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Ex-Hong Kong Lawmaker, Phillips Nizer Attys Form Boutique

By **Xiumei Dong**

Law360 (May 3, 2022, 4:47 PM EDT) -- A trio of Phillips Nizer LLP alums has teamed up with former Hong Kong pro-democracy lawmaker Dennis Kwok to launch a new boutique law firm in New York that specializes in complex business litigation, investigations and white-collar defense, the firm announced Tuesday.

The new firm, Elliott Kwok Levine & Jaroslaw LLP, comprises former Phillips Nizer partners Mark Elliott, Matthew Levine, Ilene Jaroslaw and Kwok, who also holds a senior fellow position at Harvard University. Elliott was most recently the chair of Phillips Nizer's litigation department.

Elliott told Law360 Pulse that he met Kwok three years ago and decided to join forces with Kwok and his two colleagues because their combined experience in both government and the private sector could allow them to "serve clients well in a number of different ways [and] aspects."

The new firm focuses on six specific practice areas, including commercial litigation and international arbitration, white-collar criminal defense, regulatory counseling, China-related corporate advisory work, international human rights, and antitrust, according to an announcement.

"I see there is a need for U.S. companies to understand more about China and the risk associated with doing business there and dealing with Chinese entities because of the geopolitical changes with the U.S.-China decoupling and all that," Kwok added in his interview with Law360 Pulse.

"With my background and coupled with Mark and Ilene and Matt, I think we can provide that risk analysis that is needed by U.S. companies," Kwok said.

Kwok moved to the U.S. last July to begin his work as a senior fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Center. Kwok withdrew from politics in late 2020, after being ousted from serving in Hong Kong's Legislative Council by members of the controlling party after new laws to curb political dissent were passed. Before that, he was a member of the Legislative Council for eight years and was a founding member of the Civic Party, a pro-democracy political party in Hong Kong.

Elliott began his career as an associate at Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison LLP and later spent more than a decade at Bingham McCutchen until its 2014 merger with Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP. He joined Phillips Nizer in 2015, after a brief stint at Morgan Lewis.

Elliott added that he will bring his 30 years of litigation experience to the new firm. According to the firm's announcement, he has led litigation against the Central Bank of Iraq, financier Bernie Madoff, Delta Air Lines Inc., LandAmerica Financial Group Inc., and Enron in bankruptcy cases.



Mark Elliott



Dennis Kwok



Matthew Levine

Levine, meanwhile, had recently joined Phillips Nizer in 2021 and previously served for more than three years as executive deputy superintendent for enforcement for the New York State Department of Financial Services. He also had a nearly two-year stint at investigative and compliance consultancy Guidepost Solutions LLC.

Jaroslaw joined Phillips Nizer in 2019 from Hoguet Newman Regal & Kenney LLP as part of a team that helped the firm launch its white-collar criminal defense practice. Earlier in her career, Jaroslaw also spent 23 years as a prosecutor in the Eastern District of New York.

In a statement, Phillips Nizer managing partner Marc Landis wished the departing partners well. The litigation department is currently led by partner Jared Clark, a firm representative noted.

--Editing by Nicole Bleier.



Ilene Jaroslaw

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