

Covington Beefs Up Competition Team With SF Antitrust Czar

By Alex Lawson



Law360, New York (June 02, 2014, 4:09 PM ET) -- Covington & Burling LLP has tapped the U.S. Department of Justice's former antitrust chief in San Francisco, who has more than three decades of enforcement experience, particularly in the technology sector, to beef up its competition team in the Bay Area, the firm announced Friday.

Phillip H. Warren joins as a partner working out of Covington's San Francisco office after 12 years as head of the DOJ's antitrust enforcement unit in the city. At Covington, Warren will focus his work on counseling clients involved in criminal antitrust probes and prosecutions. Warren said in a statement that Covington's strong worldwide presence provided him the best opportunity to grow his practice.

"Covington has a great global antitrust practice, with outstanding offices in Washington, Brussels, and San Francisco. It also has a strong presence in Asia," Warren told Law360. "It is committed to growing its criminal antitrust practice, particularly in the area of international cartel work."

Warren added that he was looking forward to reuniting with Covington's antitrust practice co-chairs, Thomas Barnett and Deborah Garza, each of whom is a former head of the Antitrust Division.

While heading up the DOJ's San Francisco antitrust field office, Warren oversaw enforcement efforts against international cartels in more than a dozen industries, including several high-profile actions targeting high-technology products such as liquid crystal display panels, cathode ray tubes, dynamic random-access memory, optical disk drives and lithium ion battery cells.

In all, the San Francisco office racked up more than \$2.5 billion in antitrust fines under Warren's leadership, the firm said.

At Covington, Warren told Law360 that he will counsel clients through antitrust matters, but added that he would also be handling antitrust litigation "when the opportunities arise."

Timothy Hester, chairman of Covington's management committee said Warren's unique knowledge of antitrust enforcement efforts will be of great value to the firm as it continues to expand its global

competition workload to regions such as the European Union.

“Phil’s exceptional experience in antitrust enforcement will enhance our cartel capabilities in the U.S. and around the globe,” Hester said in a Friday statement. “His arrival will further strengthen Covington’s global antitrust and competition practice, including our thriving EU competition team.”

Along with his extensive criminal enforcement experience, Warren also has a background in civil antitrust matters, reviewing and approving staff analyses of pre-merger filings involving California technology companies and overseeing probes of deals that raised possible competitive concerns.

A veteran of the DOJ's antitrust division since 1980, Warren served as a trial attorney until 1997, when he was appointed to serve as assistant chief of the San Francisco office before eventually ascending to the top slot there in 2002.

Covington has been busy deepening its antitrust team of late. Warren's hire was announced roughly a month after the firm hired two new competition partners for its Brussels-based EU office. Last fall, Covington landed the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee's chief intellectual property and antitrust counsel for its District of Columbia office.

Warren earned his law degree from the University of California, Los Angeles School of Law and also holds a bachelor's degree from Santa Clara University.

--Additional reporting by Aaron Vehling. Editing by Richard McVay.