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Shipman Partner Cunningham Named Chair of Interlaw

Interlaw, an international network with 80-plus firms and more than 7,000 attorneys, has appointed Glenn M. Cunningham, partner at Hartford's Shipman & Goodwin, its newest chairman.

"It's quite an honor," said Cunningham, who has been an active member of Interlaw's Board of Directors since 2015, serving recently as vice chair under Michael Siebold. "We have 82 firms in about 150 cities and we're approaching 8,000 lawyers, and at Shipman we've become one of the largest exporters of work into the network."

In contrast to a large multinational practices, Interlaw relies on independent firms to provide specialized services in their respective cities and countries, rather than satellite offices that have to report back to a centralized base. "It's really creating an alternative to big law," Cunningham said. "My job as chairman is to make sure things are going smoothly, and we just launched what we call our Interlaw 2.0 Strategic Plan, which has firms working more in synch with each other, like a truly global firm. We have practice groups so we can approach clients as a team and earn more cross-border work."

Cunningham's appointment follows a period of significant growth under Siebold's leadership at Interlaw, including the addition of firms in Latin America and Africa. The network has been around since the 1980s, and Shipman &

Goodwin has been a member for more than 15 years.

Started by firm leaders with clients who needed legal services in farway jurisdictions, Interlaw uses a strict due diligence process to interview new potential firms. The goal is to connect with firms that are known and trusted in each locale. "One of the benefits of the network is we're all independent," Cunningham added. "We use the network because we want to use these other firms. We don't have to."

Cunningham added that local firms tend to offer excellent, personalized service. "When I tell you we have a firm in Kuala Lumpur, it's not going to be a few attorneys from a big firm. It's going to be a firm that knows how to get things done there. It's truly a global reach, our pricing is less expensive, and frankly we're less cumbersome." At Interlaw's recent annual meeting in Paris, Cunningham said, corporate leaders said they use the network because it involves less bureaucracy, which translates into better efficiency. It's a very exciting time for our network, and I'm happy to be at the helm for next three years."

Said Cunningham's predecessor Siebold, "It has been a privilege to lead this collective of dynamic, smart and enthusiastic independent law firm lawyers who all share a common vision—to deliver the very best legal advice and service to clients wherever they need it



Glenn Cunningham, partner at Shipman & Goodwin.

in the world. Today's client demands—and deserves—the combination of supreme technical expertise and deep local insight."

"Under Michael's leadership, Interlaw has taken great strides in understanding and responding to the needs of global clients," Cunningham said. "Thanks to his strategic focus, the organization is flourishing, and I look forward to working with our new board members John O'Sullivan, Neftali Garro and Kevin Degkai Zhu, as well as existing board directors, to drive forward our plans to become the global legal practice of choice for clients around the world."

Shipman & Goodwin has 170-plus attorneys in Connecticut, New York and in Washington, DC. Cunningham has chaired the firm's business litigation and intellectual property practice groups. ■