

Meet Mayer Brown's New Managing Partner In DC

By Jack Rodgers

Law360 (July 3, 2024, 12:41 PM EDT) -- Andrew Olmem, who first joined Mayer Brown LLP as an associate in the weeks after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, said he still remembers how the firm's attorneys and staff in New York worked to assist those who were impacted and the sense of community it helped to foster.

It's something he said was especially top of mind after being named last week as the new managing partner of the firm's office in Washington, D.C., "that kind of commitment to really pull together and help people out in a time of need."

Olmem was named to the leadership post in D.C. four years after returning to Mayer Brown, where he also serves as co-leader of the law firm's financial services, regulatory and enforcement practice.

Between his first tenure with Mayer Brown, working as an associate from 2001 to 2004, and his eventual return in 2020, Olmem had a career in government, including serving as a financial policy assistant at the National Economic Council under President Donald Trump. He previously spent eight years as deputy staff director and chief counsel of the U.S. Senate's Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs.

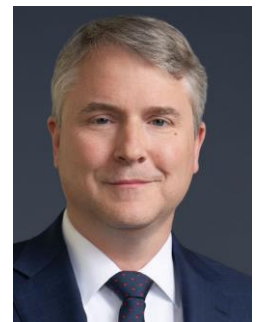
Olmem took the reins as managing partner in D.C. on June 1, the firm said. He succeeded Liz Espín Stern, who had served in the position beginning in 2021.

Olmem spoke to Law360 Pulse about his new role as managing partner in D.C., his goals for the firm, and where the firm might expect more client work to come from. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

How have you been reflecting on your new leadership role with the firm?

During my first stint at Mayer Brown, I got great training and had a good experience, but I had the public policy bug, and after a couple years, I decided that if I was ever going to do it, I had to do it. I moved to D.C. and had a remarkable time at the Senate banking committee and at the White House.

What did your roles at the White House teach you about your practice working on financial law issues?



Andrew Olmem

Having worked both at the Senate and the White House, I really understand the public policy process very well. Those are exceptional places to serve and see how public policy is actually made.

I think for me personally in this new role, in both of those positions, I was responsible for building teams of exceptionally qualified professionals and lawyers to tackle and execute on very complex public policy matters, often of first impression. I've been lucky in my career to have, earlier than most, had those leadership opportunities at a very high level.

It was unique for me because, when I was with the Senate banking committee, we had to deal with the 2008 financial crisis and consideration of the Dodd-Frank Act. Then when I was in the White House, we had the CARES Act [the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act].

So, I've had crisis management experience upfront, during both of my government experiences. I look back on particularly the CARES Act as a real point of pride, and how we were able to respond and help so many people throughout the country and pass a bill at a time where most bills fall along party lines. We were able to pass the CARES Act on a true bipartisan basis.

What are some of your goals for the firm in D.C., in your new role as managing partner?

The office is in a very good position. We are perfectly designed to handle the most complex Washington regulatory and reputational risk matters. We have a very strong regulatory practice, particularly in our historical core strengths of financial services, trade, national security, antitrust and AI.

We also have one of the nation's premier appellate/Supreme Court practices, which is very useful in today's regulatory environment, as well as strong litigation and congressional investigations experience. We've got a remarkable team.

Where I see us going forward is continuing to evolve in the marketplace, to build on those strengths and expand out. We're seeing a lot of demand for congressional investigations expertise, enforcement matters and litigation matters. Those are natural areas for us to build out. [Also], private funds and insurance on the regulatory side are areas that will be priorities for us.

Does the firm tapping someone with your expertise in the financial regulatory industry say anything about where Mayer Brown sees client work increasing in the future?

That's always been a strength of Mayer Brown; that's one of the reasons why I went to the firm. It has more than a century of experience of working with financial institutions around the globe. That client base has always been attractive to me and it's always been a core.

I think we really evolve with our clients and that means as they face new regulatory challenges, we grow with them. Certainly the growth of AI is an area that we've been building our capabilities to help with clients. We've also been very active in engaging in the regulatory front — the [Securities and Exchange Commission's] **private fund rule** is an area [where] we've engaged with clients in the public policy process. I think you'll see us continue building on those strengths.

What do you find most rewarding about your practice?

It always comes down to the teams you're working with. We work long hours with people on really complex matters, and when you put together the right team, who you can learn from, who you know

the different strengths that they bring in addition to yours in that collaboration process, along with fantastic clients — that part of it is just the most rewarding part of practice. I'm fortunate to work with colleagues and clients who are just a true pleasure to work with.

--Editing by Robert Rudinger.

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