

Steptoe Bolsters Investigations & White-Collar Defense Practice with Addition of Leading FCPA Attorney Iris Bennett

(January 24, 2022, Washington, DC) – Steptoe & Johnson LLP is pleased to announce that Iris Bennett, an internationally-recognized Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA) and cross-border investigations lawyer, has joined the firm's Investigations and White-Collar Defense Group as a partner in the Washington, DC office.

Bennett represents Fortune 100 clients across a wide range of white-collar matters, from internal investigations and corporate compliance, to federal mandatory and voluntary disclosures. She has conducted internal investigations related to sensitive and business-critical issues, as well as potential violations of criminal and civil fraud statutes, including the FCPA, the False Claims Act, the Anti-Kickback Act and antitrust law. Utilizing her multilingual abilities in Spanish and Portuguese, Bennett also has served as lead counsel on numerous large and complex cross-border matters, particularly in Latin America. These matters include serving as US counsel to the Independent Committee appointed by the Board of Directors of Vale S.A., to investigate the causes and responsibilities for the 2019 rupture of the Córrego do Feijão tailings dam in Brumadinho, Brazil.

Bennett's compliance experience includes serving as the Independent Compliance Monitor for SNC-Lavalin, Inc., where she reviewed and evaluated that company's global anti-corruption compliance program on behalf of the World Bank.

Under her oversight, SNC-Lavalin successfully completed its sanctions obligations to develop a robust anti-corruption compliance program and was able to obtain an early release from debarment. In addition, she regularly advises corporate clients on their anti-corruption compliance programs and specific policies, procedures and compliance questions.

“Iris’s experience counseling clients on high-profile government investigations and compliance programs in the US and Latin America deepens our group’s expansive cross-border capabilities,” said Gwen Renigar, Steptoe chair. “As one of the top FCPA practitioners in the country, she’ll be a premiere asset to an already talented group of investigations and white-collar defense attorneys serving our clients around the globe.”

Bennett added: “When it comes to cross-border investigations, Steptoe has an international reputation for excellence, and I’m thrilled to have the opportunity to further it. As I continue to grow my practice, I look forward to collaborating with the Steptoe team in Washington and around the world.”

Steptoe’s Investigations & White-Collar Defense practice has represented some of the largest public and private companies in the world in major government and internal investigations. Regarded as one of the best white-collar practices in the United States, the team has garnered many accolades, including recognition by both Chambers USA and The Legal 500 as a top-ranked practice in this field. The group was also named The National Law Journal’s “Washington Litigation Department of the Year in White-Collar Crime” in 2014, 2017, and 2018, and has received Law360’s “Practice Group of the Year in White-Collar” award three times. For the past six years, Global Investigations Review has named Steptoe to its GIR 30, an independent guide to the world’s best firms for international investigations.

In 2021, Bennett was recognized in several categories by

Global Investigations Review, including “Top FCPA Practitioners” and “Women in Investigations,” in addition to being ranked as an FCPA practitioner in Chambers USA and Chambers Global. She earned her J.D., magna cum laude, from New York University, where she was a member of the Order of the Coif and a contributor to the New York University Law Review. She earned her A.B., summa cum laude, from Harvard University, where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

About Steptoe

In more than 100 years of practice, Steptoe has earned an international reputation for vigorous representation of clients before governmental agencies, successful advocacy in litigation and arbitration, and creative and practical advice in structuring business transactions. Steptoe has more than 500 lawyers and other professional staff across offices in Beijing, Brussels, Chicago, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, and Washington. For more information, visit www.step toe.com.

The diversity of the firm is a critical factor in its success. The firm’s Chair is a woman; the majority of Steptoe’s nine offices are managed by women; the majority of Steptoe’s practice groups have women as leaders; and the firm’s twelve-person elected compensation committee is headed by a woman and includes five women as members. The firm’s eight-person professional business services leadership is equally diverse, with half the c-suite made up of women, including three women of color, and other leaders who openly identify as LGBTQ+.