

McDermott Opens Modernized Office in SF's Tallest High-Rise

By Xiumei Dong



Photos by Jason Doiy/ALM

McDermott Will & Emery's San Francisco office.

Despite skyrocketing real estate costs in San Francisco, McDermott Will & Emery has moved into the city's tallest building as the firm seeks to continue expanding its footprint on the West Coast.

McDermott's new San Francisco office is on the 56th floor of the 61-story Salesforce Tower—the tallest building in San Francisco and west of the Mississippi. A total of 37 attorneys and staff currently

occupy the 20,631-square-foot space that overlooks the San Francisco Bay.

"We've decided this was the most appropriate space and the best space to make a statement: 'We are here in San Francisco, we are committed to the market,'" said William Gaede, managing partner of McDermott's Silicon Valley and San Francisco office.

In March, McDermott announced its plan to open a San Francisco office after bringing aboard a roughly 50-lawyer

group from DLA Piper. McDermott has operated out of a temporary office at the Embarcadero Center since last May, until moving into the new space at the beginning of this year.

The Chicago-based firm has been building out its presence on the West Coast since setting up its Silicon Valley office back in 1997. As the firm grew its footprint and client base in the Bay Area, Gaede said his team had been

eyeing opportunities to open another office in San Francisco.

“From a recruiting, talent retention perspective, only being in Silicon Valley was limiting the people that would be willing to drive Silicon Valley,” Gaede said. “Also, in terms of serving our clients, being able to be up in the city, close to them, should also help us.”

Certain practices also benefit from having a presence in the city, he said. They include intellectual property

litigation and prosecution, private client, tax, white-collar, complex litigation, and labor and employment, as well as corporate practices, according to Gaede.

Pankit Doshi, a former DLA Piper labor and employment partner who joined McDermott last spring, added: “We are still doing the same work we’ve always been doing, still just as busy as always, but it’s nice to be in a space like this.”

In a departure from traditional law firm offices, McDermott’s San Francisco

office does not distinguish its partners’ workspaces from those of associates. The space has 47 private offices, and they are all the same size.

That results in lower costs, Gaede said, “but I also think there is a message in that—we are all one firm, we all work together.”

In addition to a 360-view of the Bay, Gaede added, the new office also features a fresh look with colorful art throughout the space.

“What the space is designed to convey is that we are a firm that works together, we are a firm that works hard together, but also doesn’t take itself too seriously,” Gaede said.

Xiumei Dong covers the business of law from the West Coast. Contact her at xdong@alm.com. On Twitter: @XiumeiDong.



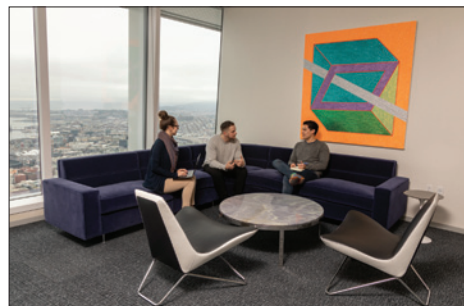
Partner Chuck Moll of McDermott Will & Emery.



Partner Troy Van Dongen and associate Jodi Benassi at McDermott Will & Emery in San Francisco.



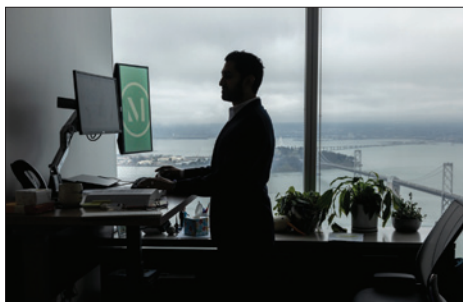
Bill Gaede, San Francisco and Silicon Valley managing partner at McDermott Will & Emery, in the firm’s new San Francisco office.



Office managing partner Bill Gaede said the firm was going for a fresh look in its new office. Associates Lauren Ziegler, Michael Giambona and Philip Shecter, of McDermott Will & Emery.



The firm’s new office is on the 56th floor of the city’s tallest building. Associate Sami Sedghani and partner Pankit Doshi at McDermott Will & Emery.



Partner Pankit Doshi of McDermott Will & Emery, joined the firm last year from DLA Piper.



Partners Todd Solomon, Christopher Foster and Jason Novak.



A conference room in McDermott Will & Emery’s new San Francisco office.