

Sheppard Mullin Brings In Antitrust Partner For NY Office

By **Beth Winegarner**

Law360, San Francisco (December 09, 2013, 5:05 PM ET) -- Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP recently landed a new partner from Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP who will bring his skills in competition, consumer protection and deceptive-conduct law to the firm's New York antitrust and trade regulation practice group, Sheppard Mullin said Monday.

As a partner at Weil, Bruce A. Colbath developed his chops in all aspects of marketing, advertising and antitrust law. He represented and litigated a number of consumer protection issues related to unfair, deceptive or unlawful conduct, handling class actions and similar litigation, according to statements from Sheppard Mullin.

"Bruce is an aggressive litigator with a strong reputation in the antitrust field. He has deep competitor vs. competitor Lanham Act false advertising expertise. Bruce represents an important strategic fit for our antitrust practice, specifically expanding capabilities in New York. We are thrilled to add such a high-caliber antitrust attorney to the firm," Sheppard Mullin chairman Guy N. Halgren said in a statement from the firm.

Colbath has been involved in actions targeting a number of industries, including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, dietary supplements, consumer products, software, semiconductors and consumer financial services. He represented Airborne Health Inc. in an advertising investigation by the Federal Trade Commission and MasterCard Inc. in state and federal multidistrict litigation challenging its currency conversion practices.

A few of those cases gave him the opportunity to collaborate with some of his new colleagues at Sheppard Mullin.

"Bruce and I have worked together for several clients, including representing MasterCard together as co-counsel on several matters. I am extremely pleased to welcome him to the firm," Gary Halling, the leader of Sheppard Mullin's antitrust and trade regulation practice group, said in a written statement. "Bruce has a national consumer protection practice representing companies in proceedings brought by the FTC, state AGs and private parties that complements our existing advertising practice."

In one antitrust case, Colbath represented L'Oreal USA Inc. in a nationwide class action accusing it of conspiring with other cosmetics manufacturers and department stores to affect the prices of cosmetic products. The case was ultimately settled, statements said.

He has also represented and counseled clients on advertising and consumer protection issues, particularly false ad litigation under the Lanham Act, and has appeared before the FTC and the National Advertising Division of the Better Business Bureau and its National Advertising Review Board. Colbath also holds considerable experience in network TV cases.

"I am delighted to join Sheppard Mullin," Colbath said in a statement. "In addition to the strength and breadth of the firm's antitrust and advertising practices, I am also impressed with Sheppard Mullin's successful growth and expansion in recent years," Colbath stated.

In the past year, the firm has added 18 attorneys in its New York office, allowing it to make "considerable headway" in the region, said Blaine Templeman, managing partner of that office. Sheppard Mullin now has 60 attorneys in New York and 25 attorneys in its antitrust and trade regulation practice group who work across the firm's offices.

Colbath earned his bachelor's degree from Georgetown University in 1974 and his law degree from New York Law School in 1985.

--Editing by Edrienne Su.