

DAMIEN BYRNE HILL TO LEAD HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS' UK & US DISPUTES PRACTICE

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Firm news

Leading City Litigator Damien Byrne Hill will take over as Head of Disputes for UK & US at Herbert Smith Freehills - one of the most prominent legal roles in the City.

Damien will take over his new position on 1 May 2018 from Mark Shillito, who has successfully held the role for more than 10-years.

Home-grown talent, Damien has been with the firm for 27 years - joining as a trainee and then becoming a partner in legacy firm Herbert Smith in 2000. He has led the firm's Banking Litigation Practice for the last 9 years, during which time it has developed a reputation as one of the pre-eminent practices in the field.

Damien has carved out an exceptional legal career with Herbert Smith Freehills, acting on some most high-profile and complex cases in the English Courts. Damien has experience advising on contentious issues facing domestic and international banks, investment funds, private equity houses and other financial institutions. His experience includes company and commercial disputes in London and Asia across a wide range of industries and professions, in the context of both High Court litigation and international arbitration.

He has advised on disputes concerning corporate finance transactions, investment advice, fund management, securities trading, project finance, private equity investment, enforcement of security and structured finance.

Ranked in Chambers and Partners 2017 as Band 1 for Banking Litigation, Damien is lauded in the directories as a "*calm and sure figure at the head of litigation*" and "*an extremely savvy litigator*".

Commenting on his new role, Damien said: *"It is an enormous privilege to be asked to lead a practice which has had such huge success in recent years. My goal will be to build on that success and to ensure that we continue to focus on how we can bring new thinking, new approaches and new processes to what we do to meet the changing demands of the clients we serve."*

Meanwhile, Mark will continue as Global Head of IP at Herbert Smith Freehills – a role he continued to carry-out alongside his role as Head of Disputes for UK & US.

Mark was also a trainee with the firm, becoming a Partner in 1996. He took on the role of Head of Disputes UK & US upon the firm's merger in 2012, having held the equivalent position in legacy Herbert Smith since 2008.

For over a decade, Mark has led the practice through many developments including the opening of the firm's New York office in 2012 and most recently the opening of the Milan office earlier this year. New York now has a team of over 30 lawyers including 11 partners representing clients in a wide range of commercial litigation, investigations, cross-border matters and class actions throughout the US, as well as infrastructure and project finance.

Based in London, Mark has been helping clients solve their most complex and high-value problems for 30 years, in sectors as diverse as life sciences, FMCG, media and telecoms. He is recognised as a leader in his field in all the major directories, most recently in Chambers & Partners 2017 as an Eminent Practitioner.

He has acted in a number of the leading IP cases and has extensive trial, deal and multi-jurisdictional dispute coordination experience.

Praised by clients in directories as *"having remarkable knowledge"*, *"commercially savvy"* and a *"great tactician"*, Mark has also been hailed as being *"one of the leading lights of Herbert Smith Freehills"*.

Mark said: *"It has been an honour and a pleasure to lead our market-leading disputes practice, and over an extended period, when it has continued to go from strength-to-strength."*

"I'm very proud of our team and everything we have delivered together. Succession is important, change is a constant and fresh ideas are a thoroughly good thing. I know, under Damien's watch, we will continue to be 'The No 1 Disputes Powerhouse' in London and I am looking forward to continuing to be part of the team, contributing to the many great things Herbert Smith Freehills will achieve in the years to come."

Justin D'Agostino, Global Head of Herbert Smith Freehills' Disputes practice, added: *"Mark has made an enormous contribution to our practice, and under his strong and steady watch we have genuinely gone from strength-to-strength. He leaves the practice in an incredibly powerful position, with a clear strategy that lays the foundations for further success in a continually changing sector. I know that Damien also brings a wealth of experience to help steer the business through its next chapter, as we continue to be the firm that companies turn to for their most high-profile and complex disputes right across the globe."*

About Herbert Smith Freehills

Operating from 27 offices across Asia Pacific, EMEA and North America, Herbert Smith Freehills is at the heart of the new global business landscape providing premium quality, full-service legal advice. The firm provides many of the world's most important organisations with access to market-leading dispute resolution, projects and transactional legal advice, combined with expertise in a number of global industry sectors, including Banks, Consumer products, Energy, Financial buyers, Infrastructure & Transport, Mining, Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare, Real estate, TMT and Manufacturing & Industrials.

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