

Patterson Belknap Leader On Firm's Approach To Litigation

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 (October 16, 2026, 4:09 PM EDT) -- While many midsize firms across the country have in recent years been focusing on growing their geographic reach with new outposts and lateral hires, New York-based Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler LL has bucked the trend by remaining a one-office operation and primarily promoting from within.

Litigation is the largest practice at Patterson Belknap, which told Law360 Pulse that 110 of its roughly 200 total attorneys are part of the group. Some of the notable matters its attorneys have worked on include representing Major League Soccer in a gambling investigation that led to the bans of two players and the defense of McGraw Hill in a False Claims Act suit by the Florida state government.



Josh Goldberg

"Patterson's litigation department is a true powerhouse and one of the preeminent practices in the city and country," practice head Josh Goldberg told Law360 Pulse. "It's unique in many ways, I think, including in terms of our size, the breadth of our practice, the quality of our lawyers and the fact that we're all headquartered under one roof."

Recruitment is another area that Patterson Belknap has chosen to differentiate itself in, almost exclusively recruiting associates from federal clerkships and choosing to focus on internal promotions to increase its partner headcount.

"We really pride ourselves on the quality of the lawyers that we bring in," Goldberg said. "We're very committed to them and we expect a lot of them. They have grown up in our culture, which puts an emphasis on getting substantive experience and puts an emphasis on training generations of trial lawyers. We are able to develop lawyers over many years and introduce them to our clients, which helps building relationships both within and outside the firm."

Goldberg spoke with Law360 Pulse about Patterson Belknap's decision to focus entirely on its New York office, the firm's recruitment and talent development strategy, and its culture and guiding principles. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What went into the decision to focus entirely on New York versus expanding into other markets?

It's one of our competitive strengths, and I think it's ingrained in the firm culture. We have occasionally had offices in other cities in the past but at the core, we're a New York-based firm and all of our lawyers are currently under one roof.

There are a number of reasons why we do this. It facilitates collaboration and cohesiveness of the firm's lawyers. Litigation can be intense, and I think being under one roof, knowing and liking the people we work with, gives us a tremendous advantage. It's also a quality control feature. We're very selective about who we bring in and who we entrust to work on cases, so being under one roof allows us to really know who our colleagues are and be really involved in mentoring and training.

We think it also makes the workday better and creates a healthy work environment. We know who our colleagues are, and if there's an issue that's important to anyone at the firm, they can bring it to their peers or firm management. I started my career here as a junior associate, and the ability to go next door to speak with senior partners was invaluable in terms of the training I received and just learning how to become a Patterson litigator. Now that I'm on the other side, I very much have an open-door policy, and it's important to me that when people on my case teams want to talk about something, they're able to speak with me directly.

Why focus on federal clerkship hires instead of casting a wider net when it comes to outside additions?

It was really something that developed organically. We were getting an incredible set of applicants from federal clerkships, and as a midsize firm, there's only so many spots we have to hire people. We made a strategic decision to focus on federal clerkships, and another part of that was that judges started to hire less and less directly from law school, so we were able to bring in lawyers who were a bit further along in their careers with a more advanced skill set. I think it's become one of our key strengths. We've become known around the federal courthouses as "a home for clerks," and that's reflected by the nearly 100% acceptance rate from our recruiting process. I think it reflects that clerks and judges know us and we've really become a destination firm for them.

We do strategically look for opportunities to bring in laterals, and we've brought in a couple of superstar laterals over the last few years who have seamlessly become integrated within the firm and are part of our culture.

How has Patterson Belknap managed to remain competitive in the litigation hub that is New York?

We have this unique situation going on where even though we're a smaller firm by New York standards, our litigation department is quite large and diverse in terms of the practice areas and quality of lawyering that we have. That gives us a tremendous competitive advantage, where we have the flexibility to take on bet-the-company cases and the biggest litigations in the city while also taking on smaller matters, rightsizing them to fit our clients' needs.

What does it mean to be a Patterson Belknap litigator?

First and foremost, it's being an excellent trial lawyer. The firm has long had a reputation as being made of trial lawyers, and what I mean by that is that [our] lawyers are trained with a mindset that says you're going to litigate a case toward trial, not necessarily just pushing paper toward a settlement or a resolution. We all know that many cases don't go to trial, but having this mindset, it really impacts the way we go about discovery, gathering evidence and putting our case together to get the best results for our client.

I also think we're zealous advocates with values and character without taking ourselves too seriously or

being unpleasant or unprofessional. Another thing I think is important is that we have a very long history of commitment to public service and to the rule of law. Part of the Patterson Belknap character is that we're a broader part of the greater legal community and part of the city, state and country's fabric. We've had 22 straight years of 100% pro bono participation, and we have a very long history of lawyers going into and out of public service, playing important roles as prosecutors, judges and other roles. I think that's been reflected in the decisions we've made the last several years, particularly in the challenging environment we're all living in.

Patterson Belknap was one of the few firms of its size to sign amicus briefs supporting firms being targeted by the Trump administration. What went into the decision to do so when many of your peers declined to?

I think it's one of my proudest moments in being a Patterson lawyer, and truthfully, at the end of the day, it wasn't a difficult decision. It was one that we deliberated and talked a lot about, but it really just came down to believing in the rule of law and doing the right thing. We really focused on what would we feel best about doing, and looking back on that moment, we would be proud about the decision we made.

We really didn't focus on the impact on the business or how it might be perceived, but I think the response we received once we signed the amicus brief was remarkable. We had widespread support from clients, potential clients who reached out, alumni, and certainly within the firm, it was a big morale booster, particularly given what ended up happening, where disappointingly few firms decided to sign onto the amicus brief and support the firms that had been targeted. As litigators, we're asked by our clients all the time to take tough positions, stand up for what's right and to zealously advocate on their behalf, and I think this was a moment where it was important to do the same when looking at what was happening at the legal profession. What looked to be a pretty difficult decision at the time was pretty clear and the right decision. Moments like this are the time when litigators should step up the most, and we were very proud about doing that.

--Editing by Alanna Weissman.