

How I Made Practice Group Chair: 'Surround Yourself With a Strong, Deep Team and Deploy That Team Often,' Says Creighton Macy of Baker McKenzie

By ALM Staff

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**Creighton Macy, Baker McKenzie,
Washington, D.C.**

Title: Chair, North America Antitrust & Competition Practice

Firm: Baker McKenzie

Year Graduated, Law School: 2008, Marquette University Law School

How many years have you been at your firm? I have been with Baker McKenzie for just over six years. Immediately before joining Baker McKenzie, I served as Chief of Staff and Senior Counsel in the United States Department of Justice's Antitrust Division.

What made you pick your practice area? The first legal matter that I ever worked on, during the summer following my first year of law school, was an antitrust matter. I was immediately drawn to the practice – the importance of diving into the facts, regardless of what industry is at issue, and working on teams, given the resource-intensive nature of many antitrust matters, excited me from the start. I have been an antitrust practitioner ever since, and have always felt fortunate to find a practice area that I remain highly passionate about.

How did you develop your expertise in your practice area? I have had tremendous opportunities to develop my practice from the start. For example, beginning my career at the DOJ's Antitrust Division as a



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Courtesy photo

Trial Attorney and then returning as its Chief of Staff and Senior Counsel several years later, during the Obama Administration, provided highly valuable experiences. I have also benefited from terrific mentors who have provided me meaningful opportunities and guidance, as well as incredibly talented colleagues with diverse backgrounds and experiences. Most importantly, from the very beginning, I have been in challenging and intense situations that required me to take on a lot of responsibility and learn quickly.

Why did you want to become a practice area leader? Baker McKenzie has a leading Antitrust & Competition practice globally and in North America. In fact, in North America we've tripled in size over the last three years.

The opportunity to lead the charge on that growth, and to cultivate and continue it, is what drew me to the position. As a former collegiate athlete, it has always been important to me to be a strong contributor on a team and to take on leadership roles whenever the opportunity arises.

What skill sets do you need to be an effective practice group leader (ie, knowing more about the practice, hiring, business development, financial management, etc.) Building a team-first culture is crucial. And aggressively recruiting individuals with diverse backgrounds that are strong fits for the team is equally as important. We focus on building a culture of high performance and accountability, leading with empathy and inclusivity, and keeping our clients first at all times.

How do you balance client work with management work? Client work always comes first. I try to look at client work and management work holistically, so that I do not feel like I am “balancing” them—rather, my perspective is that I am working at all times toward providing our clients with the best possible experience and results. This goes hand-in-hand with leading a phenomenal team that is focused on that same objective.

How does having a practice leadership role give you a sense of the broader strategic vision of the firm? Our group is buoyed by deep support from the Firm’s leadership, which has helped drive our growth and success over the last several years. For example, as a practice leader, I discuss the Firm’s vision



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frequently with our team as well as with other Firm leaders — such as Alan Zoccolillo, Chair of the Transactions Practice Group, Pete Tomczak, Chair of the Litigation and Government Enforcement Practice Group, and the CEO of Baker McKenzie North America, Colin Murray. I also speak with Mark Hamer, Global Chair of the Antitrust & Competition Practice Group, several times a day. Because of this incredible support, I have an in-depth sense of the broader strategic vision of the Firm, which I share often with the antitrust team.

What other roles or experiences help you in this current role? I have been fortunate to work on and lead large teams throughout my career, which has been hugely valuable in my current role as Chair. The Chief of Staff role at the DOJ’s Antitrust Division also provided key experiences, given its breadth of responsibilities. There was a lot of juggling, as the role included working as a senior advisor to the Assistant Attorney General on civil and criminal antitrust enforcement and policy matters, as well as budget and personnel issues. Fur-

ther, being a team captain as a college athlete has also been very valuable. These experiences, which I draw on today, reinforced the value of resiliency, hard work, and teamwork.

What are key priorities for your practice area? Our practice's key priorities are: securing terrific results for our clients, continuing to work on the largest and most complex antitrust matters, and continuing to grow by hiring leading attorneys. And importantly, maintaining a team-first and performance culture that is inclusive in every respect as we focus and execute on our priorities.

Do you have a broader influence in this role over improving diversity at your firm? If yes, how so. Yes, absolutely. We have a highly diverse practice and the Firm has empowered us to continue our efforts in recruiting a diverse and inclusive team in all respects. For instance, last year we hired 15 attorneys in our practice, 12 of them from underrepresented groups. Four of our last five partner promotions were ethnically diverse. Our team is comprised of leaders in this space, as many lead and participate in diversity-related initiatives. Diversity and inclusion is something that Mark and I speak regularly about with our CEO Colin Murray and other Firm leaders.

Is succession planning a part of your role as a practice group leader, and if yes, how so? Yes, it is a big part. We are focused on continuing to build a deep pipeline of talented

lawyers to ensure continued success of the practice and our clients. This aspect of the role, as well as the recruiting process, is one of my favorites because we have such a terrific team.

Is there anything that surprised you about the role? Not particularly. I will say that the constant support from firm leadership through our team's swift and consistent growth has been of paramount importance.

How has the role given you insights into client needs? Serving in the Chair role gives me a broad view into the many challenges our clients are facing. For instance, I have a view into all of the client and business development efforts that our team undertakes. Our clients are under more pressure than ever, navigating a heightened enforcement environment and complex regulatory regimes around the world. We are fortunate to have the largest global antitrust practice, with leading practices in each jurisdiction, and our breadth provides a true global picture as we advise clients around the world. It is a privilege for me to work with our team and help our clients navigate these challenges, mitigate risks, and thrive.

Is there any other advice you'd share for those looking to become a practice leader? I'd encourage them to take the opportunity when it comes. And, to work to surround themselves with a strong, and deep, team and deploy that team often.