

PHILADELPHIA BUSINESS JOURNAL

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Dechert reels in veteran federal prosecutor to Philadelphia office

BY JEFF BLUMENTHAL
Reporter, Philadelphia Business Journal

Dechert LLP

Dechert continues to reshape its contingent of white collar criminal defense lawyers in Philadelphia by adding veteran federal prosecutor Clare Putnam Pozos, former First Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Pozos has spent virtually all of the past 12 years as a federal prosecutor. She said she was looking for a new challenge in private practice and her choice was clear.

“The only firm where I wanted to practice was Dechert,” Pozos said.

In addition to its status as one of the 50 highest-grossing U.S. law firms, she had existing relationships with three of its younger partners.

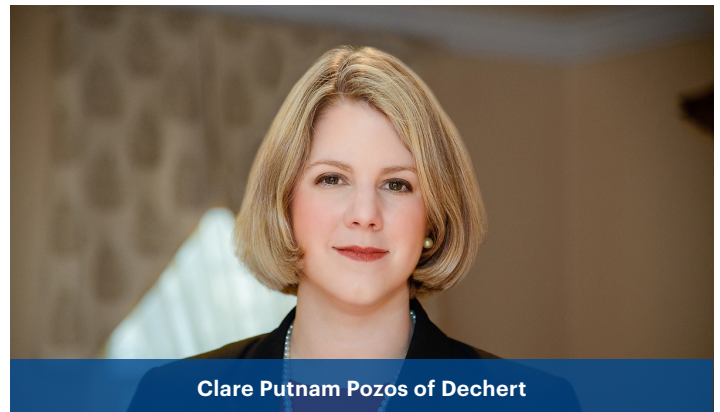
Former Philadelphia City Solicitor Sozi Pedro Tulante joined Dechert’s white collar defense practice in September 2019. He spent five years as an assistant U.S. Attorney, where he sat next to Pozos. Dechert was in need of a white collar partner at that time due to the retirement of Thomas Lee. Prior to the arrival of Pozos, Tulante was the only full-time white collar defense partner for Dechert in Philadelphia.

Pozos said she looking forward to practicing with another friend, litigator Michael McGinley, a former White House aide who left the Trump administration in 2018 to join Dechert’s litigation department in Philadelphia. Another friend from Dechert is corporate lawyer Jonathan Stott, who in August relocated from Philadelphia to San Francisco to help beef up the firm’s West Coast presence.

Pozos grew up in the Philadelphia suburbs. Her father is Alfred Putnam, the former chairman of Drinker Biddle & Reath (now Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath). She graduated from Agnes Irwin School (2000), Harvard University (2004) and University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School (2007) and clerked for U.S. District Judge Michael Baylson for one year before moving to Washington, D.C. to work as an associate for New York-based mega law firm Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom and Affiliates.

After two years in private practice, Pozos joined the U.S. Attorney’s office in Washington, where she spent four years. When her first child was born in 2014, Pozos said she and her husband, now Faegre Drinker partner Antonio Pozos, decided to move back to Philadelphia and she continued her career as an assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. She took a brief leave of absence to run for Congress in Pennsylvania’s 7th congressional district in 2018 but returned to the office as senior advisor to then-U.S. Attorney William McSwain.

When McSwain stepped down at the beginning of the Biden administration



Clare Putnam Pozos of Dechert

to join Duane Morris and begin his campaign for Pennsylvania governor, acting U.S. Attorney Jennifer Arbittier Williams appointed Pozos to succeed her as First Assistant U.S. Attorney.

During her career with the Department of Justice, Pozos prosecuted cases in areas including securities, commodities, insurance, health care, pandemic-related fraud, insider trading, public corruption and cybercrime. In all, she was lead counsel in over 40 trials and 17 appeals, with a focus on investigating and prosecuting cases involving the dark web, cryptocurrency, cybercrime and opioids.

Most recently, she led the prosecution of former Montgomery County Deputy Sheriff David Landis, who in November was sentenced to 15 years in prison for his participation in a global drug-trafficking conspiracy. Landis pleaded guilty to conspiring and agreeing to import and distribute thousands of packages of narcotics with multiple co-conspirators in China.

Pozos also led the prosecution that culminated with two Pennsylvania men being sentenced to prison in 2020 for importing controlled substances from China, manufacturing pills, and conspiring to distribute the controlled substances on the darkweb.

Outside of the courtroom, Pozos served as chair of the office’s diversity, equity and inclusion committee, and as a senior member of the hiring committee.

Now back in private practice, Pozos said she will tap into her experience as a federal prosecutor and serving on civic boards to launch her practice. After serving with the DOJ under the past four presidents, Pozos said the Biden administration has brought increased focus on antitrust issues. She also expects Attorney General Merrick Garland’s office to focus on fraud cases and continue efforts to keep up with the ever-changing world of cybercrime.

New York-based David N. Kelley, co-leader of the white collar and securities litigation practice of Dechert, said Pozos will be “an enormous asset to our clients and our firm’s global investigations, white-collar defense, appeals, and privacy and cybersecurity practice groups.”