



Public Pension Plan Clients Share How They're Meeting Their Fiduciary Duty During the COVID-19 Crisis

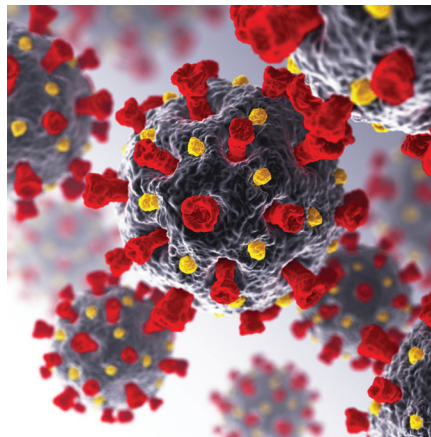
The spread of COVID-19 across the globe has created unprecedented challenges for businesses and individuals alike, and that is certainly true for the public pension plan community. Public pension plans do not have the ability to "hit the pause button" when it comes to performing their critical duties.

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A Message to Our Readers About COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic permeates the pages of this issue of the *Shareholder Advocate*, as it has most aspects of our personal and professional lives these days. Though we hesitate to add to the volume of commentary on the virus, we would be remiss if we didn't share a few thoughts.

To all our readers: we hope you and your colleagues, families, friends, and communities stay well during these difficult times.

To our clients: our dedicated professionals and support staff continue to do the work you hired us to do.

Like you, we're moving ahead and looking forward to a day soon when the pandemic is over and the world returns to a healthier semblance of normal.

With best wishes for a healthier future,

Steve Toll and Julie Reiser

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FIDUCIARY FOCUS

“ At times like this, pension systems need to think outside the box while carrying out their fiduciary responsibilities.”

KAREN MAZZA,
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
NYCERS

Public Pension Plan Clients Share How They're Meeting Their Fiduciary Duty During the COVID-19 Crisis

The spread of COVID-19 across the globe has created unprecedented challenges for businesses and individuals alike, and that is certainly true for the public pension plan community. Public pension plans do not have the ability to “hit the pause button” when it comes to performing their critical duties. Retirees and beneficiaries depend on the timely receipt of their pension checks and benefit payments that must continue to be processed and paid. Moreover, billions of dollars of pension fund assets have to be managed in a time of tremendous turmoil in the markets. The *Shareholder Advocate* turned to leaders at public pension plans to hear how they are managing to carry out their essential responsibilities during the pandemic.

Thinking Outside the Box

According to **Karen Mazza, Deputy Executive Director for the New York City Employees' Retirement System (NYCERS)**: “At times like this, pension systems need to think outside the box while carrying out their fiduciary responsibilities.” Such thinking proved critical to NYCERS as its information technology and security teams developed innovative ways to enable over 450 employees to work securely from home. The crisis highlighted the critical nature of essential support functions, such as mailroom and scanning staff, who receive and enter member documents such as retirement and loan applications and correspondence.

Interconnection and Essential Functions

Glen Grell, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS), agrees with Mazza's observation that functions supporting the business units are on the front lines in times of crisis. “We realize how interconnected all of our bureaus and units are, and we have a new sense of what constitutes an ‘essential position’,” Grell said, noting that “the work can't get done if the mail doesn't get opened, sorted and scanned to start the queue of workflows.”

The rapid transition to teleworking forced PSERS to adopt new communications and technology models, largely on the fly. “We are now communicating among all senior managers every day,” Grell says. By deploying 230 laptop computers, in addition to 70

“ All of this will position us well with enhanced capabilities once the immediate situation has passed.”

GLEN GRELL,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
PSERS

already distributed under PSERS' Continuity of Operations Program, PSERS enabled over 90% of staff to work from home. Mailroom, document imaging, print shop and facilities management were the only units requiring physical presence at PSERS headquarters. PSERS successfully processed and delivered member pension and healthcare benefits to 230,000 annuitants on schedule on March 31, and used technology to conduct retirement exit counseling remotely, so that retirement applications could be prioritized and processed without delay for the membership.

Grell says that the crisis has brought home how much their annuitant members count on PSERS to provide monthly member benefits timely and accurately, regardless of the circumstances. And there is at least one silver lining of the crisis. "All of this will position us well with enhanced capabilities once the immediate situation has passed," he says.

Importance of Communication

"Now is the time for over-communicating," says **Carolina de Onis, General Counsel to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (Texas TRS)**. As de Onis sees it, communication at this time is tied to three basic concepts: risk mitigation, accountability and well-being. She notes that when you aren't seeing people on a daily or weekly basis, you lose bits of information that may be relevant to the issues you're dealing with and that "legal issues are rarely one dimensional—you need people with different areas of expertise to identify issues you might not be aware of and to help you problem solve. You need to create a structure around those lines of communication when the normal mechanisms are no longer available." As for accountability, de Onis says, while we trust our professionals to do their jobs, it's not about trust. "It's about ensuring that the work that needs to get done is being done (under difficult circumstances and with different resources)," she says, "and finding new ways to supervise work and to demonstrate to your clients, your organization and your board that you're on top of the novel, pressing issues this situation has created." Finally, de Onis notes that many people are feeling isolated and disconnected now: "Connecting with people who are a normal part of your everyday life is healthy," she says. "People's situations may change on a dime—perhaps they are home schooling, taking care of elderly relatives or feeling anxiety about a what is going on." Repeated check-ins to make sure your teams are getting the help and resources they need is essential at this time.

“ Now is the time for over-communicating.”

CAROLINA DE ONIS,
GENERAL COUNSEL,
TEXAS TRS

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan

Gina Ratto, General Counsel to the Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS), says that OCERS' detailed

Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plan has guided them throughout the process. Like the others quoted here, Ratto highlights the importance of communication, noting that the OCERS Recovery Team had been meeting daily by conference call until they felt comfortable moving to meeting twice a week. In addition, the CEO conducts weekly "all hands" meetings by telephone, and personally telephoned all team members at home to see how they were faring. All employees were issued mobile devices and permitted to "check out" their desk chairs, computer monitors and other items as necessary to make their home offices ergonomically safe and comfortable. The phone system permits staff to receive and handle calls from OCERS members and the public with live operators responding from home. In addition, a very small team of about half a dozen staff work from the office to perform essential activities that cannot be performed from home. Significantly, Ratto notes that March is traditionally OCERS' heaviest month of the year and that the Member Services team timely processed every retirement application from members seeking a retirement date of April 1 or earlier.

Also helpful in allowing OCERS to move forward in conducting business is the fact that in California, as in several other states, the governor acted by executive order to relax the state's open meeting laws with respect to public meetings held via teleconference. OCERS held a board meeting and a meeting of its investment committee with some or all of the trustees telephoning into the meeting and the board room open to the public to observe and participate in the meeting. OCERS intends to hold its next board meeting using Zoom technology, which will alleviate the need to open the board room to the public.

Finally, returning once again to the theme of communication, Ratto notes the importance of communicating with members at this incredibly stressful and uncertain time. Shortly after the offices were closed, the OCERS CEO posted a statement to assure members that their benefits were secure, noting: "the most important fact that you need to know is if you are retired, you will get your benefit, paid in full, paid on time. That's a fact."



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**STEVE DELANEY,
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
OCERS**



“ We are
stewards
of the fund and
will continue to
exercise our duties
to safeguard and
grow that fund for
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and beneficiaries—
whether we’re
in the office or
working remotely.”

BRIAN BARTOW,
GENERAL COUNSEL,
CALSTRS

Fiduciary Duty—the Bottom Line

As **Brian Bartow, General Counsel to the California State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS)** noted, CalSTRS, like all public pension funds, is a perpetual fund and will continue after this crisis, just as it has after prior crises. After reaffirming the importance of assuring members that they can continue to rely on CalSTRS during this time to pay their benefits on time, he succinctly summarized the bottom line:

“We are stewards of that fund and will continue to exercise our duties to safeguard and grow that fund for the sole purpose of providing benefits to our members and beneficiaries—whether we’re in the office or working remotely.” ■

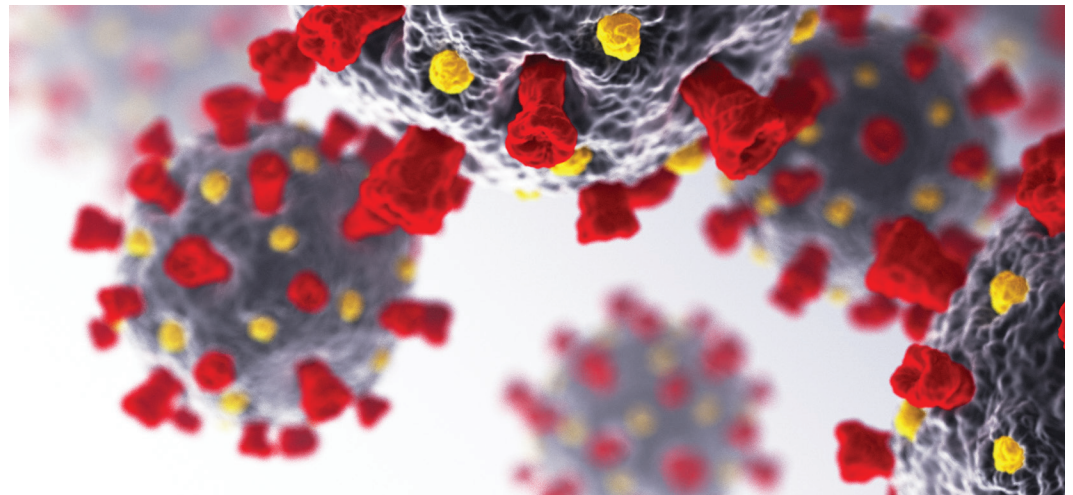
Suzanne M. Dugan heads Cohen Milstein’s Ethics & Fiduciary Counseling practice, which provides guidance to pension funds and other entities on ethics, fiduciary, governance and compliance issues.

COURT OPERATIONS CONTINUE DESPITE RESTRICTED ACCESS

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[W]HILE COURTS HAVE MODIFIED THEIR OPERATIONS TO ACCOMMODATE THE SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC, SOME JUDGES ALSO HAVE GIVEN CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS TO COUNSEL TO MOVE THEIR CASES FORWARD TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE.



Just as the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has varied in timing and scope from state to state, so it is with the nation's courts.

While state courts in 34 states have suspended all in-person proceedings, the remaining 16 states have left matters up to court officials at the local level. Likewise, the timing of federal court orders relating to court business, operating status and public employee safety have varied, thanks to the administrative discretion given the chief judge of each district. Still, there has been consistency among the federal circuits: all have limited public access to federal courthouses, postponed or continued jury trials, permitted hearings to be held by telephone or video, and either extended filing deadlines in March and April or conveyed a willingness to extend deadlines if proper motions are filed. As for the U.S. Supreme Court, it postponed 20 oral arguments scheduled for sessions in late March and April and announced on April 13 that it would hear oral arguments remotely in May for a limited number of the postponed cases.

But while courts have modified their operations to accommodate the special circumstances caused by the pandemic, some judges also have

given clear instructions to counsel to move their cases forward to the extent possible. For example, on March 23, Chief Judge Waverly Crenshaw of the Middle District Court of Tennessee issued an order “for clarification [that] the Court emphasizes that all deadlines previously established in both civil and criminal cases remain in full force and effect, absent further order . . . [and] [t]he Judges unanimously expect that counsel for all parties will continue to diligently work on cases to comply with established deadlines.”

As brick-and-mortar law offices go quiet, home offices are buzzing—or at least click-clacking—as lawyers and support staff continue their work remotely. In the securities fraud and shareholder rights practice of law, new case filings and court rulings on pending matters continue without an appreciable decline, although a recent study across all practice areas showed that rulings are beginning to slow down as compared to prior years. Lawyers continue to initiate cases, file briefs, argue motions telephonically, take video depositions, and even participate in video mediations.

This “new normal” takes adaptation and patience on both sides—especially for cases in discovery with depositions.

COHEN MILSTEIN APPOINTED TO REPRESENT INVESTORS IN THREE SECURITIES CLASS ACTIONS



While public safety measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 have also slowed some civil proceedings, Cohen Milstein has continued to pursue litigation on our clients' behalf. Here is a summary of some new securities matters in which the firm has been appointed lead counsel.



Overstock.com Inc.

The firm has filed a consolidated class action complaint on behalf of lead plaintiff The Mangrove Partners Master Fund Ltd. accusing Overstock.com Inc. and three individual defendants of harming investors by carrying out an unlawful scheme to pump up the faltering company's share price.

Allegedly led by former CEO Patrick Byrne, defendants used two tactics to inflate Overstock shares: feeding investors false guidance about the retail segment's profits and engineering a "short squeeze" that forced short sellers to buy large quantities of its stock, according to the March 13 complaint.

Plaintiffs claim the deception allowed Byrne to generate over \$100 million by liquidating his stock at artificially high prices and, at the same time, exact revenge on the short sellers against whom he had waged a personal vendetta for 15 years.

Founded by Byrne, Overstock went public in 2002 as an e-commerce retailer but began to struggle within a few years. By 2017, Overstock's core retail division was highly unprofitable; the company tried to sell it but failed. Around the same time, Byrne shifted the company's focus from online retail to blockchain technology with the goal of creating a dominant digital platform for securities lending through a business called tZERO. But that venture also failed to generate meaningful profits for the company.

WHILE PUBLIC SAFETY MEASURES TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 HAVE ALSO SLOWED SOME CIVIL PROCEEDINGS, COHEN MILSTEIN HAS CONTINUED TO PURSUE LITIGATION ON OUR CLIENTS' BEHALF.

PLAINTIFFS CLAIM THE DECEPTION ALLOWED OVERSTOCK'S FORMER CEO TO GENERATE OVER \$100 MILLION BY LIQUIDATING HIS STOCK AT ARTIFICIALLY HIGH PRICES AND, AT THE SAME TIME, EXACT REVENGE ON THE SHORT SELLERS AGAINST WHOM HE HAD WAGED A PERSONAL VENDETTA FOR 15 YEARS.

By the start of the class period on May 9, 2019, the complaint alleges, defendants had turned to fraud to prop up the company. On that day, Overstock falsely told investors that the retail division had generated profits for the first time in years and boosted year-end guidance accordingly. After Overstock's share price rose, Byrne sold 19.5% of his company holdings at a \$10 million profit. Two months later, on July 15, 2019, the company again raised year-end guidance.

But defendants had just gotten started. Allegedly guided by Byrne, they hatched a plan to issue a dividend that would manipulate the market and generate a "short squeeze"—a rapid stock price increase that forces short sellers to close their positions by purchasing shares, adding to the upward pressure on the stock. Instead of a typical cash dividend, Overstock announced on July 30, 2019, that the dividend would be in the form of preferred shares issued as a blockchain-based digital "security token" available only through Overstock's own blockchain trading platform, operated by tZERO.

At the same time, Byrne ordered 200,000 of his shares of Overstock common stock be sold that September, when entitlements to the "locked-up" dividend were set to be issued and the stock price would inevitably spike.

On August 22, 2019, Byrne resigned as CEO and secretly increased his July stock sale instructions to liquidate his entire remaining stake in the company. Then, the complaint says, he took off to South America and later Indonesia—a country he noted had no extradition treaty with the United States.

As lenders began to recall their shares and short sellers frantically began to "cover" purchases of Overstock common stock, Overstock shares shot up. At its peak of trading during the day on September 13, 2019 Overstock's stock price were up 97%, from \$15.07 to \$29.75, and trading volume increased by 776%, causing investors to purchase Overstock common stock at wildly inflated prices.

From September 16-18, 2019, Byrne secretly sold over 4.7 million shares at inflated prices, yielding another \$90 million for himself. Also beginning September 16, Overstock's share price began to fall as the truth about the scheme—and Byrnes' stock sales—began to emerge and the frantic covering abated. On September 23, the company's new leadership admitted that its retail guidance had been false and that another defendant, then-CFO Gregory Iverson, had resigned a week earlier without notice.

By November 12, 2019, after Overstock disclosed that it had received an SEC subpoena seeking documents about the locked-up dividend, the insider trading plans of Overstock's officers and directors, and communications with Patrick Byrne, the company's share price closed at \$7.78.

The case is *In re Overstock Securities Litigation*, No. 2:19-cv-709-DAK-EJF, (D. Utah).



PLURALSIGHT

Pluralsight, Inc.

Following its March 25 appointment as lead counsel, the firm is preparing an amended complaint against Pluralsight, Inc., a high tech “unicorn” company that provides online training courses and other services. The complaint accuses Pluralsight of violating securities laws by failing to disclose problems with its salesforce that would prevent it from meeting its growth projections.

Cohen Milstein represents two public pension funds, the Indiana Public Retirement System and the Public School Teachers’ Pension and Retirement Fund of Chicago, as lead plaintiffs in the class action, which, as currently pled, covers damaged investors who acquired Pluralsight from August 2, 2018 through July 31, 2019.

Shortly before the start of the class period, Pluralsight completed its initial public offering, raising \$357 million from investors. Less than a year later, on March 6, 2019, Pluralsight completed a secondary public offering (“SPO”), grossing over \$450 million. According to the complaint, the SPO served as a massive cash-out for Pluralsight insiders, since all the proceeds went to Company directors, officers, and related parties. In contrast, none of the money raised in the SPO went to fund corporate developments or initiatives.

The original complaint alleges that throughout the class period, Pluralsight misrepresented the company’s business outlook, particularly related to the company’s salesforce and its ability to generate strong growth in billings. Specifically, defendants failed to disclose that Pluralsight was experiencing substantial delays in hiring and properly training the salesforce necessary to meet its lofty billing projections. In addition, the company knew at the time of the March 2019 SPO, that it was behind schedule onboarding new sales representatives, which was hurting sales execution and preventing Pluralsight from meeting its high growth projections. Instead of disclosing such facts at the time of the SPO, defendants intentionally obscured and omitted this relevant information from investors, allowing defendants and other insiders to sell stock at inflated prices.

On July 31, 2019, after the close of the markets, Pluralsight announced disappointing financial results for the second quarter ended June 30, 2019 and said that its billings growth rate had sharply deteriorated from over 40% to just 23% year-over-year. The company blamed its declining growth in billings on sales execution challenges and other issues with its salesforce. Pluralsight also announced that its Chief Revenue Officer was resigning. In response to these disclosures, Pluralsight’s share price plummeted. The stock price fell \$12.13 per share in a single day—a nearly 40% drop—to close at \$18.56 per share on August 1, 2019.

The case is *City of Birmingham Firemen’s and Policemen’s Supplemental Pension System, et al. v. Pluralsight, Inc., et al.*, Case No. 1:19-cv-00128 (D. Utah).

**COHEN MILSTEIN
REPRESENTS THE
INDIANA PUBLIC
RETIREMENT SYSTEM
AND THE PUBLIC
SCHOOL TEACHERS’
PENSION AND
RETIREMENT FUND
OF CHICAGO AS
LEAD PLAINTIFFS IN
THE *PLURALSIGHT*
CLASS ACTION.**

**THE COMPLAINT
SAYS DEFENDANTS
FAILED TO DISCLOSE
THAT PLURALSIGHT
WAS EXPERIENCING
SUBSTANTIAL
DELAYS IN HIRING
AND PROPERLY
TRAINING THE
SALESFORCE
NECESSARY TO MEET
ITS LOFTY BILLING
PROJECTIONS.**



Deloitte & Touche LLP (SCANA Corporation)

On February 12, U.S. District Judge Margaret B. Seymour appointed the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 98 Pension Fund lead plaintiff in a case accusing Deloitte & Touche LLP of securities fraud in its auditing of SCANA Corporation, a utility company based in South Carolina.

Cohen Milstein, which was appointed lead counsel in the same order, is preparing an amended consolidated complaint expected to allege that Deloitte & Touche failed to abide by its obligations under Generally Accepted Accounting Practices in its audits of SCANA.

Due in mid-May, the complaint is also expected to allege that Deloitte & Touche's failure to perform this essential gatekeeping function allowed SCANA and its senior officers to act unchecked in defrauding SCANA investors and South Carolina ratepayers.

The fraud allegations stem from SCANA's failed \$9 billion plan announced in 2008 to build two nuclear reactors in South Carolina in partnership with a state-owned utility, South Carolina Public Service Authority. As currently pled, plaintiffs allege that Deloitte & Touche knowingly or recklessly failed in its responsibilities as auditor by issuing unqualified "clean" audits of SCANA for fiscal years 2014 through 2017.

After SCANA disclosed in 2017 that it was abandoning the decade-long project because it had failed to meet construction deadlines to secure vital tax credits, the company's stock price fell sharply, closing at \$37.39 per share on December 21, 2017, a 50% drop from a class-period high of \$76.12 per share on July 6, 2016.

The case is *Floyd v. Deloitte & Touche LLP, et al.*, No. 3:19-cv-03304 (D. S.C.). ■

ON FEBRUARY 12, IBEW LOCAL 98 PENSION FUND WAS APPOINTED LEAD PLAINTIFF IN A CASE ACCUSING DELOITTE & TOUCHE, LLP OF SECURITIES FRAUD IN ITS AUDITING OF SOUTH CAROLINA UTILITY SCANA CORPORATION.



COHENMILSTEIN IN THE NEWS

- "COVID-19 Paid Leave Law May Leave Workers out in the Cold," *Law360* – April 9, 2020
- "FINRA Rule Would Require Stronger Supervision of Rogue Brokers," *Investment News* – April 8, 2020
- "Judge Certifies Class in Race-Bias Suit Against Bakery, Temp Agency," *Reuters* – April 2, 2020
- "Latham-Led US Soccer May Have to Pay Up in USWNT Suit," *Law360* – March 26, 2020
- "Facebook Accused in Amended Lawsuit of Knowing Ad Audiences Were Inflated," *The Wall Street Journal* – March 20, 2020
- "Google's \$13M Street View Deal OK'd Over AGs' Objections," *Law360* – March 19, 2020
- "Wells Fargo Sued Over 401(k) Plan ERISA Violations," *Pensions & Investments* – March 18, 2020
- "Shareholders' Class Action Lawyers: We're Not Rushing to Bring COVID-19 Cases," *Reuters* – March 17, 2020
- "SunTrust to Pay \$29M to End Class Suit Over 401(k) Roster," *Law360* – March 12, 2020
- "Weinstein Conviction Doesn't Erase #MeToo Barriers in Workplace," *Bloomberg Law* – March 12, 2020
- "Reality TV Stars Aren't Paid Like Employees, and That's Practically Fraud," *InStyle* – March 10, 2020
- "Judge OKs Par's Settlement in Zetia Pay-For-Delay Case," *Law360* – March 9, 2020
- "Intel 401(k) Ruling Could Bolster Some Class Actions," *Investment News* – February 27, 2020
- "Investors Seek Cert. in Action Over GreenSky IPO," *Law360* – February 24, 2020

- "Marriott Can't Duck Hotel Guests' Data Breach Claims," *Law360* – February 21, 2020
- "MIT to Caption Online Videos After Discrimination Lawsuit," *Associated Press* – February 18, 2020
- "Six Years On, Flint Works Toward Justice in Water Crisis," *The Christian Science Monitor* – February 18, 2020
- "DC Court: Turkey Must Face Charges in Sheridan Circle Assault on Kurdish Protesters," *The Hill* – February 7, 2020
- "Feds Certify Securities Class Action Against Tivity," *Nashville Post* – February 3, 2020
- "Toxic 'Forever Chemicals' Found in Drinking Water Throughout US," *USA Today* – January 23, 2020
- "Pregnancy Discrimination Sees Movement on Hill, in Court," *Politico* – January 15, 2020
- "Equifax Data Breach Settlement Is a Good Deal, Judge Says," *Law360* – January 15, 2020

AWARDS & ACCOLADES

- Eight Cohen Milstein attorneys recognized among the 2020 Lawdragon 500 Leading Plaintiff Consumer Lawyers – April 10, 2020
- Cohen Milstein's Daniel A. Small recognized as a 2020 "Titan of the Plaintiffs Bar" by *Law360* – March 31, 2020
- Twelve Cohen Milstein attorneys, including Julie Goldsmith Reiser and Steve Toll of the Securities Litigation & Investor Protection practice, recognized among the 2020 Lawdragon 500 Leading Lawyers in America – March 26, 2020
- Cohen Milstein named "Antitrust Law Firm of the Year" by American Lawyer Media and The National Trial Lawyers – January 22, 2020



Jack Tidrow, President of the Professional Firefighters of Utah, talks to Director of Institutional Client Relations Richard Lorant in front of the Cohen Milstein booth at the National Conference on Public Employee Retirement Systems 2019 Annual Conference & Exhibition, which was held in Austin, Texas last May. Photo courtesy of NCPERS.

UPCOMING EVENTS

This is the space where we normally list the conferences we will be attending over the next few months, all of which have been canceled or postponed in an effort to protect everyone's health. The organizations that host these important events are working hard to find ways to share educational content via webcast, video conference, or other "distance learning" options. That's no easy task and we thank them for it. Unfortunately, there's no way to create a remote substitute for the other thing these conferences offer—a chance to get together with colleagues, acquaintances, and clients in a relaxed setting to exchange ideas, share news, and just generally catch up. That will have to wait until we can safely resume travel. For now, we look forward to talking with you any way we can.

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“ This is an extremely difficult time but there are good lessons to be learned, such as the importance of staying calm, maintaining stability, taking care of each other, and above all else being flexible.”

S. Douglas Bunch is a Partner at Cohen Milstein and member of the Securities Litigation & Investor Protection practice group. Doug joined the firm in 2006 upon graduation from William & Mary Law School and has spent his entire legal career at the firm protecting the rights of investors while furthering the firm's pro bono efforts. His work in the courtroom has been recognized on numerous occasions, most recently by Benchmark Litigation, which named him to its 2019 "40 & Under Hot List" and Super Lawyers Magazine, which designated him a 2019 Super Lawyer. For this issue of the Shareholder Advocate, Doug talked with Editor Christina Saler.

I grew up in ... Stuarts Draft in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Stuarts Draft is a small town in a largely agricultural area. My mom was a schoolteacher at our public elementary school and my dad was a UPS driver. After his retirement, my dad grew hops to sell to local breweries. I visit my parents often and frequently see former teachers and parents of classmates when I'm home.

I knew I wanted to be a lawyer ... while earning my Master's degree in Education at Harvard University. I had a yearlong internship in the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights in Boston where I helped enforce federal anti-discrimination statutes. It was this junction of law, policy and protecting individual rights that intrigued me. After receiving my degree, I headed back to Virginia to attend William & Mary Law School.

During this time of social distancing ... I've stayed connected to my community through my nonprofit work. I'm a member of William & Mary's Board of Visitors, which is its governing body. Governing the daily operations of a public university during a pandemic has been an eye-opening experience. We have been meeting more frequently (telephonically only!) to grapple with various issues—everything from the initial move to remote learning to student housing. We have also made the decision to redeploy personnel from areas of the university where they are not currently needed to other departments that are particularly stressed. This is an extremely difficult time but there are good lessons to be learned, such as the importance of staying calm, maintaining stability, taking care of each other, and above all else being flexible. As painful as this crisis is, we try to seek out opportunity wherever possible.

The last book I read was ... Claude Steele's *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do*. In his book, Steele shares the conclusions of his years of research on how stereotypes unknowingly shape a person's identity, which ultimately limits the person's perception of what is possible for him or her to achieve. Steele also presents theories on how to protect future generations from "stereotype threats." This is by no means a "light" read but well worth it and has helped me become a better university trustee. ■

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