

Rising Star: Weil's David Cohen

By Clara Geoghegan

Law360 (July 29, 2025, 4:00 PM EDT) -- David J. Cohen of Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP has represented Steward Health Care in its sprawling Chapter 11 bankruptcy involving 31 hospitals across eight states, and he was selected to lead the firm's growing Miami office, earning him a spot among bankruptcy law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

His biggest case:

Cohen said representing multistate hospital operator Steward Health Care has been the biggest case of his career.

Steward came to Texas bankruptcy court in May 2024 with more than \$9 billion of secured debt and plans to sell or close 31 hospitals in eight states. In Chapter 11, Steward sold or transitioned the operations of 28 of its hospitals, allowing them to remain open, and closed three hospitals, including one that hadn't been operational since 2020 floods damaged the property.

"It was a very challenging sort of process, trying to sell 30 different hospitals. There's not one natural buyer that's going to buy all these," Cohen said.

U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Christopher M. Lopez confirmed Steward's Chapter 11 plan July 16 despite efforts to get the case converted to a Chapter 7 liquidation.

The size of Steward's capital structure, the complexity of selling 31 hospitals spread across the country, and the lives and livelihoods that hinged on the restructuring make Steward's Chapter 11 stand out, Cohen said.

"When we got involved with Steward, it was facing significant liquidity issues, a lot of regulatory challenges and really needed a solution," Cohen recalled. "You're dealing with hospitals and real patients in hospitals, and

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David Cohen

Weil Gotshal & Manges

Age: 38

Home base: Miami

Position: Partner

Law school: Osgoode Hall Law School

First job after law school: Articling student at Goodmans LLP

making sure that they have access to medicine, medical equipment."

His proudest moment as an attorney:

Cohen said his proudest moment as an attorney was late last year when he was selected as the co-managing partner for Weil's Miami office. He was 37 at the time.

"It's a meaningful honor, and the level of trust that the firm has sort of put in me ... it makes me really proud," Cohen said.

He said he's looking forward to building out the firm's bankruptcy practice in Florida as the Miami office co-managing partner.

What motivates him:

Bankruptcy's challenges and impacts motivate Cohen, he said.

"It's more than pushing paper around or moving money from one person's hands to another. It's about preserving great companies that preserve people's jobs," he said.

Whether he's working with small, founder-owned companies or large debtors like Steward that touch the lives of thousands of people, Cohen said he is driven by what's at stake in bankruptcy.

"I think the restructuring and bankruptcy industry provides an opportunity to solve really complex, challenging issues that have a real world impact on people's lives," he said.

Why he's a bankruptcy lawyer:

In addition to the positive impact bankruptcy and restructuring can have on companies and individuals, Cohen said he was drawn to the diverse nature of the practice.

"It's very cliché, but they talk about bankruptcy lawyers being the last sort of generalists in terms of negotiating a loan agreement or [an asset purchase agreement] one day [and] the next day, you're in court, kind of fighting about it," Cohen said.

Bankruptcy was an attractive practice area when he was finishing law school and deciding what area of the law to focus on, he said. Being a bankruptcy lawyer, he noted, requires a more diverse set of skills, which makes it a challenge but also exciting.

"Really no two days are the same. You never know what challenge you're going to face in the morning, and as long as you prefer a challenge, it's a great practice," he added.

Other notable cases he's worked on:

Pennsylvania-based nuclear power designer Westinghouse Electric Co. LLC's 2017 bankruptcy stands out to Cohen.

The group filed for Chapter 11 after running into costly construction delays that threatened the completion of two new nuclear reactor projects in Georgia and South Carolina.

Westinghouse's reactors were the first new nuclear reactor construction projects in the United States in decades, and its bankruptcy ignited questions about the future of the U.S. nuclear energy industry.

Westinghouse confirmed a Chapter 11 plan supported by 99% of its creditors, most of whom were paid in full, after the debtor's parent, Toshiba Corp., agreed to sell the company to publicly traded utility holding company Brookfield Business Partners LP for \$4.6 billion.

The bankruptcy allowed Westinghouse to finish the nuclear reactors and helped pave the way for future U.S. nuclear energy projects.

"It was really a key defining moment for that company, which had been around for maybe 100-plus years, but also that industry as a whole," Cohen said. "This was sort of new technology that was going to reinvigorate the industry. And I think if those projects hadn't gotten done, I don't think we'd continue to see new plants coming online"

The 2020 bankruptcy of men's formal wear company Brooks Brothers Group Inc. also stands out to Cohen, he added.

The pandemic drove down demand for formal wear, compounding existing troubles that the more than 200-year-old company had been facing. Cohen said the team at Weil had to act quickly to line up a debtor-in-possession loan and find a transaction that allowed Brooks Brothers to continue.

Brooks Brothers sold itself to SPARC Group, an interest of Authentic Brands Group LLC and Simon Property Group Inc., for \$325 million, allowing the retail chain to live on.

"Brooks Brothers is an iconic brand, obviously, the oldest clothing company in the country," Cohen said.

--As told to Clara Geoghegan. Editing by Kristen Becker.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2025 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2025, to be eligible for this year's award.