

# Dentons bolsters litigation practice with premier team in New Jersey

November 3, 2014

**Short Hills, NJ** —Dentons announced today that it has added a prominent litigation team, enhancing its client service capabilities in the Insurance, Financial Institutions, and Life Sciences sectors. **Shawn Kelly** and **John (Jack) R. Vales** join as partners in the Firm's Short Hills, NJ office along with managing associate **Jonathan D. Henry** and associate **Erika M. Lopes-McLeman**. With more than 250 litigators in the United States, Dentons' prominent team of lawyers offers companies from all industries the talent and experience to resolve a wide array of complex issues.

"We are delighted to welcome Shawn, Jack, Jonathan and Erika to Dentons," said Mike McNamara, US managing partner of Dentons. "The talent and experience they bring will augment the Firm's formidable litigation capabilities and deepen our offerings to our insurance, financial services and pharmaceutical clients."

Kelly's distinguished 35-year litigation career has focused on solving sophisticated insurance coverage disputes and reinsurance cases. His clients include some of the most recognizable US and British insurance companies, and he has been at the forefront of the New Jersey legal community in representing insurers in complex insurance coverage litigation matters. Most recently, his team led the successful representation of a large domestic insurer in a massive asbestos insurance coverage litigation, which resulted in a multi-million dollar judgment for his client. Kelly has also successfully represented ceding insurers and assuming reinsurers in a wide variety of reinsurance disputes, including numerous confidential arbitration proceedings and several matters before the US Court of Appeals.

Kelly is consistently ranked in the top tier of legal industry directories, such as *Chambers and Partners* and other leading legal publications. He earned his JD from Georgetown University Law Center and his AB, magna cum laude, from Duke University.

Vales' broad-based litigation practice focuses on representing companies in the insurance, pharmaceutical and financial services industries. Among other matters, he has successfully represented clients in complex commercial litigation proceedings, insurance coverage disputes, reinsurance arbitrations, and adversary proceedings in bankruptcy court. He has also counseled insurance company-clients on liabilities for property damage and loss of business income arising from major catastrophes, such as Superstorm Sandy and the 2011 tsunami and earthquake in Japan. Before entering private practice, Vales completed a four-year term of service in the US Army Judge Advocate General's Corps, where he successfully tried several cases to verdict as a prosecutor.

Vales' capabilities as a litigation attorney have brought him recognition from several different sources, including *New Jersey Law Journal's* "40 Under Forty." He holds a JD from Notre Dame Law School and earned his BA from the University of Notre Dame.

"Our clients face ever-evolving, complex challenges, and I am pleased that Shawn, Jack, Jonathan and Erika have joined Dentons," said Michael Barr, Dentons' US senior partner. "The addition of this exceptional team continues our focus on deepening our litigation capabilities and expanding to meet our clients' priorities."

"Jack, Jonathan, Erika and I are excited to join Dentons," said Kelly of the move to Dentons. "The Firm's global

platform will immediately enhance our ability to serve clients and will enable us to provide an even greater depth of service going forward."

Henry, who joins Dentons as a managing associate, represents insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and manufacturers in state and federal courts in New Jersey and New York. He brings a strong litigation background in environmental remediation, complex commercial disputes, mass torts, toxic torts and employment discrimination defense. Prior to entering private practice, he was a judicial clerk for the Honorable Jane Grall of the Appellate Division of the New Jersey Superior Court. Henry earned his JD, *magna cum laude*, from Seton Hall University School of Law, where he received the Chancellor's Scholarship and was a member of Order of the Coif. He earned his BA, *cum laude*, from New York University.

Lopes-McLeman joins Dentons as an associate. She focuses her practice on insurance coverage litigation, insurance defense and complex commercial litigation. Before entering private practice, she was a law clerk to the Honorable Stuart J. Rabner, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Jersey. Lopes-McLeman received her JD, *cum laude*, from Seton Hall University School of Law, where she was both a Distinguished Scholar and Chancellor's Scholar, and served as senior articles editor of the *Seton Hall Circuit Review*. She received her BA, with honors, from Trinity College.

## About Dentons

Across over 80 countries, Dentons helps you grow, protect, operate and finance your organization by providing uniquely global and deeply local legal solutions. Polycentric, purpose-driven and committed to inclusion, diversity, equity and sustainability, we focus on what matters most to you. [www.dentons.com](https://www.dentons.com)

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