

## Sheppard Mullin Lands Sullivan & Cromwell Tax Pro In NY

By **Christine Powell**

*Law360, New York (May 17, 2016, 9:20 PM ET)* -- Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton LLP announced Monday that it has bolstered its New York office with a tax partner from Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, who joins the firm's tax, employee benefits, and trusts and estates practice.

David J. Passey has more than 15 years of experience representing clients across a spectrum of matters, including partnership transactions, structured products, real estate transactions, tax controversy, capital markets and mergers and acquisitions, the firm said.

Passey told Law360 in an interview Tuesday that he was looking forward to being part of the Sheppard Mullin team, calling the firm "fantastic."

"I am really excited about the opportunities here at Sheppard," Passey said. "There are a lot of opportunities for me to grow as a tax partner."

Passey works with both public and private companies during acquisitions and sales, according to the firm, and frequently counsels private equity funds on fund formation and acquisitions, particularly with respect to Employee Retirement Income Security Act and tax aspects of the transactions. But the bulk of his work is on mergers and acquisitions, he said.

Last year alone, he represented First Niagara Bank during its roughly \$4.1 billion acquisition by KeyCorp, Intercontinental Exchange Inc. in its \$5.2 billion acquisition of Interactive Data Corp. from private equity firms Silver Lake and Warburg Pincus, AT&T Inc. in its \$48.5 billion acquisition of DirecTV, and ACE Ltd. in its more than \$29 billion acquisition of The Chubb Corp.

Passey said he realized his desire to be a tax lawyer shortly after obtaining his law degree from Cornell and has not looked back since. He said what he most enjoys about tax law is that it's "intensely analytical, but at the same time it's very pragmatic" and involves "lots of deep thinking."

In a statement, Keith R. Gercken, partner and leader of Sheppard Mullin's tax, employee benefits, and trusts and estates practice, said he was thrilled Passey had joined the firm.

"His legal talent and understanding of complex commercial transactions, particularly as it relates to mergers and acquisitions and private equity funds, further enhances our capabilities in an area that is crucial to our clients' businesses," Gercken said.

Guy N. Halgren, chairman of Sheppard Mullin, added that Passey joined the firm as part of its “ongoing commitment” to deepen its transactional capabilities both in New York and firmwide.

Passey was at Sullivan & Cromwell for 13 years, most recently as special counsel. He earned his law degree from Cornell Law School in 1999 and a bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University in 1996.

--Editing by Philip Shea.

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