

With Mass Torts 'Getting Even Bigger,' Shook One of the Latest to Add in LA

By Andrew Maloney

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What You Need to Know

- Shook, Hardy & Bacon has added Alycia Degen, previously a co-leader of Sidley Austin's product liability and mass torts practice.
- The firm said she's a 'natural fit for Shook' and part of the firm's strategy to expand its depth in LA.
- The last month or so has seen several litigation and leader moves in Southern California.

The stream of Am Law firms making moves in Los Angeles has remained steady, with Shook, Hardy & Bacon one of the latest to add a litigation leader in the city.

This week the Missouri-founded firm announced the arrival of Alycia Degen, previously a co-leader of Sidley Austin's product liability and mass torts practice, with the firm saying she's a "natural fit." Her move comes as Shook seeks more expansion in the Southern California market and as mass torts activity continues to get "even bigger," one firm leader said.



Courtesy photo

Alycia Degen of Shook, Hardy & Bacon.

The last month or so has seen several litigation and leader moves in Southern California. Firms such as Cooley and Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe recently added high-profile litigators from Am Law 100 rivals, while Simpson Thacher Bartlett and Sidley nabbed office leaders in LA.

Degen, a litigation strategist with experience in class action and complex civil and appellate matters, has focused on represent-

ing life sciences, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, food, and cosmetics producers. She's also worked on issues related to automobiles, telecoms, manufacturing, and emerging technology.

In a statement, the firm called her "a natural fit for Shook," while Eric Anielak, managing partner of the firm's product liability litigation practice, pointed to the depth and quality of her relationships in California—a hotbed for mass torts and class actions due to a strong plaintiffs' bar and robust rules for such cases. Anielak also pointed to her familiarity with the firm and predecessors at Shook's office in L.A. who also came from Sidley.

"The firm in general has been looking to expand our depth in Los Angeles, so that strategy has been in place for a bit now, probably a few years," Anielak added, adding that Degen "fits into that strategy."

He added that mass torts are "getting even bigger."

Degen worked at Sidley for most of her career, starting as a summer associate and

returning to the firm after a clerkship. She said that, after more than 20 years, she ultimately just found herself thinking more and more about the big picture.

"Every now and then you take a step back and look at where you are and where you want to go, and this was one of those times for me," said Degen, who has also been in Los Angeles for her whole career.

She added that there are opportunities in California state court that are unique, and her familiarity with the jurisdiction can provide a boost to the firm, especially as product liability claims move into new areas such as technology, software and social media.

"That's part of why I think building and continuing to build Shook's presence in California is important," she said. "We've received very large amounts of litigation, both in federal and state court, and having a strong local presence in addition to the nationwide profile [of the firm], is important for defending our clients."