

# PERSONNEL MOVES

IN ITS LATEST QUARTERLY UPDATE, ACTIVIST INSIGHT MONTHLY KEEPS TRACK OF THE HIRES AND PROMOTIONS OF ACTIVISM PROFESSIONALS. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT A JOB CHANGE OR PROMOTION FOR THE NEXT UPDATE, PLEASE [EMAIL US](#). WE WILL ALSO INCLUDE MOST SUBMISSIONS IN OUR DAILY NEWS UPDATES ON ACTIVIST INSIGHT ONLINE.

## INVESTMENT BANKS

### DUNCAN HERRINGTON

*MANAGING DIRECTOR, MOELIS & CO. FROM MARCH 19, 2020.*

Duncan Herrington joined the New York office of investment bank boutique Moelis & Co. from Raymond James Financial, where he was head of activism and contested situations. The bank has been on a mini hiring spree, adding Ted Moon from Red Mountain Capital, and Peter da Silva Vint, who also works out of New York, from BlackRock. According to Moelis' Craig Wadler, Herrington's appointment "reinforces our commitment to working with corporates on pre-activist strategies such as performance evaluation, capital allocation and efficiency, M&A potential, corporate governance, and evaluating the shareholder base."



## PROXY SOLICITORS

### PAUL SCHULMAN

*MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CO-HEAD OF THE M&A AND ACTIVISM ADVISORY GROUP, MORROW SODALI, SINCE JANUARY 2020.*

Paul Schulman joined the New York team of Morrow Sodali from MacKenzie Parnters in January, joining Michael Verrechia as leader of a thoroughly global activism practice. Formed by the merger of Italy's Sodali and U.S. solicitor Morrow & Co. in 2016, Morrow Sodali now has 13 offices around the world. "What I saw from the outside before joining, but have come to really appreciate from the inside over the past month is that this firm has unmatched resources that come from having the largest client base in the industry and the global footprint with offices across every continent that no one else has," Schulman told *Activist Insight Monthly*.



### HARRY VAN DYKE

*EXECUTIVE VICE CHAIRMAN, MORROW SODALI, SINCE FEBRUARY 2020.*

Morrow Sodali also appointed former Morgan Stanley and Bank of America investment banker Harry van Dyke to chair its global executive committee, lead a new strategic advisory board of independent executives, and help grow the M&A and activism business. "We are thrilled to have Harry join our leadership team," CEO Alvise Recchi said in a statement. "We are confident that his vast global experience, particularly in M&A, will be instrumental in helping us expand further."

## MARK HARNETT

SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR, OKAPI PARTNERS, SINCE OCTOBER 2019.

Mark Harnett returned to proxy solicitation after a nearly five-year stint at communications firm Sard Verbinen & Co., where he co-founded specialist advisory shop Strategic Governance Advisors. Previously, he spent more than two decades at MacKenzie Partners. “Over the last three years, C-Suites and boards have been advised to initiate off-season engagement with the investment stewardship groups and governance/proxy teams at their largest shareholders,” Harnett told *Activist Insight Monthly* of recent developments, adding that many companies had done an effective job at outreach. “In 2020, we’ll begin to see whether some of that off-season shareholder engagement changes the dynamic, and possibly tips the scales, in activist campaigns in favor of companies. Or whether activist representation will still be welcomed as the catalyst underperforming companies need to drive returns.”



## ROUNDUP

MacKenzie Partners appointed its veteran proxy solicitor **Bob Marese** as president and the role’s previous incumbent Lawrence Denny to vice chairman. “Bob has earned wide respect among clients and their advisors for his expertise in delivering results in proxy contests, M&A transactions, general proxy services, tender and exchange offers, and corporate governance consulting,” CEO Dan Burch said in a statement.

Alliance Advisors hired **George Rubis**, former a portfolio manager at Weiss Multi-Strategy Advisors, to lead business and product development for its market surveillance unit in February 2020. Rubis, who will be a vice president in Alliance’s Investor Intelligence Group, said in a statement that the adviser’s “talent and data-driven analysis has permitted them to gain a strong footing in investor relations.” Alliance also hired **Celine Feng** from IHS Markit as vice president of business development for Greater China in December 2019. “Celine will extend to the broader Asian market the same high level of satisfaction that Alliance’s domestic and international clients are accustomed to experiencing,” Chief Operating Officer Joseph Caruso said in a statement.

**Ian Robertson** was appointed as president, Canada at Kingsdale Advisors. The founder of the firm’s communications practice in 2014, Robertson “has made a significant impact on the firm by building our communications practice, enhancing our marketing capabilities, mentoring team members and pursuing new business opportunities,” CEO Amy Freedman told *Activist Insight Monthly*.

Laurel Hill appointed **Emerson Kako** as a corporate governance analyst in its Canadian governance team in October 2019.

## LAW FIRMS

### ADEL ASLANI-FAR

SHAREHOLDER, GREENBERG TRAUIG, SINCE JANUARY 2020.

In January, Adel Aslani-Far left his role as co-chair of Latham & Watkins M&A practice to join the global corporate practice of Greenberg Traurig, which he told *Activist Insight Monthly* “aspires to have one of the world’s premiere M&A and activism defense practices.” The ambitious firm, which plans to take space in new skyscraper One Vanderbilt, has Aslani-Far excited. “Everyone here is focused on the future and the ability to contribute to building a world-class M&A practice here is very energizing,” he said. “When someone offers you the chance to jump aboard a rocket ship, you don’t say ‘no.’” Looking ahead, Aslani-Far predicted more activism outside of the U.S., an increase in the level of activism by traditional long-only investors, and more “informal” settlements without a standstill agreement.



**ETHAN KLINGSBERG**  
PARTNER, FRESHFIELDS  
BRUCKHAUS DERINGER,  
SINCE OCTOBER 2019.

Ethan Klingsberg joined Magic Circle firm Freshfields to lead U.S. M&A from Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton, bringing with him Meredith Kotler, Pamela Marcogliese, and Paul Tiger – each of whom include shareholder activism as part of their repertoire. The crossover of M&A and activism provides some of the biggest challenges for executives, Klingsberg told *Activist Insight Monthly*, with activists looking to both scupper deals and catalyze sales or breakups. “Often this approach is based on misunderstandings of industry dynamics and can be frustratingly disruptive for boards,” Klingsberg said of the latter tactic. “Understanding that an activist’s presence poses this risk – and preemptively discussing with investors the misunderstandings that underlie the view that a quick sale or breakup would serve investors well – is one of the most important workstreams I have going with clients.”



**PATRICK GADSON**  
PARTNER, VINSON & ELKINS, SINCE JANUARY 2020.

Patrick Gadson was already co-leader of Vinson & Elkins’ shareholder activism practice – the busiest on the corporate side in 2019, according to *Activist Insight Monthly* – before being elected to the partnership effective January 1.

**LAURA TURANO**  
PARTNER, PAUL, WEISS, RIFKIND, WHARTON &  
GARRISON, SINCE OCTOBER 2019.

The Paul Weiss M&A practice added “rising star” Laura Turano from Davis Polk in October 2019. “Laura has worked with some of the country’s best-known companies on some of their largest and most complex deals,” Corporate Department Chairman Robert Schumer said in a statement. “Our clients will also benefit from her experience with sensitive corporate governance and shareholder engagement issues.” Turano had previously worked on CSX’s settlement with Mantle Ridge.

**PR FIRMS**

**CHARLIE KOONS**  
PARTNER, BRUNSWICK GROUP, SINCE JANUARY 2020.

After two-and-a-half decades in the proxy solicitation business with MacKenzie Partners and Morrow Sodali, Charlie Koons joined communications firm Brunswick to focus on M&A, shareholder engagement, and activism. The hire comes only a few years after Brunswick lured Jonathan Doorley from London to lead its efforts in that field and a year after the appointment of Nikhil Deogun as CEO of the Americas. “I am thrilled to join Brunswick’s world-class team of advisors,” Koons said. “We have an extremely talented group of people from a range of varied but complementary backgrounds who are able to provide clients with unparalleled insight.” The firm is currently fighting Carl Icahn on Occidental Petroleum’s behalf.



**DAN ZACCHEI**  
PRESIDENT, SPECIAL SITUATIONS, SLOANE & CO, SINCE MARCH 2020.

Communications firm Sloane & Co. named Dan Zacchei its president, special situations and promoted Joe Germani to managing director in the same team as it seeks to build on its successful activism and M&A practice. “Dan has played an integral role in Sloane’s growth and success in recent years by establishing a premier special situations platform that now represents a cornerstone of our business,” Sloane co-CEOs Darren Brandt and Whit Clay said in a statement. “We are confident that Dan will continue to build out a world-class team and scale all of our offerings. This is a practice area that we are very committed to and will continue to invest in.”



Zacchei will continue advising executives, boards, and investors, while overseeing new strategic initiatives to “enhance and grow” the firm’s offerings, while Germani will continue to lead mandates and mentor younger colleagues. The New York-based pair currently lead one of the busiest activism practices in the industry, working on either side of deals.

**ELLIOT SLOANE**  
MANAGING PARTNER,  
THROUGHLINE  
COMMUNICATIONS, SINCE  
FEBRUARY 2020.



Elliot Sloane is back to starting from the ground floor, after building up Sloane & Co. from 1998 until his departure for FTI Consulting in 2018. At Throughline, a new venture, he is joined by Susie Fogelson, a former executive at Food Network and Cooking Channel, and Gary Nelson, a career marketing and advertising creative professional. “In the context of today’s activist environment, we know that parties who can engage -- not just in the nuts and bolts of a TSR or a balance sheet discussion -- but in the through line between brand narrative and valuation will emerge stronger and better positioned to align with shareholders and other critical stakeholders,” Sloane said in a statement.

**PAT TUCKER**  
HEAD OF M&A AND ACTIVISM, ABERNATHY MACGREGOR, SINCE FEBRUARY 2020.

Pat Tucker, an eight-year veteran at communications firm Abernathy MacGregor, was named its head of M&A and activism in recognition of “the leadership role he has played in building both practices in recent years and helping clients in a range of industries resolve complex challenges and achieve successful outcomes in high-consequence situations,” the firm said in a statement.

**MICHAEL HENSON**  
SENIOR CONSULTANT, KEPLER COMMUNICATIONS,  
SINCE JUNE 2019.

Charlotte Balbirnie’s Kepler Communications has worked hand-in-hand with former Sard Verbinen & Co. executive Michael Henson to advise both listed companies and activist funds since last summer. “We are big firm escapees with a shared belief that a collective of highly specialized senior advisors can better serve clients who prefer nimble, situation-specific strategies to the standard playbook,” Henson explained. “Charlotte’s expertise as an advisor to investors and mine to issuers combines to offer funds — and companies willing to go beyond the conventional thinking of traditional ‘defense’ ideologies — objective, pragmatic, and honest counsel to help define and achieve their goals.”

Henson’s last venture was a partnership with former Rolls-Royce Holdings investor relations chief John Dawson to offer strategic governance advice to U.K. companies. Dawson became head of investor relations for Reckitt Benckiser Group in January.

## OTHER

**EDOUARD DUBOIS**  
PARTNER, SQUAREWELL  
PARTNERS, SINCE OCTOBER  
2019.



Edouard Dubois joined SquareWell Partners – a shareholder advisory firm founded by ex-Sodali professionals Ali Saribas and Louis Barbier – as a partner in October 2019. Dubois, a director in BlackRock’s investment stewardship team and a former Institutional Shareholder Services (ISS) analyst before making the move, is based in the firm’s Paris office. “Having worked at the world’s largest asset manager, I can comfortably say that increased stewardship activities are reshaping the relationships between companies and their shareholders, with traditional investors not only opposing resolutions or supporting activist hedge funds, but also acting like activists themselves if need be,” Dubois told *Activist Insight Monthly*. “Directors are more and more held responsible for their decisions, from executive pay to succession planning but also for their oversight of ESG issues such as climate change.”

**SUSTAINABLE GOVERNANCE PARTNERS**  
GOVERNANCE ADVISORS, SINCE 2020.

Four former members of the investment stewardship team at Vanguard founded a new environmental, social, and governance (ESG) advisory group in February 2020. CEO Jessica Wirth-Strine, Chief Operating Officer Rob Main, Director of Research Marc Lindsay, and Associate Director of Research Amy Hernandez provide investor engagement, voting advisory, activism defense and ESG communications support “to help public companies drive sustainable long-term value,” according to the firm’s website.

**YUMI NARITA**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE  
GOVERNANCE, COMPTROLLER OF NYC’S OFFICE,  
SINCE DECEMBER 2019.

After just over a year as AllianceBernstein’s global head of corporate governance and following 14 years at BlackRock, Narita moved to the New York City Comptroller’s office in December. Under Scott Stringer, the manager of five major pension funds has taken some high-profile positions at companies like Mylan and NRG Energy. 