

# The Growing Path From Wall Street Law Firm to Latham

By Andrew Maloney

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Latham & Watkins has been on a partner hiring surge firmwide in 2026, and many of those recruits have been in New York, as the firm looks to continue adding talent to service the most high-end matters for financial and M&A clients. And although the firm's focus isn't on hiring from any one particular firm, or type of firm, in any one market, several of those lateral partner additions are coming from Wall Street elite firms, whose partners are more mobile now.

"The movement from (Wall Street) firms has certainly been with greater frequency than it was five years ago," Latham's New York office leader, Marc Jaffe, said in an interview.

Latham has added 19 lateral partners in New York in about 14 months, said Jaffe. That includes four partners from Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz over the last year, including Emily Johnson and Mark Stagliano, who arrived this week, plus John Sobolewski and Zach Podolsky in 2025. The moves are a sharp contrast to just a



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few years ago, when Wachtell rarely saw a partner lateral exit.

In addition, David Marriott, formerly of Cravath, Swaine & Moore, was a marquee add last year to bolster the firm's antitrust capabilities, as was Kyra Bromley, from Debevoise & Plimpton.

Still, Jaffe said that aspect of partner pedigree—Wall Street firm background—isn't a focus, noting Latham has also added partners from boutiques, including Sara Margolis, a complex commercial litigator from MoloLamken. "There's not a focus on

hiring from any one particular firm, at all," he said. "The focus is on hiring talent."

He said the firm's 2025 additions, including Ray Schrock from Weil Gotshal & Manges; Andrew Parlen from Paul Weiss; and Ryan Dahl from Ropes & Gray, in more traditional restructuring matters have been an emphasis, as well as partners and practices that are connected to restructuring, including Sobolewski, who chairs the firm's liability management practice and co-chairs its capital markets practice; and Max Silverstein, a capital markets partner from Ropes.

Jaffe said he also could have mentioned build-outs in securitization, fund formation, and high-end insurance M&A as well. And that the firm in New York is focused on creating "the premier public company M&A bench in this market."

He said Latham's New York office build is geared to a list of sophisticated clients and matters that run the gamut.

"The common thread is high-end, bet-your-company, complicated transactions and controversy matters, for this market's most sophisticated clients – the traditional sophisticated clients, the big public companies, obviously, the money center banks, all the way to and through what we see as the emerging set of sophisticated clients," he said, listing, "the private capital clients, the fund clients, the new asset manager elite, two women and a dog in a garage."

New York has long been a core strategy for Los Angeles-founded Latham, which was

ranked last year as having the fifth-largest office in New York by attorney headcount. Firm leaders have previously said they want to be a "talent aggregator" in the city and a strategic adviser in all practice areas important to clients, especially when other firms prioritize specialization.

Among Latham's 42 partner hires for the year ending Sept. 30, 2025, about a third of them were in New York, among all offices, according to Law.com lateral data. Last year, the firm also added Marc Berger, co-head of Simpson Thacher & Bartlett's government investigations practice, and former Milbank partner Jerome McCluskey, who was general counsel and chief compliance officer at private equity firm Charlesbank Capital Partners.

Still, no firm is immune from exits in this environment. That includes Latham, which has seen partners such as Frank Saviano and Michelle Kelban move over to rival Kirkland & Ellis. And the firm's London office continues to see exits. Earlier this month, Ivana Rouse was one of the latest partners to join Sidley Austin from Latham, continuing a talent raid that started in 2024 with the addition of a sweep of around 30 London lawyers. Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom also lured a litigation and arbitration partner from Latham & Watkins in London for the second time this month.

"We are a large firm. Our goal is for every one of our attorneys to thrive here. And people make decisions about where they fit best for lots of different reasons," Jaffe said,

but adding, “We have a fabulous track record of retaining top talent.”

Looking forward, Jaffe said the firm will continue to look for talent who can serve asset managers, asset aggregators and everyone from traditional banks to new funds to private credit and hybrid finance, which will be particularly active in New York. He also said emerging technology, everything from AI to chips and energy required to power data centers, will produce activity. “Disruptive tech,” in general, “will not only fuel growth but the need for sophisticated legal minds.”

Latham’s goal is always to be the best, or at least the No. 2 firm, in every market and discipline they choose to be active in, he said. “And if we’re number two, to continue to strive to be number one. And if we’re number one, not to rest on our laurels. And our lateral strategy plays into that.”

The firm in 2024 made changes in partner compensation that have helped to attract and retain talent. That included increasing the

base pay for the highest-performing partners and allowing the firm to reward more partners from the bonus pool in any given year.

Latham’s hiring streak in New York is getting noticed.

“Unlike some other firms that have really, I think, gone downmarket in their lateral hiring, they have stayed with the top people, for the most part,” said Alisa Levin, a New York-based legal recruiter and principal at Greene-Levin-Snyder. “And they’re good at hiring and doing their due diligence “

“All of the deal practices are lucrative, and that’s where you have to be in New York,” she added.

The partner hiring surge at Latham is not only in New York. Law.com reported last week that the firm has announced at least 18 lateral partner hires within the first seven weeks of the year, in several offices globally, compared with five lateral partner announcements during the same period of time in 2025.