

White Collar Group Of The Year: McGuireWoods

By **Emilie Ruscoe**

Law360 (February 4, 2020, 2:17 PM EST) -- McGuireWoods LLP's white collar practice secured the dismissal of charges against former congressman Aaron Schock, counseled Vice President Mike Pence in the Mueller probe and won a \$501 million judgment against North Korea on behalf of the family of Otto Warmbier, earning it a place among Law360's 2019 White Collar Groups of the Year.

McGuireWoods' 60-attorney white collar team, with expertise in 21 specialized areas, includes many high-profile alumni of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Some examples: the group's co-head George Terwilliger III capped his 15 years with the DOJ as acting attorney general under President George H.W. Bush; Richard Cullen, a senior partner in the group who was once chair of the firm, is a former attorney general of Virginia; and Christina Egan, a member of the practice group and managing partner of the firm's Chicago office, is a former deputy chief U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois.

This unusually sophisticated expertise deeply informs the firm's work, and the group's chair Todd Steggerda said the deep bench reflects the firm's efforts, over a decade, to grow the practice group to ensure its reach is comprehensive.

In those 10 years, he added, the firm has nationalized its practice and expanded strategically across the United States.

"The breadth of our experience, the range of our capabilities across all of the federal and state jurisdictions involved in investigative and enforcement activities, and the level of dedication and focus that we give to our clients" is what sets the group apart from its competitors in the saturated white collar practice area, he said.

Those strengths were on display with the firm's achievement in the Schock matter, in which the firm negotiated the dismissal of criminal charges against Schock as part of a deferred prosecution agreement.

Under the terms of the agreement, the government put its criminal case on hold so the former congressman has time to reimburse nearly \$68,000 to three campaign committees and pay the Internal



Revenue Service an amount to be determined for more than \$42,000 in unreported income he received through his six years in office.

Egan, who worked on the matter alongside Terwilliger, recalled how her team's years of dedication to their work on the case came to an end following the transfer of the case from Illinois' Central District to the Northern District for review.

"Finally, this long, hard fight had resulted in a very just result for our client," she said. "It was really gratifying after years of fighting in that case and fighting for our client to achieve the result that was achieved, when that case was resolved."

Cullen and Ben Hatch, another white collar partner who collaborated on representing the Warmbier party, emphasized that the organized, lightning-fast team supporting their efforts had been essential to their success in that matter.

In matters involving the government, Hatch noted, "You've got to make sure that you have command of the facts and the law that's relevant."

"Having people who are on top of the facts and are able to digest those facts and summarize them in a way that's fully accurate" in support of the case is critical, he added.

In order to bring an action against North Korea in the matter, the team had to persuade the State Department to return North Korea to the department's list of state sponsors of terrorism — which they did by meeting with lawmakers to build bipartisan political support for their cause, they said.

Cullen recalled the immense satisfaction of receiving word about that development from the West Wing and feeling the team had turned a corner in the case.

"Finally, there was some good news for the Warmbiers, who had been on a mission since Otto had died," he said.

Terwilliger noted that the expertise underpinning the firm's 2019 victories will be even more advantageous as white collar matters become more complicated.

He recalled one of the group's early cases involving a former FBI agent from shortly after he and Cullen started the white collar group in the early 1990s. That early matter, he said, could be managed by three to six people, and everything from document review to witness interviews could be handled in-house.

"Now, the practice of doing internal investigations has become much more complex," he said.

Despite that growing complexity, he said, McGuireWoods has a distinct advantage: "We're uniquely positioned to appreciate what moves the levers on the government's side, both at the line level and at the top level of enforcement agencies."

--Editing by Philip Shea.