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WilmerHale's New York head joins Latham

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John V.H. Pierce has left Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr, where he headed the firm's international arbitration practice in New York, to become global co-chair of Latham & Watkins' international arbitration practice.

Pierce began his new role at Latham today after 22 years with WilmerHale. He will continue to act as both counsel and arbitrator and will split his time between the firm's New York and Paris offices.

Pierce tells GAR: "Although it was a difficult decision to leave Wilmer, I am honoured by the opportunity to join old friends and new in Latham's stellar, global arbitration practice. The chance to help drive the continued growth of Latham's practice, which is a strategic priority for the firm, is an extraordinary opportunity."

Pierce will co-chair Latham's arbitration practice with **Fernando Mantilla-Serrano** in Paris. Mantilla-Serrano tells GAR: "John has earned a sterling reputation as a global thought leader in the field, and is widely recognised as a first-rate advocate, arbitrator and mentor."

Sophie Lamb QC, partner at Latham in London, says Pierce is a "creative, thoughtful, and strategic advisor" with "a team-focused perspective."

"We couldn't be more thrilled to have him aboard."

Pierce played a key role in WilmerHale's representation of Deutsche Telekom in a decade-long shareholder dispute with French mass media holding company Vivendi, which involved a series of ICC and Vienna International Arbitration Centre cases and eventually led his client to taking sole control of Polish mobile operator PTC.

He subsequently managed to dismiss a US\$7 billion US lawsuit brought by Vivendi against T-Mobile USA under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act relating to the same dispute.

More recently, Pierce represented a group of Chinese investors in a US\$3.5 billion treaty claim against Ukraine over the blocked takeover of an aerospace company and British Virgin Islands-registered entity Uni-Top in its bid to enforce a US\$21 million CIETAC award against a subsidiary of Chinese state-owned oil and gas company Sinopec in the US.

He has also represented Volkswagen in an ICC case with Suzuki over a multi-billion euro agreement to co-produce fuel efficient cars for the Indian market.

He will continue to work with WilmerHale as co-counsel on select matters.

Pierce joined WilmerHale legacy firm Wilmer Cutler & Pickering's newly opened New York office in 2000 after a year as an associate at Simpson Thatcher & Bartlett.

His 22-year stretch at the firm saw him spend time in the London office before returning to New York, where he became head of international arbitration.

Pierce says he has been "immensely fortunate to spend the last 20 years working with **Gary Born** and a spectacular group of partners and colleagues in the arbitration group at WilmerHale. The group has a well-deserved reputation at the very top of the field and the partners in the group are more than wonderful colleagues—they are close friends."

Born, chair of WilmerHale's global international arbitration practice, says: "John is a tremendous lawyer and good friend. We wish him the best of luck at Latham and are sure that he will enjoy many successes there."

James Carter, who this week announced his own departure from WilmerHale to become an independent arbitrator in New York, says: “John is a man of stature, in every sense of that word, in the New York international arbitration community.”

“Clients love him, and his powerful advocacy and comprehensive arbitration knowledge mark him as a leader, now and in the future, of the New York arbitration bar.”

Pierce sits on the New York International Arbitration Center’s executive committee, and is co-chair of its committee on board relations.

He also edits the recently launched GAR Guide to IP Arbitration with **Pierre-Yves Gunter**, co-head of arbitration at Bär & Karrer.

Gunter, who has sat as arbitrator in cases in which Pierce acted, tells GAR: “John is an outstanding arbitration counsel with an amazing advocacy talent. A truly international arbitration practitioner who has a unique ability to adapt to different cultural and legal backgrounds.”

Jean-Christophe Honlet, a founding partner of Paris boutique Honlet Legum with whom Pierce is currently acting as co-counsel, describes him as “a perceptive and sharp counsel, in the best US tradition.”

“I have no doubt he will continue to thrive at Latham.”

And New York-based independent arbitrator **John Fellas** says “I’ve had the pleasure of serving on tribunals with John and seeing him in action as an advocate. John is one of the most talented, effective and highly-regarded international arbitration lawyers around.”