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## 2 Sheppard Mullin Antitrust Litigators Jump To V&E In SF

By James Mills

*Law360 (January 10, 2023, 9:46 AM EST)* -- Vinson & Elkins LLP is expanding its West Coast antitrust capabilities by adding a Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP team of two litigators as partners in its San Francisco office.

Mike Scarborough and Dylan Ballard, both of whom have spent their entire legal careers at Sheppard Mullin, are joining the V&E antitrust litigation practice, the firm announced Monday. They handle antitrust litigation and competition-related government investigations as well as consumer protection and unfair competition cases.

They represent multinational businesses in all phases of class action, direct plaintiff and competitor litigation. They also advise businesses and individuals through civil and criminal matters involving federal and state enforcement agencies. Additionally, Scarborough served as chair of Sheppard Mullin's antitrust and competition practice.

In a Monday afternoon interview with Law360 Pulse, Scarborough explained they had always been impressed by the V&E antitrust team from previous cases where they had worked together.

"When it came to our attention that they were looking to grow the antitrust practice and expand in San Francisco, it was an easy conversation to have," Scarborough said. "It was a fantastic opportunity to join a top-notch firm and a nationally renowned practice. It was just an amazing opportunity that both Dylan and I saw as too good to pass up."

Ballard concurred, emphasizing how thrilled they are to join such a highly regarded antitrust team.

"Vinson & Elkins has for a longtime had a very renowned national antitrust practice. Mike and I are a California-based antitrust practice," Ballard said. "So, putting those two pieces together, strengthening the national profile of the antitrust practice at Vinson & Elkins even more was a big part of the synergy that we saw here."

With their arrival, V&E's San Francisco office now has 15 attorneys, five of whom are partners. But the firm plans to keep growing the office in the coming months, something Scarborough and Ballard said they're thrilled to be a part of.



Mike Scarborough



Dylan Ballard

"The national antitrust practice at Vinson & Elkins, the emphasis on growing in California, the opportunity to be at least the starting antitrust litigators at such a great firm, it's sort of a culmination of our career so far," said Scarborough. "We're just excited to take it to the next level."

Craig Seebald, co-head of V&E's litigation and regulatory department and a leader of the firm's global antitrust practice, explained how vital Scarborough and Ballard are to the firm's growth plan.

"The Northern District of California is the nation's most active antitrust court, and San Francisco is an important market for our clients — especially in the technology and energy industries — so building our team there is a key piece of the firm's growth strategy," Seebald said in a statement. "I have known and worked with Mike and Dylan for many years and they have impressive track records handling some of the biggest and most complex antitrust cases and their addition immediately strengthens our position as a leader in antitrust litigation."

V&E, which was founded in 1917 in Houston, has about 700 attorneys in 11 offices worldwide.

Earlier this week, V&E announced that environmental, social and governance and corporate governance attorney Jon Solorzano was joining the firm's Los Angeles office.

In November 2022, V&E announced its largest partner class ever, promoting 20 attorneys to partner and 20 others to counsel.

Scarborough received his law degree in 1999 from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law and started work at Sheppard Mullin in October 1999.

Ballard earned his law degree in 2007 from the University of California Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco and started work at Sheppard Mullin later in October 2007.

Scarborough always knew he wanted to be a litigator, deciding antitrust litigation was the most exciting of all the litigation fields.

"If you are a litigator in San Francisco, as far as I am concerned, where it's at is antitrust litigation," said Scarborough. "It is the most sophisticated, complex litigation. It's a very active antitrust division, a very active and sophisticated plaintiff's bar, a sophisticated judiciary. There's a whole lot of very interesting, high-profile antitrust litigation that happens in San Francisco. I can't think of any other practice area that has that much going on at that high a level, with high stakes and really interesting matters. That's what did it for me. It's kind of a no-brainer given the opportunity to focus on antitrust litigation when you're a young litigator and in San Francisco."

Ballard also always wanted to be a litigator but initially wasn't sure what area to go into.

"The reason that I became an antitrust lawyer is because a senior associate named Mike Scarborough told me it would be a good idea for me to join," Ballard said. "He was a big part of that decision."

Ballard is pleased he decided to go into antitrust and is happy with everything he has achieved in his career.

"It's a very international practice," he said. "I've gotten to travel the world to represent clients. The

cases are high stakes. Everybody cares about them; which is an exciting place to be if you're a litigator. Everybody who does them is good. The judges tend to be very knowledgeable. So, when it comes to complex litigation, I don't think you can ask for a whole lot more."

--Additional reporting by Andrea Keckley. Editing by Alyssa Miller.

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