

Mitchell Sandler Announces 15 New Hires In DC

By Rachel Rippetoe

Law360 (January 13, 2022, 4:11 PM EST) -- Financial services boutique Mitchell Sandler LLC announced Thursday that it has secured 15 hires in Washington, D.C., including a partner from Offit Kurman PA who will serve on the firm's management committee.

The hires, which include partners, associates and staff, will bring the firm's lawyer headcount to over 20, Mitchell Sandler said in a statement. Daniella Casseres, who was a partner at Offit Kurman, will help lead the majority women-owned firm alongside managing partner Andrea Mitchell and chief operating officer Robyn Quattrone. Another former Offit Kurman partner, Ari Karen, was hired to lead the firm's litigation and labor and employment groups.

Mitchell Sandler Announces 9 New Attorney Hires

ATTORNEY	TITLE	PRACTICE AREA	PREVIOUS EMPLOYER
Daniella Casseres	Partner, Head of Mortgage Regulatory Practice Group, Management Committee	Regulatory Compliance, Litigation & Enforcement, Mortgage Regulatory	Offit Kurman
Ari Karen	Partner, Head of Litigation, Labor and Employment	Regulatory Compliance, Litigation & Enforcement, Mortgage Regulatory	Offit Kurman
Todd Karazim	Counsel	Mortgage Regulatory	Offit Kurman
Oyinade Koya	Counsel	Regulatory Compliance	OneMain Financial
Daniel	Counsel	General Litigation, Labor &	Dewey Pegno &

Shternfeld		Employment	Kramarsky
V. Amanda Witts	Counsel	Litigation, Employment & Labor	Offit Kurman
Kaleb Beckett	Associate	Mortgage Regulatory Compliance, Regulatory Compliance	Northern Trust
Sonia Steinway	Associate	Regulatory Compliance, Community Development Financial Institutions, Consumer Risk Mitigation, Fintech	fintech entrepreneur, strategic adviser, and angel investor
Sharon Samuel Ourien	Associate	General Litigation, Labor & Employment, Class Actions	Condon & Forsyth

"We always knew we wanted to build out our mortgage and litigation practices and we really wanted to bring on some partners who share our vision," Mitchell told Law360. "So when you find two partners who are leaders in their industry and they're invested in the cultural framework we created, you seize the opportunity, and you collaborate with them."

Casseres and Karen brought over a team of two attorneys, four compliance specialists and two additional staffers from Offit Kurman. Mitchell Sandler also hired another two counsels: Oyinade Koya, who was associate general counsel for OneMain Financial, and Daniel Shternfeld from Dewey Pegno & Kramarsky. And it hired three associates: Kaleb Beckett, who previously served as vice president for compliance at Northern Trust; Sonia Steinway, a former fintech entrepreneur and angel investor; and Sharon Samuel Ourien from Condon & Forsyth LLP.

"When we think about the way we want to service our clients, we try to provide as much depth and breadth as possible, but to accomplish that you have to have a certain diversity in talent and background," Mitchell said. "We combined the skills and backgrounds and subject that our clients wanted from us and then set out to find the best and brightest people who also fit within our culture."

According to Mitchell Sandler, Casseres advises mortgage companies on federal and state regulatory compliance matters, like fair lending and anti-money laundering requirements. She told Law360 that she was drawn to the specific focus the firm has on financial clients and advising those clients with a range of perspectives.

"My practice is highly specialized, so it was attractive to join Mitchell Sandler, which also has a well-defined financial service practice," Casseres said. "It was also very attractive to me to be able to join the leadership team and help shape the way the firm is set up for the future."

Karen counsels mortgage lenders on government investigations and represents companies in labor and employment disputes. He helped propose a \$500,000 settlement in September for mortgage lender Real Estate Mortgage Network, which was hit with a collective action claiming it failed to pay employees overtime.

Mitchell Sandler was founded in 2019 by two former Buckley LLP lawyers, Mitchell and Andy Sandler, co-founder of what was formerly Buckley Sandler. From its formation, the firm emphasized that it would be managed by women. While Sandler is a senior partner, the firm's management committee is made up of women.

Mitchell said that when she and Quattrone were envisioning the firm, they realized that there should be some kind of template for how to build a women-led law firm from scratch.

"There were no role models for us at the time," Mitchell said. "Part of what we've done is create a law firm that could serve as a template for others, not just as a women-led law firm but one that shares our values of trust, respect and inclusion."

Sandler told Law360 in May 2019 that he did not anticipate the firm becoming a "behemoth." In fact, he said that is the opposite of his and Mitchell's intentions.

"We want to keep it small, and Andrea and Robyn are very intent on remaining a women-owned and managed law firm, and I am completely supportive of that," Sandler said.

Mitchell said this remains true even as the firm has nearly tripled in size.

"Today's announcement could be seen as a signal that we intend to continue growing, but we plan to remain a boutique law firm," she said. "We thought that the growth that is occurring made sense to make sure we had the breadth of practice area knowledge for our clients, but we plan to remain small, and that allows us to continue to operate under the culture we've created and continue to provide for the client base we have."

--Editing by Orlando Lorenzo.