

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Crowell & Moring Acquires Core Atrium Senior Legal Team**

*Bolsters Firm's Emerging Companies and Venture Capital Practice*

**San Francisco—April 6, 2020:** Crowell & Moring is expanding its emerging companies and venture capital practice with the acquisition of a group of senior lawyers from Atrium, including its co-managing partners [Matthew Melville](#) and [Michel Narganes](#), and a founding attorney, [Jon O'Connell](#). These partners are joining the firm's San Francisco office and are recognized as leaders and trusted advisors in the emerging companies community in the Bay Area and nationally.

Drawing on their years of legal and business experience, Melville, Narganes and O'Connell not only bring a deep level of understanding of the emerging companies life cycle from concept to exit, but a client service model that is compelling to emerging companies and their investors. The model, which complements the approach that Crowell & Moring has taken, provides clients with a core legal team that is committed to the client's success. The team operates as strategic advisors, connecting the client to the legal experience and business know-how that is required to navigate through formation, capital raising, regulatory compliance, and the evolving stages of commercial growth and maturity. This is accomplished in a seamless and cost-effective manner, with a view toward optimizing potential while managing risk.

"We are excited about this acquisition. It aligns with our strategic goals of continuing to grow our practice in San Francisco, deepening our corporate capabilities, and advancing our digital transformation initiative to support clients in a business environment where technology plays an increasingly imperative business role," said [Philip T. Inglima](#), chair of Crowell & Moring. "These partners bring bold ideas, an entrepreneurial spirit, and a deep commitment to delivering the highest level of service to emerging companies and investors."

"Our further investment in this practice reflects our continued focus on taking the long view when evaluating opportunities to expand our platform to support the needs of our diverse client base," Inglima said.

In addition to the three new partners, [Matt Pelnar](#) joins the firm as counsel from Atrium in its San Francisco office. The firm also has welcomed [Steven Ryan](#), who joins as a counsel in the emerging companies and venture capital practice in Washington, D.C. from DLA Piper.

"In the current environment, where new needs and challenges are being identified quickly across every industry sector, entrepreneurs with creative solutions are focused on advancing their ideas," Narganes said. "By combining with Crowell & Moring, we are in an even stronger position to support our clients and help them navigate the full scope of commercial and regulatory issues."

"The firm's platform offers a robust combination of corporate and regulatory benefits to clients," O'Connell said. "From cyber security and data protection to labor and employment and government contracts, clients are able to consult with lawyers who can knowledgeably and efficiently guide their decision making and strengthen their business strategies. In addition, the firm's government-facing practices are able to provide real time guidance and business impact advice to clients navigating a myriad of issues, including those associated with the COVID-19 pandemic."

"We developed a service model that focuses on worrying for our clients and the privilege of serving as their most trusted advisors," Melville said. "By joining Crowell & Moring, we have enhanced our ability to do that. In addition, we can plug into the firm's experience and relationships across its platform, including in key markets such as New York, Washington, DC, and London, and access innovative pricing and staffing structures to support our clients' needs."

The addition of these five lawyers reflects an ongoing strategic priority to deepen the firm's bench in the technology and digital transformation arenas. Other examples include partners Michelle Gitlitz, who leads the firm's blockchain and digital assets practice; Jodi Daniel, who leads the firm's digital health practice; and in the firm's San Francisco office, Kristin Madigan, who handles complex litigation with a focus on technology, privacy and consumer protection matters; and Gabriel Ramsey, who handles complex technology litigation with a particular focus on intellectual property and cybersecurity matters.

#### **About the Lawyers:**

**Matthew Melville** oversaw Atrium's legal operations with Narganes. He focuses his practice on representing emerging growth companies throughout their lifecycles, from corporate formation to exit. Melville also has significant experience advising technology companies in governance and strategic matters. In addition, he advises venture capital funds and strategic investors, structuring investment transactions that range from seed to growth stage, and represents buyers and sellers in M&A transactions.

**Michel Narganes** brings more than 15 years of experience as a senior corporate lawyer at Sitecore, a global software and marketing company, and as a lawyer at *AmLaw100* law firms where she counseled clients in the technology industry. She focuses on venture-backed startups, corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, financings, commercial transactions, and licensing.

**Jon O'Connell** joined Atrium as its fifth employee and a founding attorney. He previously managed Atrium's venture capital financing team, which was one of the most active venture capital deal teams in the industry. Prior to joining Atrium, he worked at two *AmLaw100* firms. He regularly advises startup companies on a wide range of matters, including corporate governance issues, angel/seed financings, venture capital financings, secondary sale transactions, commercial transactions, and mergers and acquisitions.

**Matt Pelnar** counsels clients on corporate governance matters, venture financings, employment issues, board matters, equity strategies, and operational challenges.

**Steven Ryan** represents venture funds, venture-backed companies and founders to develop legal strategies, understand risks, and accelerate growth.

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