

Haynes Boone Expands Presence as it Celebrates 20 Years of Growth in New York City

September 23, 2024 Craig Unterberg, Sharon Baldasare, Cristina Addy, Kenneth Bezozo, Rick Werner, Courtney Smith, Joseph Lawlor, Laura Martone

PRACTICES Real Estate, Fund Finance, Intellectual Property, Finance, Energy, Power and Natural Resources, Litigation, Capital Markets and Securities

Twenty years ago, Haynes Boone launched its New York City office with just one lawyer. Today, it proudly announces a lease renewal to grow its occupied footprint as it celebrates two decades of growth.

Since opening its doors in 2004, the firm's New York office has expanded to more than 120 employees, becoming Haynes Boone's second-largest office globally by attorney headcount.

[Finance](#) Partner [Craig Unterberg](#) was one of the earliest New York City additions, traveling frequently between Dallas and New York starting in 2007 before settling permanently in 2009. Today, Unterberg is the New York office managing partner and a member of the firm's executive committee.

"From day one, we have very intentionally focused on growth and creating a full-service New York office," Unterberg said. "The entrepreneurial spirit of this office has allowed us to go into a competitive market and flourish."

New Lease


As the firm marks 20 years in New York City, it's also renewing its lease at the iconic 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

Over the last two years, Haynes Boone has prioritized making offices collaborative and modern with moves in [Denver, Austin, Charlotte and others](#). It's continuing that trend in New York with the renewal of its lease at 30 Rock, which will result in the firm relocating to newly renovated space consisting of the entire 22nd and 23rd floors and a portion of an additional floor plus the right to lease additional space for future expansion.

The firm's occupied footprint will grow from approximately 70,000 square feet to roughly 90,000, and the new build-out will feature more communal areas and a modern, upgraded office design focused on efficiency and collaboration.

"We're thrilled to renew our presence at 30 Rockefeller Plaza, which is a truly iconic location," said Real Estate Partner [Sharon Baldasare](#), who led the lease negotiation. "Our firm's presence has grown significantly in New York City in recent years, and our lease renewal provides us with the flexibility to continue expanding as our needs evolve."

Real Estate Counsel [Cristina Addy](#) also supported the lease negotiation effort.

 30 Rock Exterior #1 - Courtesy of Tishman Speyer

History of the New York Office

Senior Counsel [Ken Bezozo](#) is a New York native who joined Haynes Boone in 1981. When the firm decided to open its doors in the world's financial capital, he took on the challenge as Haynes Boone's first New York-based attorney.

When Capital Markets Co-Chair [Rick Werner](#) joined the New York office 2006, the headcount was still just around 10.

"It was very difficult to recruit talent at the beginning because everyone wanted a firm with more brand recognition," Werner said. "It hasn't been a straight line, but we have strong practices across a variety of groups now. It's still a highly competitive market, but now people truly know Haynes Boone and our expansion proves that."

Culture and collaboration are cliché corporate words, but for a law firm trying to break into the hyper-competitive New York legal market, they were also a necessity for attracting and retaining top talent.

"If I worked on a deal for you eight years ago, I'm still working on it and I know the entire history of the transaction," said [Fund Finance](#) Partner [Courtney Smith](#), who joined the New York office in 2016. "I think it's great for our clients to know that there's somebody who understands what's going on and has that context because that's rare."


The New York office began with a natural focus on [Capital Markets and Securities](#) but quickly expanded to include [Litigation](#) and the significant addition of more than a dozen [Real Estate](#) attorneys between 2010 and 2012.

“There’s definitely a view of everyone being in the boat together and a collaborative spirit,” said [Intellectual Property](#) Partner [Joe Lawlor](#), the first New York Summer Associate to move into partnership. “People at this office truly care about each other and about the betterment of the office in a way that’s quite rare in big law, especially in New York.”

During the Great Recession, the New York office had grown to 50 lawyers and made the pivotal decision to move into 30 Rockefeller Plaza, a marquee address further establishing the firm as a key player in the city’s legal market.

“It’s a prestigious address and a phenomenal location,” [Energy](#) Partner [Laura Martone](#) said. “With everyone going back to the office, it matters where you’re working, and to be right in the middle of Midtown Manhattan and in an iconic building with everything at your fingertips makes a difference.”

A core characteristic of the New York office is the longevity of its staff. The longest tenured employee isn’t an attorney but a legal secretary, Vivian Hwang, who has been a cornerstone of the office for 17 years. Office Administrator Shelly Ortega joined in 2010 as the firm made its move to 30 Rock, and many others have also provided dedicated support and stability to Haynes Boone in New York City.

 Lobby of 30 Rock, Courtesy of Tishman Speyer

Looking Ahead

From the outset, the New York office has been deeply engaged in civic and philanthropic activity in the city. The firm has represented the New York Philharmonic on a variety of legal fronts including its \$550 million renovation of David Geffen Hall.

Since 2019, the New York office has also partnered with Summit School, which is committed to assisting students with learning differences through enhanced academic services, recreational programming and counseling. The firm's pro bono efforts also include years of successful immigration advocacy, like last year's [asylum victory for a Honduran mother](#) and three of her children.

In the last decade, the office has roughly doubled in size and includes attorneys specializing in intellectual property, capital markets, corporate, labor and employment, finance, investment management, real estate and more.

As the firm celebrates its 20th anniversary in the city, it continues to follow the blueprint that made it successful: focusing on strategic growth and dedication to client needs.