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Allen Matkins Atty On Becoming Youngest Operating Partner

By **Adrian Cruz**

Law360 (August 16, 2021, 4:30 PM EDT) -- Allen Matkins Leck Gamble Mallory & Natsis LLP has named an experienced land use and real estate attorney as operating partner of its Century City office in Los Angeles, noting in its announcement that the 35-year-old is the youngest ever to hold that position at the firm.

Spencer Kallick, who's been with Allen Matkins for a little over two years, was named office managing partner last week, with firm management highlighting his leadership qualities.

"Spencer embodies the type of leadership and core values that are most important to Allen Matkins and its clients," Managing Partner Jeffrey R. Patterson said in a statement. "He is respected by his colleagues and clients for his sound judgment and dynamic ability to solve problems. I am confident Spencer is going to drive our firm's success into the future."



Spencer Kallick

Allen Matkins, founded in 1977, has 50 attorneys and staff in the Century City office and specializes in areas such as finance, joint ventures, real estate transactions and litigation.

Kallick spoke with Law360 Pulse on Thursday about his journey to becoming a Century City operating partner, his goals for the office and his personal practice. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What does being named the youngest operating partner in the firm's history mean to you?

It's humbling, and it's an honor. It's also very exciting. I've worked at a number of different firms over the years, and one of the things that really attracted me to Allen Matkins is that they really invest in the next generation of leadership. At a lot of law firms, the way you take on a leadership role like this is by waiting for someone to retire or move on after having been at the job for 30 or 40 years.

At Allen Matkins, we've been very intentional about promoting young partners and putting them in positions of leadership to really grow and develop the firm for many years to come. I feel very lucky to be one of those leaders, and I'm excited about the firm's future.

There is a ton of opportunity that comes with this role, and part of it includes being a sounding board for my colleagues, our staff and attorneys. The nice thing is that our firm just came off one of its best years ever, and we have tremendous clients doing really great projects. I'm stepping into a place of great opportunity, and my hope is to continue that and make it even better, so we can continue giving great service to our clients, and making it an environment where everyone's excited to come to work every day.

How long have you been with Allen Matkins, and what led to your operating partner appointment?

I joined the firm about two years ago to help reinvigorate the land use department. I joined the

Century City office, which didn't really have much of a presence in the field. I've always been focused on growth, opportunity and lifting up the associates I work with because not too long ago, I was an associate myself. I was always looking for opportunities without a title or recognition to help the firm and my colleagues.

One of the things I did when COVID hit was starting a program called Allen Matkins University. Too often, when we get really busy with the practice of law, we don't have much of a chance to sit down and do real training, really getting in the weeds with our associates and partners with different areas of law. So I took it upon myself to start hosting weekly and sometimes biweekly training sessions via Zoom with our partners and associates across the firm's offices. We had about 50 last year during the pandemic, which were all highly attended. I think it's a model for the future of training associates.

Even though I didn't have a title or a scope of work, I just saw there was a need, and I wanted to help our team get even better than it already is. In terms of the operating partner role, it wasn't something I sought out. It was something that came as a surprise to me, but as we talked about it more, I realized it was really well suited to my values of authenticity, inclusion and doing things that are best for the greater good for the firm, our practice and clients.

What are your and the firm's goals for the rest of 2021?

We're looking to grow. That's one of the things I'm focused on — making sure that we continue growing in a smart and intentional way. We've been very lucky to be doing well, and while a lot of firms were laying people off during the pandemic, we ramped up hiring. There's a lot of great folks out there and a tremendous amount of need, so we're excited to welcome a number of new partners, and we're hoping to continue doing that.

There's certainly room for our office to grow in terms of head count but also diversity of expertise.

I've only been in this role for a short time and I certainly don't have all the answers, so I'm focused at the moment on engaging with my colleagues to understand what's important to them before making any decisions on new initiatives or opportunities.

There are a couple of things that come to the top of the list. First and foremost, it starts with providing excellent legal service to our clients. The other thing I'm focused on is figuring out how we can adjust quickly to our clients' demands and needs. One of the things we pride ourselves on is not having 10-15 attorneys on every matter, which gives us the opportunity to be very responsive in short order.

What's your personal practice like and what kind of work do you do?

I'm a real estate and land use attorney, so my focus is on land use entitlements and getting deals done. Traditionally I represent property owners, lenders and investors in real estate deals across both California and the United States. The entitlement work involves working with local agencies for redevelopment and new construction projects.

I joke that it doesn't matter what type of product it is, I entitle it. Right now, looking at my desk, it ranges from office to industrial, hospital, mixed use, schools, senior housing, affordable housing. You name it, we entitle it.

--Editing by Gemma Horowitz.