

2018 Spotlight firm

This year we are introducing an initiative to put a spotlight on one Pangea Net firm per year so that both new and existing members alike can learn more about the varied practices within the network. If your firm is selected as a 'Spotlight Firm' we will interview you in order to help members find out a little bit more about your practice, the regions in which you would like to do more work and what you expect from Pangea members when you refer work to them.

The Spotlight Firm will also be expected to prepare a short ten minute presentation about their practice for the AGM. Our 2018 Spotlight Firm is one of our American members, Whiteford Taylor Preston (WTP).

Interview

Tell us a little bit about the sort of work that WTP does and the key sectors that you work in.

Peter Guattery (PG): WTP is a mid-Atlantic based, full service law firm. Our services cover everything from corporate work to IP to real estate transaction work, labour and employment law, immigration, non-profit organisations and community associations.

We also have a very strong litigation practice that reaches across all of the departments, particularly with respect to complex commercial litigation and product liability issues. It is a broad spectrum of work.

Herb Thomas (HT): To complement what Peter is saying, you probably can't think of a sector where we have not been active at some point, and in many ways that's as a result of the range of clients we serve. So while our regional footprint is strongly mid-Atlantic, our clients range from incubator start-ups, up to and including Fortune 10 companies.

Where we find ourselves mainly operating is in the middle market, by which I mean privately owned or family owned companies that more often than not do not have in-house counsel. We find that these sorts of organisations very often look to the lawyers they are working with to be a sort of outside general counsel. This role is one of the things that we really take a lot of pride in.

What is the history of your involvement in the network?

PG: I was one of the six founding members of the network. Our initial meeting was in a pub on Wigmore Street in London in October 2009 and was followed by our first official board meeting the next January.

At that time we had about 12 members that were fully committed to the network. We grew rather rapidly in size after that! I served as chair of the Pangea network for the last 7 years until I decided to step down off the board so that others in the network would have an opportunity to serve.



How has being a part of Pangea assisted your firm and helped feed into your firm's strategy?

PG: Our membership in Pangea has helped in several regards. Primarily it's a referral source both out to the network and inbound, but I think on a more general level it's helped give the firm a higher global profile than it would have otherwise. Pangea has also given us a resource to really tell clients who do work internationally that we can assist them with matters that arise overseas.

Pangea therefore gives us more depth and more reach than we would otherwise have as a mid-sized firm.

What can members expect from WTP when they refer work to you?

PG: You can expect to receive a very prompt response. We will make sure that you are connected very quickly to an available attorney who is most capable of working with you and your client on the matter at hand.

HT: We are a partner intensive firm and try to meet clients where they are in terms of the financial arrangements. We want to provide your client with a customized service and we prioritise and honour the personal relationship.

What are you looking for from Pangea firms when you send them an outbound referral?

PG: First, I look for a quick response to our request. I also like to see member firms demonstrate the same level of interest in the client that we obviously have, and for them to recognise that we are part of a cooperative team.

This is particularly important because I want to project that collective feeling to my client as well because it provides them with some comfort. I try to achieve this by referring to other Pangea Net members as my 'colleagues'. This lets the client know that the relevant Pangea Net member is somebody that they can trust and that they can work with.



Internationally, what regions would you say you mostly receive referred work from and where would you like to do more work?

PG: We primarily receive referrals from Germany and Switzerland, though a number of other members have referred us to clients with smaller issues.

As a mid-Atlantic firm with a broad footprint across the central East coast of the U.S. – one of the most fertile areas for investment from abroad and with a diverse and sophisticated client base – we believe our reach and experience makes us well situated to assist the clients of Pangea members with an interest in doing work in the United States.

What are your favourite memories of your time as a member of Pangea?

PG: For me, favourite memories are from when it was just a small group of us getting together and starting off. We were serious about what we were going to do but there was a real sense of shared purpose and that made it very enjoyable. Being a member of the board and the time spent with everybody at board meetings was a truly special experience.

There are also great memories from all of the AGMs. If I bring along a colleague from WTP to the AGM who has never been before then afterwards I have another person who can't wait to go next year! The reason for that is because Pangea Net is such a great group of people and although our trips are business oriented there's a real sense of collegiality. Even when the weather hasn't been particularly good the meetings have been terrific!



**Whiteford Taylor Preston
Quick Fact File**

Founded:
1933

Number of attorneys:
160+

Office locations:
Baltimore, Bethesda, Columbia, Dearborn, Eastern Shore, Falls Church, Lexington, New York, Pittsburgh, Roanoke, Towson, Washington, Wilmington.

Managing Partner:
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**Whiteford Taylor Preston
Key Contacts**

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