



Remote Working Policies and Growth Become Key Discussions at Barclay Damon

Barclay Damon offices are set to go back to normal operations, with all attorneys and staff returning at the end of June, but managing partner Connie Cahill says the option to work from home may remain.

By Aleeza Furman

Barclay Damon started the new year under new leadership, with Connie Cahill taking over as the firm's managing partner. Cahill replaces John Langan, who left the position to serve in the newly created role of chair, where he will focus on continuing the growth the firm has seen over the past few years.

Cahill's work in the upcoming year will include planning what the transition back to office work will look like post-pandemic, a large question facing firm leaders across the legal industry, and how long the firm will keep its remote working policy even after health risks fade.

The offices are set to go back to normal operations with all attorneys and staff returning at the end of June, but Cahill says the option to work from home may still remain. (After offices could open back up in 2020, Barclay Damon instituted a policy in which attorneys and staff who do not need to be on-site could decide on a day-to-day basis whether they would work at the office or at home.)

Despite the challenges that remote working poses to mentoring and maintaining firm culture—what Cahill refers to as “glue”—Barclay Damon plans to examine the benefits of keeping its COVID



Barclay Damon managing partner Connie Cahill.

Courtesy photo

remote working policy as a more permanent option.

“If you had asked me this question a year ago, I would have said there's no way to do glue, and there's no way to do

mentoring and training unless everybody's face to face five days a week," Cahill said. "And I think COVID has taught us that that's not necessarily true."

Cahill is taking control of a firm that, she said, managed to maintain strong revenue despite a difficult 2020. Cahill declined to discuss specific revenue figures.

She credited Barclay Damon's success to a steady client base and fewer travel expenses, as well as hard work from the attorneys and staff. In the past year, the firm not only avoided furloughs and layoffs but also brought on 18 attorneys and 12 staff members, with plans to add more, according to Cahill.

Barclay Damon's current attorney head count sits around 300, a number that has grown from 60 since Langan took on leadership of legacy firm Hiscock & Barclay 20 years ago, the firm has said. The firm particularly grew through a series of mergers and group hires over the past five years, starting with the 2015 combination of Hiscock & Barclay and Damon Morey to create Barclay Damon. Since then, it also absorbed Gilberti Stinziano Heintz & Smith and Menter, Rudin & Trivelpiece and

added about 20 attorneys from LeClairRyan.

Cahill said that more mergers could be in Barclay Damon's future. "We'll always be looking for that kind of opportunity. The way a firm has those skill sets that we think really creates synergies with our clients and our existing skill sets," she said.

The shift in leadership will allow the firm to focus even more on adding talent to its ranks. "One of the things that John Langan is going to do in his role as chair is really focus on lateral recruiting, so we would very much like to grow what we call our major market offices—Boston, New York and New Haven, [Connecticut]," she said.

According to Cahill, new hires can benefit many of its practice areas. The firm is seeking to expand its regulatory group after it saw a successful year of work in the energy industry. Cahill said labor and employment, real property tax, health care and intellectual property are also possible areas of growth.

"We're always looking for what might make sense to grow those areas," Cahill said.

Langan announced about three years ago that he would step down from his managing partner role. Cahill was elected

as his replacement and trained for the position as deputy managing partner before assuming her full leadership responsibilities Jan. 1. She was previously chair of the public finance practice area, and throughout her 14 years at the firm, she has served as Barclay Damon's financial services practice group leader and managing director of the Albany office.

Aleeza Furman is a Philadelphia-based copy editor with ALM. Contact her at afurman@alm.com.