

## Hodgson Russ Names NYC Office Managing Partner

By **Adrian Cruz**

*Law360 (September 15, 2022, 4:44 PM EDT)* -- Hodgson Russ LLP announced that it has named partner Valerie Stevens as managing partner of the firm's New York City office, the second largest in the East Coast firm's portfolio.

Stevens' main role as office managing partner will be to focus on client service and growth while also overseeing the professional development of the nearly 60 attorneys that practice out of the New York City office, according to the firm.

"I'm excited for the opportunity," Stevens told Law360 on Thursday. "The NYC legal market is crowded with very large firms, but Hodgson Russ offers an excellent combination of hands-on relationship management, sophisticated advice, and value that our clients find very attractive. I'm excited to share that message with an even wider audience of potential clients and colleagues."



Valerie Stevens

Stevens replaces longtime attorney Gary Schober, who stepped down from the role in July after serving as New York managing partner since 2013. Schober, who's been with Hodgson Russ since 1979, also served as firm managing partner from 2006 to 2012.

"Gary is a Hodgson Russ institution," Stevens said. "Under his leadership, we built out a new NYC office location for the firm, and successfully weathered the COVID-19 pandemic. I am grateful for the training and mentorship that he and the other more experienced attorneys in the office have provided to me over the past decade; I'm standing on their shoulders as I move into this new role."

Stevens, who graduated from the University of Toronto Law School, has been with Hodgson Russ since 2006, when she joined the Buffalo, New York, office as an associate. Following a two-year stint managing community affairs programs at Morgan Stanley and pursuing a master's degree at New York University, she rejoined the firm in 2012.

Stevens was named equity partner in 2017, and she was elected to the firm's equity partner compensation committee, on which she still serves.

Going forward, Stevens said she plans to focus on client development and recruitment while also looking to gain more traction for Hodgson Russ throughout the New York City region.

Stevens added that when it comes to recruitment and growth, one of the aspects the firm focuses

heavily on is work-life balance, citing her own experience managing her career while also raising a family.

"I often point to myself as an example: I have three young children and a husband who is very supportive but also has a demanding career," she said. "Hodgson Russ has allowed me the flexibility to make it work — from generous maternity and paternity leave policies that attorneys and staff actually use, to being able to be home to have dinner with the family and tuck in the kids almost every night ... even if I have to log back in once they are asleep."

Stevens' practice focuses on corporate transactions, representing a wide range of clients on national and international middle market acquisition, divestiture, and joint venture transactions, along with trade regulation and commercial matters.

"Delivering value to clients in New York City and surrounding areas is a strategic priority for the firm; Hodgson Russ is uniquely positioned to offer innovative and forward-thinking legal advice to the middle market," said managing partner Benjamin Zuffranieri Jr. in a statement. "Valerie's track record of building long-term relationships, both with clients and with members of the Hodgson Russ team, will be instrumental to the continued success of our New York City office."

--Editing by Ellen Johnson.