozen O'Connor

Established in 1970 and ranked among the 100 largest law firms in the United States, Cozen O'Connor has 575 attorneys who help clients manage risk and make better business decisions. The firm counsels clients on their most sophisticated legal matters in all areas of the law, including litigation, corporate, and regulatory law. Representing a broad array of leading global corporations and ambitious middle market companies, Cozen O'Connor serves its clients' needs through 21 offices across two continents.

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