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## Former Maersk GC Opens NY Law Firm With Five Others

The outgoing general counsel of an international shipping conglomerate is launching a six-attorney New York firm, enlisting the help of a New York University professor and four women seeking to re-enter the law or expand their legal practices after working part-time.

By Christine Simmons | September 21, 2017

The outgoing general counsel of an international shipping conglomerate is launching a six-attorney New York firm, enlisting the help of a New York University professor and four women seeking to re-enter the law or expand their legal practices after working part-time.

James Philbin, who was general counsel of Maersk Inc., the North American subsidiary of Danish conglomerate A.P. Moller-Maersk A/S, launched The Philbin Law Firm this month. The firm will offer services in litigation, regulatory and investigations, as well as employment and labor law, corporate and workplace investigations, intellectual property, finance and real estate.



Samuel Estreicher  
Courtesy photo

Five attorneys are joining the firm as of counsel, including Samuel Estreicher, a New York University law school professor and director of its Center for Labor and Employment Law. He is also a columnist for the Law Journal.

Also joining the firm as of counsel are Leslie Arfine, Lisa Kerr Parlo, Danielle Furey and Joanna Garelick Goldstein.



Joanna Garelick Goldstein  
Courtesy photo

Goldstein, an IP litigator, is also of counsel at Sharma & DeYoung and a former associate at Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto. Arfine was a litigator for a White Plains firm, and Furey was previously an associate at Robinson & Cole and former executive director of a business operations for a sports merchandise company. Parlo has a mediation practice.

Philbin said he enlisted the help of other attorneys so the firm can handle larger matters.

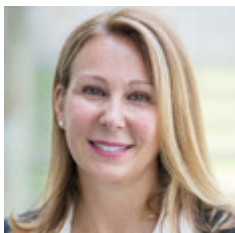


Leslie Arfine  
Courtesy photo

At Maersk, Philbin managed multijurisdictional investigations related to the False Claims Act, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, U.K. Bribery Act, export control regulations and other laws.

“I’ve always had great support around me to help in those cases. I’m looking to have some bench strength” to offer services to midsize corporations or even larger ones that may seek conflict counsel or need specialty counsel, he said.

While A.P. Moller-Maersk has had many lines of work, it’s most well known for its shipping container business and the 2009 hijacking of one of its ships by a crew of Somali pirates, the subject of the “Captain Phillips” film. During the 2009 hijacking (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/apr/09/somali-pirates-us-ship>), Philbin and other Maersk lawyers coordinated with international authorities and then worked with the Southern District U.S. Attorney’s Office to prosecute one of the pirates (<https://www.justice.gov/archive/usao/nys/pressreleases/February11/museabduwalisentencingpr.pdf>).



Danielle Furey  
Courtesy photo

In recent years, the U.S. operation of the Danish company has diminished and the scope of Philbin’s job shrunk, as the company sold off many of its subsidiaries (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-maersk-tankers/maersk-sells-oil-tankers-to-owner-opening-door-to-mitsui-idUSKCN1BV0ST>), leading Philbin to exit.

In his transition out of Maersk, Philbin, who previously practiced at Morgan, Lewis & Bockius for 13 years, talked with some larger firms but ultimately decided to launch his own. “Autonomy was the biggest part of the attraction,” he said, adding he wanted to have “better discretion in the work I do going forward.”



Lisa Kerr Parlo  
Courtesy photo

For now, Philbin is practicing out of Croton Falls, north of New York City, but he plans to open a Manhattan office soon.

Philbin, 62, has launched his own business before. He was a dentist in the 1980s, but enrolled in law school in 1989 after a dental drill injury gradually impaired his depth perception in one eye.

During his departure from Maersk, Philbin said he met other lawyers, including some “Lacrosse moms” and some who were working part time raising families but were ready to add more work hours and dive back into law.

“An untapped resource in the United States are these women lawyers who left firms years ago and raised families, and a lot of them are interested in getting back into the workforce,” Philbin said.

Meanwhile, Estreicher was a mentor to Philbin during law school, and the two practiced together at Morgan Lewis for three years. More recently, Estreicher was of counsel at several other firms while teaching at NYU, including Schulte Roth & Zabel, Paul Hastings and Jones Day.

Estreicher said he envisions the new firm seeking work that “isn’t directly competitive with larger firms,” such as sexual harassment investigations, worker safety audits and federal contractor audits.