

Womble Combines With San Francisco-Based Litigation Boutique

SAN FRANCISCO (July 11, 2023) – Womble Bond Dickinson announced today its combination with boutique litigation firm Simmonds & Narita LLP. The deal brings together the complex litigation practice of the San Francisco-based firm with Womble’s full-service, international capabilities. The team, comprised of partners Tomio Narita and Jeffrey Topor, counsels Leanne Yu, Nathan Searles, and Dominic Luca, and paralegal Rosana Klingerman, has extensive experience defending individual and class actions filed under a wide range of consumer protection statutes in federal and state courts in California and jurisdictions across the country against companies operating in the consumer financial services industry.

“Simmonds & Narita is a high-quality team of lawyers with a strong track record of litigation excellence,” said Chris Jones, who leads the Business Litigation Practice Group and serves on the firm’s Global Board. “The addition of their depth of talent and sophisticated skill set, including decades of experience handling class action matters, greatly enhances the dispute resolution and litigation practice for our firm.”

The team defends creditors, finance companies, debt buyers, law firms, and collection agencies against individual and class claims brought under the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), the California Rosenthal Act, the California Consumer Legal Remedies Act, Section 17200 of the California Business & Professions Code, and other state statutes governing credit and debt collection. They are well-versed in defending against individual and class action claims brought under the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), the Fair

Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), and the California Consumer Credit Reporting Agencies Act (CCRAA). They also handle arbitration matters pending before JAMS and the American Arbitration Association and are regularly retained to handle cases pending before federal and state appellate courts.

“We accomplished a heck of a lot as a five-attorney law firm, and our team has built close relationships with our clients and with each other. In considering a move like this, we knew it had to be the right fit for our people and clients,” said Narita. “We immediately recognized that Womble shared our values, including a commitment to exceptional client service, and their platform will be an incredible resource with greater efficiencies and robust services for the complex litigation needs of our clients.”

Chris Mammen, who, in addition to serving as Office Managing Partner, leads the Intellectual Property Litigation Group and is a member of the firm’s Global Board, added: “We could not be more pleased with the continued growth of our San Francisco office. This combination comes on the heels of an exciting year, including our move to a new office and earlier combination with Cooper, White & Cooper, a multi-practice firm of more than two dozen legal professionals. It further strengthens our capabilities on the West Coast and expands the legal services we can offer our clients.”

With additional offices in Irvine, Los Angeles, and Silicon Valley, the firm now has over 100 legal professionals, including 54 lawyers, in California and a global platform of more than 1,000 lawyers in 31 offices.

About the new lawyers:

Tomio Narita is a trial attorney focused on defending class actions and high-risk cases filed against members of the consumer financial services industry. He has over three decades of experience representing creditors, national banks,

debt buyers, finance companies, alternative lenders, collection agencies, collection law firms, and mortgage companies in cases arising under various consumer protection statutes. Tomio has also successfully defended hundreds of class and representative actions in state and federal courts and frequently handles complex business disputes.

Jeff Topor has over thirty years of experience litigating in and working for federal and state courts. Since 2000, he has concentrated his practice on complex litigation with an emphasis on defending creditors, finance companies (including fintech companies), debt buyers, debt collectors, and law firms in federal and state courts against individual and putative class claims under the FDCPA, TCPA, FCRA, corollary state Acts, and myriad other consumer protection statutes. Jeff has tried cases before juries in state and federal courts, has extensive experience in federal and California appellate courts, and has mediated and arbitrated scores of matters.

Leanne Yu focuses her practice on complex civil litigation, including defending banks and companies in individual and class actions brought under the FCRA, FDCPA, TCPA, Truth in Lending Act (TILA), and related state laws. Prior to private practice, Leanne was a Deputy Attorney General at the California Department of Justice, focusing on complex financial services litigation.

Nathan Searles is experienced in defending against individual and class action claims brought against businesses and individuals under the FDCPA, FCRA, TCPA, California Rosenthal Act, California CCRAA, and California Identity Theft Act, among others. He also assists in regulatory, employment, and privacy claims.

Dominic Luca focuses his practice on complex litigation, including consumer financial services defense litigation brought under a wide variety of federal and state laws in

courts and arbitration tribunals in California and throughout the United States. He represents clients in matters arising under the FDCPA, FCRA, Rosenthal Act, and California Unfair Competition Act, as well as related federal and state law causes of action.