

# LAW WEEK

## COLORADO

# Fisher Phillips Names Greco New Head of Denver Office

*Philadelphia transplant takes over for Denver office co-founder*

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LAW WEEK COLORADO

Leading a Fisher Phillips office isn't new for Mike Greco. If anything, he's hoping to replicate in the Denver legal market the success he had out East.

Greco is the new regional managing partner for the Denver office of employment law firm Fisher Phillips, which has 33 offices in the U.S. He succeeds the office's co-founder, partner Todd Fredrickson, who led the Denver location since its inception in 2008. Greco relocated to Denver in 2015 from the firm's Philadelphia office, which he co-founded.

Greco already has a few priorities set for how he'd like to see the Denver office — which has 15 attorneys — expand further through 2017.

"Our focus for the future here is growth while maintaining quality of practice," Greco said. He added that the office is diverse in terms of the attorneys' personal backgrounds and employment-related practice areas, which range from immigration and wage-and-hour law to trade secret law. He wants to continue diversifying and deepening the experience of the office, he said.

Greco's litigation and counseling resumé is hyper-focused on trade secrets and non-compete agreements, which have made up 100 percent of his practice for the past 20 years, he said. He has handled and litigated such cases in all 50 states, representing mostly large companies that have a multi-state presence.

Back in 2007, Greco opened Fisher Phillips' Philadelphia location with colleagues Chris Stief, who is now that office's regional managing partner, and David Erb, who is now a partner in the firm's Baltimore office. Prior to that, Greco worked with Stief at a Philadelphia boutique firm, Rubin & Associates, which was solely dedicated to representing Merrill Lynch in non-compete litigation. Greco and Stief would meet Erb after they joined Saul Ewing in 2002,

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Mike Greco, regional managing partner

and the three would carry their shared practice focus to Fisher Phillips in 2007. The new office resembled a boutique for restrictive covenants and trade secrets starting out.

But it would eventually grow in breadth. There turned out to be a healthy demand for national counsel on trade secrets and non-compete matters, which implicate a motley of state laws. If a company had a new case spring up in Texas over a non-compete provision, it wouldn't have to seek a Texas-based lawyer to litigate the case if it already had someone like Greco with a grasp on the varying state laws.

Growing an office organically from a boutique-like model turned out to be a successful strategy, Greco said. Leveraging the relationships the firm had with national companies in their niche practice, Greco and the other partners connected those companies with other attorneys throughout the large firm whenever they had other employment law needs.

When presented the opportunity to come to Denver, Greco admitted that he was worried about "starting over" and working to establish a new network of businesses and fellow attorneys. "When I was considering whether to leave Philadelphia ... I had a network in place and relationships I valued," he said.

But the collegiality of the greater Denver area's professional culture

made that easier than he'd expected.

"I was pleasantly surprised at how welcoming the people in the greater Denver community are," he said.

Part of what was so enjoyable about growing the Philadelphia location was doing it as one of three friends who liked working together.

They would often turn to each other to say, "We've got a great thing going here," Greco recalled. He added that they would hire like-minded, quality attorneys "who were fun to be around" and "you wanted to sit next to," which is a philosophy he looks to apply in Denver.

As many other law office leaders have been saying, Denver continues to present a lot of growth potential for a firm, Greco said.

"I think Denver is one of the hottest business markets across the country," he said, adding that the city has a national reputation as a "great place to live" and an innovation hub. "People like me and others are moving here at a rapid pace."

The general business growth in the greater Denver area should also present more opportunities for employment law practices that serve companies. "Wherever you've got business you've got employees, and whenever you've got employees you've got employment law," Greco said.

Aside from business reasons, part of what drew Greco to Colorado is that his family would enjoy living

here. His wife grew up in Arvada, and the Grecos frequently vacationed in Colorado while they still lived out East. Their son, 13, likes to climb 14ers in the summer and ski in the winter, Greco said.

When Fredrickson and Darin Mackender opened the Denver office in 2008, the office was just the two of them and a single staff member.

Today it has 15 attorneys and 16 people on staff.

Fredrickson said running the Denver office from its beginnings was a "fantastic experience."

One of his favorite accomplishments in that nine-year tenure, besides the growth, has been "maintaining a culture of collegiality and respect among all members of our team, which was vitally important to Darin and me in opening the Denver office," he said.

Fredrickson will continue his practice of counseling companies and litigating on their behalf in a range of employment and labor management issues. He will continue to chair the firm's Diversity and Inclusiveness Committee, which he said is working on a variety of initiatives that include a retention action plan and a targeted program to recruit diverse lateral partners.

He believes Fisher Phillips' Denver office serves as model for "D&I" for the rest of the national firm. •

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