

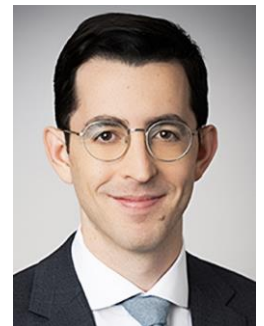
## Weil's New Appellate Co-Head On His Meteoric Rise

By Kevin Penton

*Law360 (September 11, 2025, 2:57 PM EDT)* -- In a little more than five years, Robert Niles-Weed rose from beginning as an associate at Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP to being named co-head of its appeals and strategic counseling practice.

Niles-Weed, 36, was appointed to co-head the 25-member practice in March, only 14 months after making partner, which he accomplished a little over four years after joining the firm in December 2019.

The Harvard Law School and Harvard Business School graduate had several prominent clerkships before joining Weil, including for U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan, for U.S. Circuit Judge David Tatel of the D.C. Circuit, and for U.S. District Judge J. Paul Oetken of the Southern District of New York.



Robert B. Niles-Weed

Niles-Weed helped secure a unanimous decision in February 2023 from the Supreme Court in favor of the buyer of a California house in *Bartenwerfer v. Buckley*. The high court ruled that a debt incurred by fraud cannot be discharged through a Chapter 7 bankruptcy, even if a debtor isn't culpable for the fraud.

In May, Niles-Weed helped successfully represent Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. as it won a \$406.8 million judgment in its antitrust suit against Amgen, following a jury verdict that found Amgen Inc. illegally undercut the price of Regeneron's anticholesterol drug Praluent through a bundling scheme with two blockbuster Amgen drugs.

Niles-Weed spoke recently with Law360 Pulse about his fast rise at Weil and his outlook for the practice. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

**What drew you to the law? Did you dream as a kid of becoming an attorney, or was it something that developed later in life for you?**

Growing up in Buffalo, New York, my grandpa was an attorney, so I got to see a little bit firsthand when I was young how my grandpa was able to use the law to help people solve their problems and make a difference for the better in people's lives. And so I had that early inspiration to the law.

And then I really solidified it during college and afterwards, where I was really interested in reading, writing, arguing. I was a comparative literature major and then worked in management consulting, so I got to see firsthand some of the challenges that companies and corporate clients were facing.

That combination of using the tools of law of reading, writing and advocacy to help solve real problems was what drew me ultimately to law school and also business school.

**I understand that clerkships can be illuminating for young attorneys, as they get to peek behind the curtain, so to speak, and get a better sense of what courts and judges are looking for. Can you share some of what you learned from your clerking experiences that you carry with you to this day?**

I think one of the most important skills I developed in the clerkships is judgment. In a case where the facts may be complicated, the law may be complicated, how to identify and focus on the points that really matter and that are the issues on which the case is going to be decided.

So I got to see how my judges would do that, how they would take in the briefs and what they would find compelling and not. And now in my practice, when I am making arguments either to courts or in other forums, I think about what is the nub of the dispute and how can I best advocate for my client in a way that will be convincing to a judge.

**How do you feel you were able to grow so quickly into your current role?**

I think I'm lucky that our appellate group is the type of place that really invests in mentorships and in creating opportunities for junior folks. I joined the group six years ago, on the same day as my now co-Head Zachary Tripp, who was coming out of the solicitor general's office. And from the beginning, Zack and others at the firm have really empowered me to take opportunities early, to spread my wings, to get argument experience, to get experience working on trial matters, bankruptcy court, the U.S. Courts of Appeals, and the Supreme Court. To know the practice from soup to nuts and to get to know our clients, as well.

So I've had an opportunity to do it all and, through that, was able to develop both a broad skill set in the sort of appeals and strategic counseling work that our group does and also cultivate relationships within and outside the firm. It has really given me opportunities to work on interesting matters and grow ultimately into this role.

**What are some of your goals for the practice for the next year or so?**

There are a couple of things that I'm really focused on in the near to midterm. I think the first is just continuing to do excellent work for our existing clients and our existing matters. The most important thing is this, to be delivering extraordinary advocacy and advice to our clients who need it.

The second thing I'm really focused on is continuing to integrate our practice — and the appellate skill set and capability that we bring to bear — throughout all stages of litigation and across practice groups within the firm. I think one of the virtues of our practice is how well-integrated we are across the firm, and I want to make sure that we're continuing to deepen our collaboration, in the hopes of offering clients more complete solutions.

And then No. 3 for me is I want to focus around talent. I really want us to continue recruiting and developing the best all-around appellate lawyers coming out of law school, coming out of clerkships and making Weil a destination for people who want to do really interesting, high-quality appellate work. And have fun while doing it.

### **How do you approach collaboration for your practice with other areas of the firm?**

The way it works for us is that our clients come to the firm with a problem. They've been sued, they have a legal risk they're worried about, they're about to embark on a significant transaction or restructuring. And the question for us is: How can we put together the best team to solve that problem? So that involves a lot of communication within the firm that transcends the various practice group boundaries.

To think about, for example: This on its face is an antitrust case, but there are some really thorny legal issues that would benefit from someone in the appellate group, or from folks in complex commercial litigation. Or other groups, because the problems our clients face don't always follow along the lines that our practice groups are divided. So what we need to do is be nimble and collaborative enough to realize that it is often a cross-functional team that'll be best for a particular problem or matter that a client comes with.

And I think that at Weil in particular, our culture is critical to that. We all really enjoy working together across the firm as a whole, so we're happy and eager to bring together folks who might not regularly work together. To bring the best team to bear to solve the problem that we're confronted with. So there's no egos, doors are always open, phones are always open, and everyone is excited to help out a partner in another group.

### **You mentioned recruiting. What attributes are you looking for in attorneys to hire?**

We're looking for people with strong legal skills and the horsepower to be writing great briefs, to be bringing creative ideas to the table. We want the smartest people we can find working on our team. But it's not only that. For me, it's critical that they also be great colleagues and team players because, as I said, so much of our work is collaborative and cross-functional, and so it's important that everybody is excited to be a good colleague on our team.

We also want people who can see the big picture and really take a holistic approach to helping our clients solve their problems. I think there's sometimes the sense that writing the perfect brief, for example, can become an end unto itself. But really, that's not the goal. The goal is for us to solve the client's problems in whatever form that takes, whether that is taking a case to appeal and winning it, or if it's finding another solution. And so we're looking for people who are excellent legal thinkers and writers, who are collaborative, and who are able to put that together to sort of holistically think of and keep in mind the best interest of our clients.

### **I'm sure that rising from being an associate approximately six years ago to serving as the co-head of a practice at a major law firm is not accomplished without a lot of work, a lot of dedication and long hours. How are you able to do the work that you do and remain sane, and also have a life outside your job?**

I think I am a better lawyer when I am a fully rounded and happy person, so I think it's incredibly important to make space for relaxation, for time with my family. I'm a new father, so I really love spending time with my husband and son. I love reading, I love going to the theater and the arts in general, and for me, all of the other stuff helps me be more thoughtful and creative and present for my clients. Balance is a constant struggle, but I think we're all — myself and my team — I think we do better work when we feel like we are full people and not just focused on work. While mindful, of course, that we also need to be doing great work for our clients at all times.

Fortunately I'm not doing it alone. I'm lucky that in the group and across the firm, I have colleagues who are willing to step up and help me out in moments when I need it, and I do the same for them. And I think we're all just trying to be there for one another, which makes it a lot easier to manage.

--Additional reporting by Vince Sullivan and Jared Foretek. Editing by Amy French.

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