

## Benesch Hires Second Retail Partner From Steptoe & Johnson

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 (February 23, 2023, 4:47 PM EST) -- Days after it announced the hire of Steptoe & Johnson LLP retail partner Stephanie Sheridan to lead its San Francisco office, Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP said Thursday added another retail attorney from Steptoe & Johnson.

Meegan Brooks joined Benesch's San Francisco office as a partner on Thursday after five years at Steptoe & Johnson. She told Law360 Pulse she was drawn in large part by the firm's dedication to diversity, saying the San Francisco office is 75% diverse by race or gender, along with its culture.

"Benesch has focused on attracting the most exciting talent — and also the friendliest people — from the country's best-known firms, and those people have pretty uniformly stayed for the long term," she said. "This idea of a safe haven for BigLaw refugees, where everyone can work happily together until they retire, sounds too good to be true, but I've gotten every indication that things will play out that way. Also, any firm can manufacture a façade of diversity and inclusivity. For our women-run practice, finding the real deal was important."

Brooks, a graduate of University of Michigan Law School, said she's been working with Sheridan since joining the now-defunct Sedgwick LLP in 2014. She said that when she knew she was joining the firm, she emailed Sheridan for months asking to join her retail practice group, getting the opportunity when the main retail senior associate left the firm to go in-house.

Brooks' practice focuses on defending retailers against consumer class actions, especially in privacy and false advertising. She also advises retailers on consumer-facing matters such as advertising copy, website design, automatic renewal programs, return policies, influencers and sweepstakes.

Brooks said that because many of her retail clients have small in-house legal departments, her main goal as counsel is to help shoulder part of a load that can have them "constantly pulled in a thousand different directions."

"Meegan and I have worked together for a long time, and the move to Benesch is really about being able to serve our amazing retail and e-commerce clients' needs, whether across practice areas, across geographies or in navigating emerging issues and regulations," Sheridan said in a statement. "As Meegan can attest, I like to see newer lawyers get exposure to running cases and deals early on, which builds the sort of flexible, entrepreneurial talent that walks Benesch's halls every day."

Over the last few years, Benesch has made a number of hires in its now 14-attorney San Francisco office, which in early 2020 consisted of only two attorneys. Intellectual property partner Ziyong "Sean" Li joined Benesch's San Francisco office in September from Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan LLP, and in May 2021 litigation partner James Thompson joined from Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP.

--Editing by Brian Baresch.