

SEC Pro Talks Switching To Defense Work With Robbins Alloy

An Atlanta-based attorney is planning to leverage the nearly nine years he spent prosecuting fraud with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission as one of the newest shareholders with Robbins Alloy, where he will lead the firm's SEC defense practice.

On Oct. 1, **Joshua Mayes joined Robbins Alloy Belinfante Littlefield LLC** in Atlanta as a partner after serving as a senior trial attorney for the commission's enforcement division, where he handled federal court disputes and administrative actions. Mayes joins 19 other attorneys at the firm, which has one office in Atlanta, according to the firm's website.

Mayes navigated investigations and litigation when he was at the commission and said his private practice will be informed by his experience.

"So, having gotten to work with folks on both sides of the process, work the recommendations all the way up to the commissioners and the recommendation process to bring an enforcement action, [that] gives me really good insight into how the agency works, how the agency makes decisions and that will certainly benefit my clients," Mayes said in an interview with Law360 Pulse on Thursday. "It also gave me a chance to work with a lot more folks in [Washington, D.C.,] than you might see just from a trial lawyer."

In addition to starting Robbins Alloy's SEC defense practice, Mayes said he can take on plaintiff-side work, such as helping someone recover money after they were the victim of fraud.

Mayes said he believes the commission will take an aggressive posture toward ferreting out fraud, and as investigations unfold, business professionals may need to defend themselves even if they were unaware of fraud committed by others.

"What I enjoyed most or enjoy a lot is more focusing on the people involved," Mayes said. "So, all of the executives or the people — particularly the gatekeepers like accounting firms, auditors and underwriters — they often get swept up in SEC investigations when they're not really the perpetrators of the fraud. But with the benefit of hindsight, some folks at the SEC like to say, 'Oh, well, you should have caught this fraud,' and it can be really ruinous for a person's life. I want to help folks like that out."

Mayes said he was drawn to Robbins Alloy, because he thought highly of its attorneys, including those he worked with previously when he was in private practice before he joined the SEC. Before joining the commission, Mayes was an associate attorney at Sutherland, which has since become Eversheds Sutherland, he said.

Mayes said he was also drawn to the firm due to its small size, noting that it has fewer clients and therefore fewer conflicts of interest. He said he represents companies and individuals who are required to appear in court or if they're being investigated for fraud.

Mayes was admitted to practice law in Georgia in 2006, according to the State Bar of Georgia's website.

After earning his law degree from Cornell University Law School, Mayes served as a law clerk for Judge Karen J. Williams in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Mayes received his bachelor's degree from the College of Charleston.