

Mayer Brown's DC Office Gets New Managing Partner

By **Sophia Morris**

Law360 (June 17, 2019, 8:49 AM EDT) -- Mayer Brown has a new managing partner in Washington, D.C., with Rajesh De, the head of its global cybersecurity and data privacy practice, focused on growing the office and increasing diversity within the workplace.

De will succeed Daniel Masur and oversee an office of more than 200 lawyers. He has extensive experience handling matters at the intersection of privacy, cybersecurity and national security. In addition to heading up the cybersecurity and privacy practice, he serves as co-leader of the firm's National Security practice, and will continue in these roles.



Raj De

De told Law360 on Friday that in his new role, he will work to ensure the continued growth of the D.C. office, which has added a dozen lateral partners in the past couple of years. The office has been expanding to meet the demands of clients as D.C. becomes known as the "risk capital of the world," he said.

The role of the office is to help clients "mitigate some of those risks, whether it's investigations, or regulations, or congressional inquiries," De said.

He would also like for the firm's office to be more recognized within D.C. for its deep bench of experienced attorneys. The office is filled with attorneys who have experience tailored toward the city, such as former Watergate prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste and former senior government officials like Mickey Kantor and Susan C. Schwab.

De himself has a range of experience from his time working in government. He first joined the firm in 2006, then left to work in the Obama administration and serve as general counsel at the U.S. National Security Agency. In his role at the NSA, he supervised 100 lawyers and staff. He returned to Mayer Brown in 2015.

Increasing diversity within the office is a key goal for De. The office is no different than other big law offices with its "inadequacy when it comes to diversity," but he aims to do better, he said. In his time as head of the cybersecurity practice, the group has grown and become one of the most diverse practices at the firm, both in terms of the types of litigators and the backgrounds of the lawyers themselves.

“That is not an accident, we built it that way,” he said. “So if we can do that in a very successful, modern, growing practice, there's no reason why that can't be true for big law more broadly.”

Ensuring diversity at the office requires a focus on everything from recruitment, to promotions and retention. The firm works to have diverse 1L receptions and mentoring programs, De said.

“I do think being a diverse partner in charge of the office is really important from a role model perspective for younger lawyers,” he said. De added that clients also value diversity in the firms they hire, and are increasingly expecting firms to have diverse teams.

One of the ways that Mayer Brown can foster diversity is through its mentoring program, which De said was particularly impactful on his own career.

De said he would like to show lawyers at the firm that “a career in the law can develop in lots of different ways.” His own path has seen him alternate between public service and private practice, and he wants to show young lawyers that there are alternatives to starting as a young associate and working your way up the ladder.

“Ensuring that there is an appropriate mentoring structure for all young lawyers, but particularly diverse lawyers, is absolutely critical,” he said.

--Editing by Rebecca Flanagan.