

ERISA Litigation Partner Michael Graham Joins Michael Best Chicago Office

Michael Best announces that **Michael T. Graham** has joined its Chicago office as a partner in the firm's Labor & Employment Relations Group, where Graham will chair the firm's growing ERISA Litigation Practice. This addition comes on the heels of several recent lateral hires in the Chicago office, including Mircea Tipescu and Peter Huh.

"We fully expect Michael to hit the ground running as he will be in great demand," said Amy Schmidt Jones, Chair of the Labor & Employment Relations Practice Group. "With profound changes taking place in the employment sector, the two decades of experience Michael brings with him will help strengthen our practice and provide extraordinary counsel to our clients."

Graham joins Michael Best from McDermott Will & Emery, and brings nearly 20 years of experience in Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) Litigation and employee benefits controversy matters on behalf of Fortune 500 employers, employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) trustees, plan administrators, and plan sponsors. He focuses his practice on employee benefits matters, including counseling plan administrators, fiduciaries and employers on proper statutory and regulatory compliance as well as administrative benefit claims and appeals procedures. He also counsels clients on preventive measures to avoid litigation and assists in developing defense plans in the event that litigation arises, the firm said in a news release.

"We're thrilled that Michael has joined our Chicago office," said Kerryann Haase Minton, Michael Best's Chicago Office Managing Partner. "We're always searching for talented and

sophisticated attorneys and the experience Michael brings in employment benefits litigation will be a great addition to our team.”

Graham frequently litigates fiduciary breaches, ESOP issues, and medical and pension benefit denial claims in front of federal and state courts, and in front of the U.S. Department of Labor. He also dedicates a part of his practice to counseling plan administrators, fiduciaries and sponsors on Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) requirements and liabilities.

“There is a significant amount of ambiguity currently in the employment sector,” said Graham. “With a number of regulations and requirements set to come down, I expect employers to be very active in the near term and I believe Michael Best has positioned itself well to address their client’s needs in the employee benefits, ERISA litigation and labor and employment areas.”

Graham received his J.D., magna cum laude, from Valparaiso University School of Law, and his A.B. from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

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