

Orrick Nabs Former Co-Chair Of MoFo's Life Sciences Group

By Adam Lidgett

Law360 (April 10, 2019, 6:53 PM EDT) -- Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP has bolstered its life sciences and technology team in Washington, D.C., with the addition of a partner who formerly served as co-chair of Morrison & Foerster LLP's life sciences practice.

Stephen Thau brings to the firm his unique expertise in helping life sciences companies negotiate and document various types of deals ranging from venture capital financing to mergers and acquisitions, Orrick announced on Tuesday.

Thau told Law360 on Wednesday there were many reasons behind his decision to make the move, including Orrick's strength in the emerging companies spaces and related practice areas, like capital markets and mergers and acquisitions, among other things.

"I've known the people at Orrick for a really long time and always admired what they were doing in terms of growing the business, growing the emerging companies practice, being innovative with technology and their interest in life sciences," Thau said. "It has gotten to the point where it seemed like a good time to make a change."

Thau said he's collaborated extensively with emerging companies in the life sciences sector, including the fields of biotechnology, medical technology and health information technology. He works with them from the very early stages of their business through multiple rounds of venture capital or other financing, strategic transactions and mergers and acquisitions. Additionally, he said, he has also helped companies go public.

Thau studied biology as an undergraduate at Harvard University, and said that he's always enjoyed science, an affection that helped steer him into his current field.

"I like working with scientists, and I like working with entrepreneurs and the energy and excitement they bring to the work that we do," Thau said. "It's fun and rewarding to help clients accomplish their goals."

Thau started his legal career clerking for now-former U.S. District Judge Vaughn R. Walker in San Francisco before transitioning to Morrison & Foerster, the first private firm he worked at after graduating Stanford Law School, he noted.



Stephen Thau

He said he worked at Morrison & Foerster for about three years as a litigator before leaving in 1998 to join Venture Law Group, where he stayed on through a merger with Heller Ehrman LLP in 2003. Thau then rejoined Morrison & Foerster as a corporate partner in Palo Alto in 2008, and was the co-chair of the firm's life sciences team from 2008 through about 2012 or 2013, he said.

"Recruiting Stephen is part of a plan that began earlier this year with the opening of our Boston office," Don Keller, who heads Orrick's technology and life sciences sector, said in a statement. "Many of us know Stephen well from our time together at Venture Law Group, and he is exactly the kind of high-quality corporate lawyer we want on our team."

--Editing by Daniel King.