

## Crowell Nabs Ex-Kirkland Partner To Grow Litigation Practice

By **Xiumei Dong**

*Law360 (January 27, 2020, 9:39 PM EST)* -- Crowell & Moring has hired a former Kirkland & Ellis partner for its complex civil litigation practice, in a move that the Washington, D.C.-based firm said adds to its capabilities to defend large companies in high-stakes litigation and enforcement actions.

Andrew Pruitt, who was a trial lawyer and a litigator at Kirkland for the past eight years, has joined Crowell's D.C. office as a partner, the firm announced on Jan. 14. Pruitt's practice focuses on complex commercial litigation, investigations and other government enforcement matters.

"What was immediately attractive about Crowell was that it was clear they are a young entrepreneurial forward-thinking firm," Pruitt said in an interview Monday.

Pruitt said he was drawn to Crowell because of the firm's focus on addressing litigation risk in the new marketplace, especially when it comes to new digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, smart devices, and cybersecurity and privacy.

"It was also clear that they were thinking ahead, not only to how the marketplace is changing today, but also what it'll look like in 10, 20 years, and how to adapt to those changes to be on the cutting edge, serve new industries, new markets, and really provide the best value to clients," he added.

Pruitt, who was promoted to partner at Kirkland in October 2017, has worked with clients in industries such as energy, chemical, manufacturing, technology, automation, pharmaceuticals, financial services and consumer products, according to his firm biography.

Over the past eight years, he has handled over 100 depositions and trial examinations, including representing British Petroleum during the Deepwater Horizon incident off the Gulf of Mexico, according to a firm press release.

Some of the other high-profile matters he has worked on include representing the state of Georgia in an "original jurisdiction" dispute with Florida in the U.S. Supreme Court over water rights and chemical company Tronox in antitrust proceedings brought by the FTC regarding Tronox's \$2.2 billion acquisition of Cristal.

Since joining Crowell, one of the very first things on his agenda is to help the firm manage its growing docket of class action cases for General Motors, Pruitt said.

General Motors is a longtime client of Crowell for civil litigation around defective vehicles matters. The two formed an even stronger connection last June as Crowell hired GM's former litigation counsel Lawrence Lines as a senior counsel in its Orange County office.

Crowell, which has about 550 lawyers in seven offices, said it has 111 attorneys in its litigation practice, including 45 in the Washington, D.C., office.

In a statement commenting on Pruitt's arrival, Mark Klapow, co-chair of Crowell & Moring's litigation group, said Pruitt's complex litigation experience amplifies the firm's litigation expertise in the nation's capital.

"He has successfully worked with expert witnesses, crafting winning strategies for clients facing highly technical commercial disputes based on scientific issues," Klapow said.

Pruitt earned his law degree from the George Washington University Law School and an undergraduate degree from Louisiana State University, according to his profile on Crowell's site.

--Editing by Emily Kokoll.