



Courtesy of Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton

Front row, from left, Thomas Kaufman, Gregg Fisch and Michael Gallion. Back row, from left, Paul Berkowitz, Erica Ibsen, Kate Visosky, Laurie Barnes, Jennifer Abramowitz and David Van Pelt.

Sheppard Mullin Grows Labor Core

By Anna Scott
Daily Journal Staff Writer

LOS ANGELES — Five more labor and employment lawyers joined Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton from Seyfarth Shaw in Los Angeles, following three partners who made the same move last month.

Special counsel David Van Pelt and associates Jennifer Abramowitz, Laurie Barnes, Paul Berkowitz and Kate Visosky joined former Seyfarth partners Thomas Kaufman, Michael Gallion and Gregg Fisch at Sheppard last week, the firm announced Tuesday. Class action clerk Erica Ibsen also moved with the Seyfarth group.

“Labor is one of our foundational practices,” said Sheppard Mullin Chairman Guy Halgren. “We’re always looking to make it stronger. When we learned that these folks

were available, we jumped at them.”

Van Pelt, who advises employers on issues including termination and discipline, reductions in force and employment matters related to mergers and acquisitions, has a J.D. and an L.L.M. from Duke University. Abramowitz, who has defended companies in a variety of wage and hour class actions; Barnes, who specializes in defending management in single-plaintiff litigation; and Visosky, who represents employers in single-plaintiff and class action litigation, all graduated from USC Gould School of Law. Berkowitz, a junior associate, attended law school at UCLA.

“Sheppard provides us with a platform that’s stronger for our clients’ needs, with respect to wage and hour litigation,” Abramowitz said. “They’ve got a strong wage and hour practice already set up, but they’re also a firm with a very

strong footprint up and down California.”

Among the partners Abramowitz and the other associates have joined, Kaufman previously was co-chair of Seyfarth’s national wage-and-hour class-action practice group, and Gallion was the firm’s hiring partner.

Sheppard Mullin’s status as a California-based firm with a strong client-base here was a big draw, especially when labor and employment class actions in the state have been on the rise, Gallion said.

“The firm’s roots are here, so you’re not pulling resources from all over the country,” he said. “The firm seems to really understand California. What it boiled down to for me is, most of the work I do is California work, most of the clients I service are in California.”

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