

Lawdragon: Robin Cohen On Founding Her Own Firm, And Winning In Insurance Recovery

"My only regret is that I wish I would have done this five or 10 years ago."

The idea of starting a new firm is daunting, strategically difficult and not for the faint of heart. As evidenced by her groundbreaking career, however, powerhouse lawyer Robin Cohen is anything but faint-hearted.

A renowned insurance coverage attorney and chair of her firm, Cohen Ziffer Frenchman & McKenna, Cohen advocates for policyholders in landmark cases. Unafraid to go to trial in massive bet-the-company litigation, Cohen has recovered billions of dollars for Fortune 500 companies, such as Verizon and Pfizer, for claims ranging from environmental coverage to employee dishonesty to asbestos-related litigation. In one case, Cohen secured a big win for her client, Warren Pumps Inc., obtaining more than \$500M in insurance coverage for the company, and changing the way asbestos coverage policies are triggered.

Her deep experience in the insurance recovery field, and that of her close-knit team of more than two decades, inspired Cohen to start her boutique firm with partners Adam Ziffer, Kenneth Frenchman and Keith McKenna in January 2021. "The four of us, we've been together for over 20 years. We finish each other's sentences," Cohen explains. That familiarity, coupled with the global seismic shift in insurance claims initiated by the Covid-19 pandemic, led the four partners to found a firm that has exploded onto

the insurance recovery scene, aided by the quartet's reputation and Cohen's remarkable command of business acquisition.

Already highly regarded for their work at previous firms including Dickstein Shapiro and McKool Smith, since opening its doors in January, the firm has been sought out as coverage counsel for a barrage of new matters related to the pandemic. Cohen recently appeared in court as lead counsel for various real estate companies including Thor Equities LLC, JDS Development Group, LLC and JGB Vegas Retail Lessee, LLC in Covid-19 litigation cases. In those disputes, Cohen successfully argued that the companies' claims could not be dismissed summarily and that policyholders should be given an opportunity to prove their business losses. In a rapidly changing pandemic world, Cohen is leading the charge to find relief for policyholders, after more than a year of losses and hardship.

Lawdragon: So, you've just had a major shift in your career with your decision to open your own firm. How did you know that was the move that you wanted to make right now?

Robin Cohen: So, for the past five or 10 years, my team and I were really creating our own group within our firms and bringing in our own business. We were very productive, and our client base grew significantly.

Then, COVID hit, and I think we all had some time for personal and professional reflection. And that stay-at-home reflection time coupled with the fact that many of our cases blew up during that time – both because our clients were dealing with COVID losses and we handle a lot of coverage cases for D&O and ransomware attacks — we realized that we're a pretty close-knit group. We wanted to forge our own path, to really bet on ourselves.

So, we did a financial analysis of whether it would be fruitful to go ahead and open our own firm. It wasn't even a close call.

Because of our established team dynamic, starting our own firm was much easier than we had imagined. We had the luxury of a large client base that moved with us and it was a seamless process as we brought on new clients. We are, at this point, killing it in the sense that we hit the ground running

with a very active caseload and new clients are knocking on our door every day. So we got a big splash in starting our own firm.

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