

Global Growth

An Interview with Brad Karp, Chairman, Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

EDITORS' NOTE *Chairman of the firm since 2008, Brad Karp is one of the country's leading litigators and corporate advisors. Karp has successfully guided numerous Fortune 100 companies, global financial institutions and other companies and individuals through "bet the company" litigations, regulatory matters, internal investigations and corporate crises.*



Brad Karp

FIRM BRIEF *Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP (paulweiss.com)*

is a premier firm of more than 1,000 lawyers with diverse backgrounds, personalities, ideas and interests who provide innovative and effective solutions to their clients' most complex legal and business challenges. The firm represents many of the world's largest and most important public and private corporations, asset managers and financial institutions, and clients in need of pro bono assistance.

What drives Paul, Weiss' success as a leader in the legal industry, and what sets the firm apart?

First and foremost, we deliver exceptional results for our clients, which include the world's most important public and private corporations, asset managers and financial institutions. Our commitment to client service is unparalleled; we handle our clients' most complex matters and always strive to exceed their expectations by delivering extraordinary results. Another key to our success is our focus on hiring the most talented lawyers in the world and providing them with unmatched training and professional opportunities so they can rise to the top of their field. We attract the very best talent because potential recruits know

they will work on the most important matters for the biggest companies in the world and that they'll do so alongside the leading lawyers in their field. Finally, what sets us apart is our ability to identify opportunities and pursue investments that will strengthen the firm and allow us to better serve our clients as their needs evolve. It's never been more critical than it is now to be agile and open to making bold decisions as we solve our clients' increasingly complex issues.

How does Paul, Weiss' culture contribute to this success?

Our culture is critically important to our success, and we take steps every day to safeguard it. We are an elite law firm and we thrive on the high-stakes nature of our work. Our standards are incredibly high, but we truly love what we do and we enjoy working together. While our work is fast-paced, we maintain a supportive, collegial environment where everyone is rooting for each other's successes and is generous in offering mentorship.

Our historic commitment to pro bono and inclusion are integral parts of our professional culture and distinguish us in the industry.

The firm has experienced significant growth over the past year. Will you highlight these recent developments?

Over the past year, we reshaped the firm's geographic footprint in an effort to meet our clients' global needs. Last August, we had the opportunity to bring over a best-in-class team of private equity-focused lawyers in both London and Los Angeles, a truly transformative move for our firm. We created – virtually overnight – London's leading advisory team for global private equity and, since then, we have brought in 27 of London's highest-profile partners, building

premier capabilities across private equity M&A, public M&A, insurance M&A, debt finance, high-yield capital markets, tax, antitrust, funds, restructuring and IP. In our new Los Angeles office, we have the nation's top private equity team and recently brought over a nationally preeminent product liability litigator.

We also just opened an office in Brussels, the epicenter of EU competition law and policy. With our global antitrust team, we can provide strategic advice to our clients on global antitrust issues at a time when they face increasingly complex and challenging cross-border antitrust and regulatory issues.

Have there been any big changes in Paul, Weiss' New York office?

Paul, Weiss was founded in New York nearly 150 years ago, and our New York office has played a critical role in landmark transactional, litigation and pro bono matters for generations. We are proud to call this dynamic, diverse city home, and New York continues to be our largest office, with more than 800 lawyers. We have been extremely busy on the M&A front, and our New York office is a hub for much of that activity. In fact, we earned 35 top-five rankings in Bloomberg, Mergermarket, Dealogic and London Stock Exchange Group in the value of deals we advised on during the first half of 2024.

We're continuing to expand our ranks in New York. On the corporate side, we were thrilled that Jim Langston, Nick Bogdanovich, and Chelsea Darnell, two truly stellar dealmakers, joined us recently in New York, as well as two talented asset management M&A partners, David Hepp and Matthew Collin. On the litigation side, we brought over Mike Holston, who joined us from General Electric, where he was longtime general counsel.

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We are also excited about our move to a new office in a couple of years to a space just a few blocks north of our current location. In addition to supporting our strategic growth, our new offices will also foster collaboration and offer high-tech features to bolster our world-class work, all while keeping us in the center of this incredible city.

Inclusion is an integral part of Paul, Weiss’ culture. Will you discuss this culture of inclusion and how it bolsters the firm’s work?

Inclusion is part of our DNA at Paul, Weiss. There is no doubt that we are more effective counselors to our clients when we bring a diversity of perspectives to our matters. Fostering an inclusive environment has always been one of the firm’s greatest strengths, and it is one of the reasons I was drawn to Paul, Weiss. This commitment begins with increasing the pool of talent available to the legal industry as a whole. For example, last year we partnered with Harvard Law School to create the Future Leaders in Law Fellowship, a new program for high-achieving students – primarily individuals from first-generation and less advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds – interested in law school and pursuing careers at the highest levels of the legal profession. The fellowship began with a week-long residency for the 35 inaugural Fellows, and we hosted our second cohort this summer.

Last year, following the Supreme Court’s decision barring race-conscious university admissions policies, my partners Loretta Lynch, the former U.S. Attorney General, and Jeh Johnson, former head of the Department of Homeland Security, and I were asked to co-chair a New York State Bar Association blue-ribbon task force on the future of legal

strategies for a diverse and inclusive profession. The task force released a report that serves as a detailed blueprint for law schools, corporations, law firms and courts to maintain and advance these goals. The report was widely covered by the media, and I am personally very proud of the task force’s work and its continuing influence.

Paul, Weiss has long been committed to high-impact pro bono efforts. Will you share some of the firm’s recent pro bono efforts, including those in New York?

Every day, we bring the top strategists and legal minds together to take on complicated global challenges on behalf of our corporate and pro bono clients. One of those global challenges is the escalation of hate-based extremism and violence. In May, we launched the Center to Combat Hate, dedicated to partnering with civil rights organizations and educational institutions to bring impact litigation to confront and redress hate-driven violence and intimidation. Our goal is to safeguard vulnerable communities and foster a more just and equitable society. Given that this is the 70th anniversary of the seminal *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, a case in which our firm worked closely with Thurgood Marshall, it felt very appropriate to formalize this critical work we are doing to combat hate-based extremism.

In New York specifically, I want to highlight the critically important pro bono work our lawyers have been doing with the Robin Hood Foundation, New York City’s largest poverty-fighting organization. Partnering with Robin Hood, scores of corporate, tax, benefits, real estate and other attorneys have been providing legal support to myriad small community-based organizations and nonprofits over the

past two years. This past spring, we launched a new partnership with Robin Hood’s Catalyst Program, which supports mission-driven startups that use AI to improve the lives of low-income New Yorkers. Our work included developing tools and advice for under-resourced, mission-driven for-profits, with a focus on governance, operations, intellectual privacy and data privacy.

Last year, you were honored as a “Pioneer in Legal Practice” by the World Jurist Association at its 28th World Law Congress in New York City. What did it feel like to be part of this important event?

We worked closely with WJA to bring the World Law Congress to New York City last year. We thought it was very important to bring the platform here, where so many important global companies and law firms are headquartered. The mission of the Congress – promoting a just global society and respecting the rule of law – has never been more important and it was a tremendous honor to be recognized by the organization.

What advice do you have for rising leaders in the legal industry?

Be bold. Be courageous. Be empathetic. Today’s world is changing faster than ever before. The most effective leaders embrace change and make smart decisions to move their firms forward and deliver the very best for their clients. This means keeping abreast of how the world and the legal industry are evolving and making the right investments to keep pace and stay competitive.

Also, don’t underestimate the power of empathy. It is an essential leadership tool. When you take time to try to understand other people’s perspectives, you forge stronger bonds and open the door to more effective collaboration. ●

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