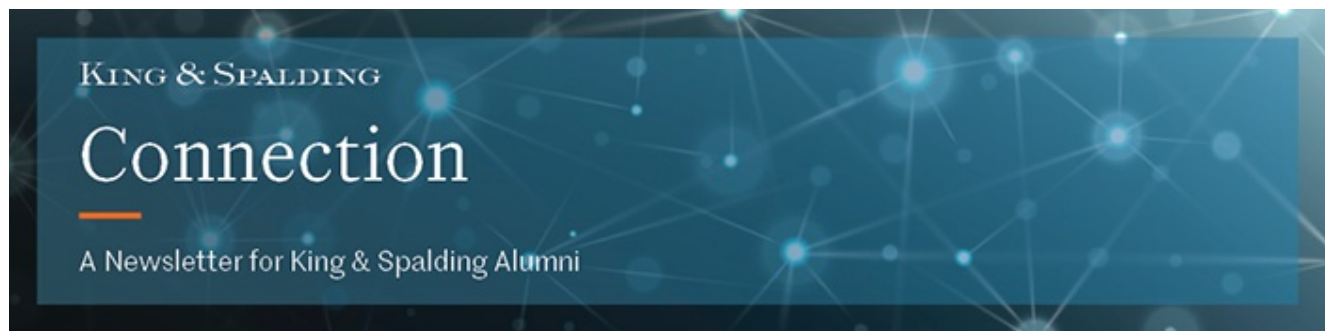


Putting on Wide Lens

kslawemail.com/71/6014/pages/page16-new-hur.asp



After two stints at King & Spalding, alum Rob Hur now serves as the U.S. attorney for the District of Maryland, where he worked previously as an assistant U.S. attorney (AUSA). He manages a staff of nearly 100 lawyers, prosecuting a wide range of matters that includes national security, violent crime, cybercrime, drug trafficking, complex financial fraud and political corruption.

Less recognized, but in his view just as important, is that Hur's team of AUSAs also represents the U.S. when people are suing the U.S. government. His Civil Division lawyers also take on affirmative civil enforcement actions to sue and seek remedy against people in violation of federal civil law.

Why is it a fulfilling job? "It's humbling to work with what I believe is one of the country's most talented group of prosecutors, people who are making a difference every day for the safety and security of the people of Maryland," says Hur. "Baltimore, as many know, is facing historic challenges with regard to violent crime. It's a privilege to work with our law enforcement partners to help control crime and play a real role in targeting the people who are bringing violence, misery and death to the community."

Hur notes ongoing challenges on the white-collar side too. A recent case involved a Ponzi scheme that defrauded victims around the country of nearly \$500 million, where the lead defendant received a sentence of 22 years.

Whether the matter is criminal or civil, Hur finds the interaction with victims to be both powerful and inspiring. "The families of violent crime victims have lost their loved ones too soon; on the white-collar side, people have seen their retirement savings or college tuition for their kids plundered. I am always moved by the incredible courage these people show, coming to court and telling their stories."

Walking Alongside a Defendant

While there are different paths to becoming an effective prosecutor, Hur believes that a prosecutor's enormous power and discretion – about whether and how to conduct an investigation, or whether to bring charges at all – must be informed by an understanding of both sides of the coin. He says:

The way you try a case, the way you satisfy your discovery obligations, and the way you seek or recommend a sentence from a judge call for a lot of discretion. The two key ingredients to make sure you do the job correctly and consistent with the requirements of the constitution are, number one, integrity, and number two, humility.

One valuable way to gain such integrity and humility is to spend time on the other side, as defense counsel. At King & Spalding, Hur represented people who were the subjects of federal investigations. “When you represent an individual or even a company, you walk alongside them and understand the genuine terror they feel as the subject or target of an investigation – that’s really helpful.” Now that he’s back on the law enforcement side, Hur can’t help but be mindful of the real human costs and consequences of an investigation or prosecution.

Adding to the Reservoir of Trust Is More Important Than Adding Up Wins

Hur first came to the Department of Justice (DOJ) as a line prosecutor, where his focus was necessarily narrow and deep. Now that he bears responsibility for the office as a whole, he sees a bigger picture. He carries the institutional concerns for both current staff and alumni, to ensure the department is always perceived as protecting and defending the rule of law, and protecting the principle that no one is above the law. He says it’s also important on a more individual level. He wants the individual or CEO of a company who’s being prosecuted to believe that those conducting the investigation are following the facts and applying the law in an impartial way. “I want to convey and help people understand the importance of the institution, and how important public perception is,” he says. “It has to be absolutely clear that we operate to the highest ethical standards, that we follow the rules.”

“I have the privilege to welcome and swear in new AUSAs and administer the oath of office – which is a pretty weighty set of words,” Hur adds. “I try to convey to them that when they go into court representing the United States of America, their word carries weight – they have a certain amount of credibility because the many generations of prosecutors that came before all exercised the utmost candor with the court and they earned that credibility.”

He points out the reservoir of trust built by his office and the entire DOJ, even as he notes the concern about wins, losses and convictions. “I tell my people, it’s our job to add to the reservoir of public trust, and we must earn that trust by every action we take.”

Exploring Opportunities in Public Service: “It’s in the firm’s DNA.”

Hur first came to K& S following Chris Wray, with whom he worked as counsel in the criminal division at the DOJ. (Wray became director of the FBI in 2018.) He knew the firm valued and encouraged government experience. He notes:

The firm always conveyed to people that if they wanted to stay and become a successful partner and continue to grow a thriving legal practice, that’s terrific. But if they wanted to get experience in public service, that’s terrific too. There were many great examples of people who had followed both of those tracks at the firm.

To Hur’s mind, government service is baked into the firm’s DNA – it’s part of what makes the firm strong. The Special Matters and Investigations practice group was founded by Attorney General Griffin Bell, a strong proponent of the importance of public service, to bring specialized top-shelf experience and credibility that could benefit the firm’s clients. Built from this initial proof of concept, the group continues to attract an impressive roster of talent and high-profile cases. Hur says:

It’s extraordinarily telling that so many people leave the firm to go into government service but they come back. They don’t have to come back; they have many options. But they want to come back.