

# We Are Weil

Spring 2014

Alumni Outreach and Engagement Initiative

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# We Are Weil

Alumni Outreach and Engagement Initiative

## From Private Practice to Public Service

The Honorable **Vernon S. Broderick** Shares Highlights of His Journey to the Federal Bench.

**W**eil has many distinguished alumni. But it's not every day that a past or present Weil partner is nominated and confirmed to the federal bench.

**Vernon S. Broderick**, until last fall a partner in the White Collar Defense & Investigations practice group, recently took his seat on the US District Court for the Southern District of New York. That was a proud moment for the Firm, and it prompted the question: How does a successful attorney like Vernon come to be chosen for the federal bench? White Collar Defense partner **Christopher L. Garcia** sat down with Judge Broderick in our New York office to talk about his career, the confirmation experience, and what it's like to be a sitting federal judge.

Spring 2014



From left to right: Christopher L. Garcia and The Honorable Vernon S. Broderick

### Leaving the ‘family business’

From a family with roots in Jamaica, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, Vernon Broderick grew up in Scarsdale in New York’s Westchester County after moving there from Queens for the educational opportunities. His father and brother are doctors, and his mother is a nurse. Surrounded by a medical mindset at home, Vernon was a history major at Yale who still planned to start pre-med courses and apply to medical school. But the pull of liberal arts proved too strong, and with the support of his brother, who was then an intern at Yale New Haven Hospital, he decided to take a different path, which took him to Harvard Law School. Weil, and now the federal judiciary, can be grateful that he did.

With no lawyers in his family, Vernon educated himself about what law firms could do for a newly minted attorney. One of his mentors, Henry “Pete”

“

I got amazing training. I took and defended 40 depositions, and traveled.”

”

Putzell, a defense attorney who had worked at the US Attorney’s Office, mentioned the Firm to Vernon because two former colleagues of Putzell’s – **Richard Davis** and **John R. “Rusty” Wing** – were then at Weil. “I interviewed and liked the place. I thought it was a place I could fit in.” He came for the summer of 1987 and decided to return as an associate.

At that time, Weil had 300 attorneys in New York, which meant an opportunity to work on “some of

the smaller cases where you were doing the research, writing the initial drafts both in terms of pleadings and briefs, etc.” One big case he recalls was a Westinghouse product liability matter involving nuclear steam generators. He got to work with **James Quinn, Mindy Spector, Eric Ordway,** and **Bruce Meyer.** “I got amazing training. I took and defended 40 depositions, and traveled.”

### From prosecutor to partner

After five years as an associate, Vernon left for the US Attorney’s Office. He had heard Pete, **Rich,** and **Rusty** talk about the work there, the people, the government service, the experience they got, in such a way that he knew he was going to apply. Vernon started in the Southern District of New York in July 1994.

“I interviewed and liked the place. I thought it was a place I could fit in.”

Before long he was focusing on violent gangs and the murders, robberies, and kidnappings that accompanied major narcotics cases. From 1999 to 2002 he served as chief of the Violent Gangs Unit, which handled many of the cases concerning the notorious “name-brand gangs – Latin Kings, Bloods, Crips.” Vernon didn’t have safety concerns: “It was part of the job, and so I didn’t really think about it.” Courthouse security was good, and “I was never threatened.” That didn’t stop family and friends from worrying a bit.

Vernon’s stint at the US Attorney’s Office lasted eight and a half years, but he stayed in touch with people at Weil. For example, **Marsha Simms,** who retired as partner in 2011, would host alumni gatherings at her home and career panels at the Firm. At one such event, Vernon would speak to college interns bound for law school about his

government experience, and then caught up with fellow alumni over cocktails.

As he mulled his next career move, “it was just natural to think about Weil as being the place, since I knew the Firm. I knew a lot of the lawyers, I knew the support staff, and it was a place that I had very positive feelings about. It made sense not to have to build those relationships from scratch – relationships that were critical to both advancing your career but also to your happiness in your career.” In 2002, he had an offer to return as counsel, and by January 2005 he was named partner.

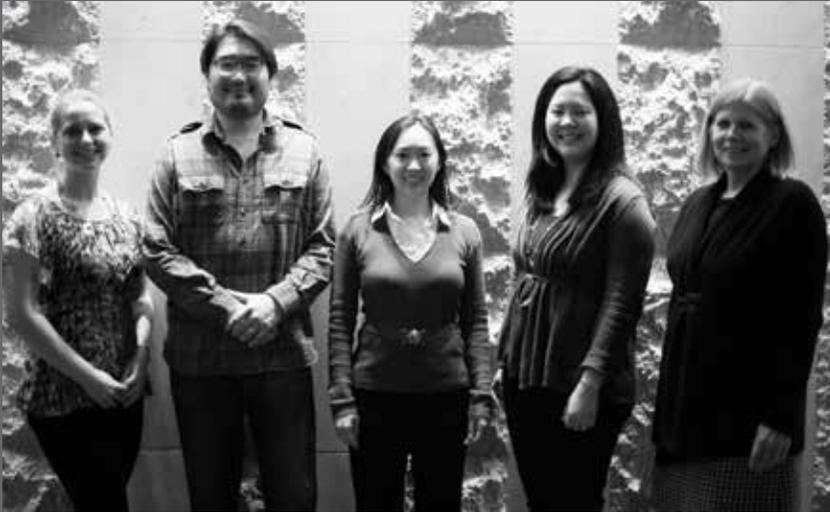
One of the earlier matters Vernon recalls managing as a young partner was representing a client defrauded in connection with several corporate transactions. “It was a great experience, in part because I got to work very closely with **Greg Danilow, Seth Goodchild,** and **Stefania Venezia,** and got to meet some partners on the corporate side who I hadn’t worked with before.”

Vernon was also known as a big supporter of pro bono work at Weil. He is perhaps proudest of a 2006 prisoner’s rights case in federal court in Manhattan. He enjoyed seeing the young lawyers he supervised “cutting their teeth, digging down into the facts and then performing ... It was their case. I was there to make sure that things didn’t go off the rails.” Vernon credits the associates’ hard work for the win.

### The impact of relationships

From the start Vernon understood the value of building relationships outside the Firm as well as inside it. He got involved with the boards of various not-for-profit organizations, including LatinoJustice PRLDEF, which he joined in 2005. Picking a not-for-profit you are “passionate about” is important. It makes it easier to find the time and “enables you to be a more well-rounded lawyer.” Two years earlier a former colleague had recommended him to Mayor Bloomberg for a spot on the New York City Commission to Combat Police Corruption. At the time he was nominated

“From Private Practice to Public Service” continues on page 8 ►



*From left to right:  
Amy Reed, Jin Han, TiTi Nguyen,  
Leslie Liu, Nancy Raber*

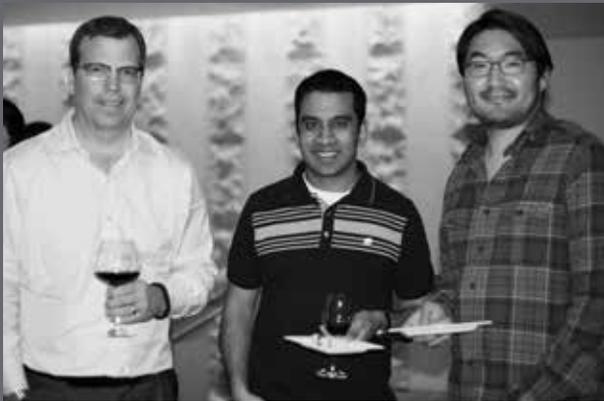
## Silicon Valley Office Alumni Discuss Careers Beyond Weil

**W**eil alumni working in the tech sector and for the California Department of Justice recently met with Silicon Valley associates to share advice and guidance on navigating one's career during and beyond law firm practice. **Jin Han**, Principal Corporate Counsel at Apple, **Leslie Liu**, Product Counsel at Google, **TiTi Nguyen**, Deputy Attorney General, California Department of Justice, and **Nancy Raber**, Associate General Counsel at Yahoo! offered perspectives on the skills that associates should hone to deliver exceptional client service and prepare them for opportunities that exist working in-house and for the government.

The distinguished panel covered a variety of topics, such as the importance of project management skills and organizational diplomacy, the need to carefully evaluate and reasonably control business risk, as well as proposing creative solutions, issue spotting, and the perennial aspiration of lawyers to explain complex concepts to lay people. As one alum aptly put it, "you need to be more of a business person who happens to have a JD."

With levity and candor, the panelists shared personal anecdotes of life as a junior associate and explained how the sometimes arduous

and mundane tasks assigned to them earlier in their careers prepared them to work in larger organizations. Lastly, Silicon Valley alumni discussed the positive impact that Weil attorneys have had on their career transitions, including Nancy Raber's description of her continued collaboration with Weil attorneys as a client and friend of the Firm. The session was followed by a networking reception with cocktails and appetizers at which associates and alumni were joined by partners and counsel. ■



*From left to right:*  
(top) An Tran, Leslie Liu, Bambo Obaro;  
(bottom) Silicon Valley Office Managing Partner Craig Adas, David Singh, Jin Han

## Exploring Careers Beyond Weil

To enhance the associate experience and support those who seek guidance in exploring career alternatives to private practice, Weil is launching a “Beyond Weil” Career Exploration Initiative. This program will offer interested mid-level and senior-level associates a suite of services to assist them in their consideration of potential opportunities. Such services would include:

- ▶ Liaising with Weil partners, clients, and alumni to identify opportunities in the in-house, government, and not-for-profit sectors, and then prepare associates for whom those roles are appropriate to best present themselves as candidates;
- ▶ Facilitating introductions to client contacts, alumni, and friends of the Firm currently with a prospective employer that will enable associates in the program to gather company or industry “inside intelligence”;
- ▶ Hosting industry-specific career navigation workshops led by in-house recruiters, HR professionals, in-house alumni, and seconded associates; and
- ▶ Launching an Alumni-Associates Mentoring Program

We invite alumni who would like to participate in this effort as career mentors and client contacts to reach out to:

**Kito Huggins**  
Manager, Strategic Business  
Development Initiatives

# Weil Elects Nine Partners and Nine Counsel

**L**ast November Weil's partnership elected nine partners and nine counsel. "I am very excited to introduce this diverse group of exceptional lawyers," said Firm Executive Partner **Barry Wolf**. "These individuals are based in nine of the Firm's 20 worldwide offices, and about half of our partner class is made up of women. They have wide-ranging experience across our four main departments of Corporate, Litigation, Business Finance and Restructuring, and Tax, Benefits, and Executive Compensation and will provide our clients with the legal excellence and top service that are a hallmark of Weil."

The new partners and counsel are based in Boston, Houston, London, Miami, New York, Paris, Silicon Valley, Warsaw, and Washington, DC. ■

## Partners

**Hannah Field-Lowes**  
Complex Commercial  
Litigation  
London

**Lukasz Gasinski**  
Capital Markets/  
Financial Institutions  
Regulatory/M&A  
Warsaw

**Iwona Her**  
Antitrust/Competition  
Warsaw

**Todd Larson**  
Complex Commercial  
Litigation  
New York

**Mark Lawford**  
Business Finance &  
Restructuring  
London

**Stacy Nettleton**  
Securities Litigation  
New York

**Mark Schwed**  
Tax, Benefits, and  
Executive Compensation  
New York

**Sarah Stasny**  
Private Equity  
New York

**Jeff White**  
Antitrust/Competition  
Washington, DC

## Counsel

**Jason Comer**  
Real Estate  
New York

**Edouard de Lamy**  
Tax, Benefits, and  
Executive Compensation  
Paris

**Elliot Ganchrow**  
Real Estate  
New York

**Jason Lang**  
Patent Litigation  
Silicon Valley

**Chris Lopez**  
Business Finance &  
Restructuring  
Houston

**Matthew Morton**  
Private Equity/M&A  
Washington, DC

**Ramona Nee**  
Private Equity  
Boston

**David Singh**  
Complex Commercial  
Litigation  
Silicon Valley

**Oliver Walker**  
Tax, Benefits, and  
Executive Compensation  
London

*"From Private Practice to Public Service" continued from page 4 ►*

for his judgeship, Vernon was also serving on the boards of four other not-for-profit organizations or commissions: the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics, the Justice Resource Center, the Fund for Modern Courts, and the City Bar Fund.

Vernon is quick to add that building and sustaining relationships – both inside and outside the Firm – is critical to a recommendation for a seat on the federal bench, as it is for a recommendation for a seat on a board: "It's through the commission and



LatinoJustice, where you meet people who may be doing other things. That really is part of how my name came to the attention of Senator Schumer in connection with recommending me to the President to become a judge."

Still, being nominated for a federal judgeship is like few other experiences in the profession. Senator Charles Schumer has "a selection panel of prominent attorneys from different backgrounds,"

and Vernon was approached by someone on the panel. He filled out the questionnaire and interviewed with the panel.

Although Capitol gridlock has left many judicial nominees maddeningly becalmed in the roiled waters of the Senate, Vernon sailed through. He modestly attributes that happy result to good timing: being recommended right after President Obama's reelection. And of course there was still a lot of paperwork to complete and background checks to undergo before his actual nomination on April 15, 2013.

Vernon vividly recalls that day because it started in London, where he had been sightseeing. "I was flying back to New York, but when I landed, I got an email from the White House Counsel's office indicating that the President had nominated me. So, it happened while I was over the Atlantic. I was a little concerned they might say, 'What is taking this guy five hours? This is a once-in-a-lifetime thing. The President is nominating you!'"

Passing through customs, he had to resist the temptation to use his BlackBerry, which travelers know is verboten there. You don't want agents descending on you at the very moment the President nominates you! Showing preternatural patience, Vernon waited before responding to the White House emails.

### **The Senate confirmation: bright lights, little drama**

Like every nominee, Vernon had to undergo a thorough background check – of which the questionnaire is just one part. The check delved into his life as a lawyer, overseas travel, employment history, and his 14 most significant matters, including four pro bono cases. Pretty much everything he had written, or had a part in writing, amounting to more than a thousand pages, was scrutinized. The FBI did its own background check. Agents spoke to colleagues at Weil "and asked permission to go to the building where I live and basically knock on doors and ask people about me, as just part of the vetting process."

“

It's a big change. It's a great commitment.

”

Much of the preparation for the Senate hearing involved going over the materials he had submitted to the senators. Vernon spoke to people he knew who had gone through the experience. He watched past Senate Judiciary Hearings online. Also helpful were some fantastic attorneys in the White House Counsel's Office and the Department of Justice.

The day of the hearing, Weil colleagues in the New York office watched the televised proceedings. Everyone was expecting drama. As Vernon recalls: “You walk into the Senate Judiciary Room, and there are bright lights because a lot of the proceedings are in fact broadcast, so I'd imagine it's sort of movie-studio-ish.” But the session was “relatively quick,” and he was asked a total of four questions, all of them “straightforward.” While the absence of Senate confirmation theatrics might have left onlookers crestfallen, that anticlimax came as a relief to the nominee: “Everybody's disappointment was my pleasure.”

Vernon was moved by all the support he received from partners like **Laura Wilkinson** and **Todd Chandler**, and former Weil associate **Erin Law**, as well as associates from the DC office who attended the hearing. Vernon's niece listened in from school, and “I got emails from people who were on their computers watching. So it was fantastic knowing that people were supportive no matter what happened.”

At the farewell party in New York, Appellate Litigation Chair and Pro Bono Chair **Steven Reiss** summed up the feelings of everyone at Weil: “Nobody is going to reach a more decent decision, a more just and humane decision than Vernon. This is a great day for Weil. But it's a great day for the profession, and everyone in this jurisdiction, because we are putting on the bench one of the people who most deserves to be there – Vernon. You could not ask for better judgment.”



**From left to right:**

(top) Litigation Department Co-Chair David Lender, Vernon S. Broderick; (middle) Vernon S. Broderick, Christopher L. Garcia; (bottom) Vernon S. Broderick, Ash Altschuler, Marsha Simms; (opposite, top) David Singh, Jorge Martorell, David Fertig, Vernon Broderick, Ariel Rothstein; (opposite, bottom) Rich Davis, Shelley Dropkin, Vernon S. Broderick, Henry Putzell, Caroline Zalka, Stacey Nettleton

### 'Maybe the last job'

Watching and interacting with judges over the years has been instructive. "Seeing how they treat litigants and attorneys is an important part of forming what my approach is going to be on the bench." Judge Broderick intends to "control the courtroom," making sure that everyone who comes into it is "shown respect." To help him with the workload, he tapped two Weil associates, **Devin Cain** and **Alana Montas**, to serve as his law clerks.

Judge Broderick mused that "I really enjoy the practice of law. I really loved working at Weil, interacting with a lot of the lawyers and being part of a team to provide the best legal services we could for our clients. Being a judge is a big change – and not just because you suddenly 'lose' your first name," he quipped. "It's a great commitment. It's also a commitment because you have your appointment for life, so, thinking about this as maybe the last job I'll have – it's certainly possible. But it's been great so far." ■



This is a great day for Weil. But it's a great day for the profession, and everyone in the jurisdiction, because we are putting on the bench one of the people who most deserves to be there – **Vernon.**

## Weil Alumni on the Federal Bench

- ▶ **The Honorable Vernon S. Broderick**  
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York
- ▶ **The Honorable Gregg Costa**  
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas (nominated for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals)
- ▶ **The Honorable Dennis Lynn**  
U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Northern District of Texas
- ▶ **The Honorable Margaret Mahoney**  
U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Alabama
- ▶ **The Honorable Brenda Rhoades**  
U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Eastern District of Texas
- ▶ **The Honorable Robert Summerhays**  
U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Louisiana

# Return • Reconnect • Recommit

What to Expect at the April 2014 Alumni Reunion

## On Thursday, April 10, 2014 all roads lead to Weil New York,

where we will celebrate the accomplishments of our alumni, and where the community of Weil attorneys – current and former – will network and discuss the various ways they can serve as stakeholders in each other's personal and professional success.

This reunion event begins with a CLE segment whose speakers will include industry leaders at global firms such as KKR, Credit Suisse, Pfizer, Corvex Management, and General Electric. Along with the Firm's practice leaders, alumni and clients will lead four concurrent panels on topics including shareholder activism, social media use in the workplace, distressed acquisitions, and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Following the CLE programs, alumni, staff, and current attorneys will convene in the Weil Dining Room and join a moderated conversation with the iconic **Ira Millstein**, Executive Partner **Barry Wolf**, Dallas office Managing Partner **Glenn West** and alumni-mentees of theirs who have taken on leadership roles at prominent private equity firms, financial services institutions, and returned to Weil as a partner. They will share personal anecdotes about their journeys to and through Weil and offer sage advice for those navigating their careers beyond the Firm.

Finally, hundreds will dine and dance the night away as we take the celebration to the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Ballroom at the Time Warner Center. Return to a milestone on your professional journey. Reconnect to former colleagues. Recommit and establish new relationships that are sure to benefit you for a lifetime.

You don't  
want to  
miss this.

RSVP today!

[weil.com](http://weil.com)

BEIJING  
BOSTON  
BUDAPEST  
DALLAS  
DUBAI  
FRANKFURT  
HONG KONG  
HOUSTON  
LONDON  
MIAMI  
MUNICH  
NEW YORK  
PARIS  
PRAGUE  
PRINCETON  
PROVIDENCE  
SHANGHAI  
SILICON VALLEY  
WARSAW  
WASHINGTON, DC

Don't Miss Our  
Alumni Reunion Event.  
Details on Page 11.



The poster features a city skyline at the top with the Weil logo in a green box. Below the skyline is a green banner with the text "Return · Reconnect · Recommit" and "It's Time for a Reunion!". The main title is "2014 Alumni CLE Conference & Reunion Gala" followed by the date "Thursday, April 10, 2014". The event schedule is as follows:

Time	Location
~ 3:30 pm	CLE Conference Weil Conference Center 767 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10115
~ 5:00 pm	"We Are Weil" Reception & Networking Reception Weil Dining Room 757 Fifth Avenue New York, NY 10115
~ 6:30 pm	Reunion Gala The Mandarin Oriental Ballroom 60 Columbus Circle New York, NY 10023

At the bottom, it says "Click here to RSVP or contact [kito.huggins@weil.com](mailto:kito.huggins@weil.com) for more information regarding this event." and "Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP" in the bottom right corner.

## Let's Stay Connected

We want to know about your:

- ▶ Job Moves and Promotions
- ▶ Life Events and Personal Milestones
- ▶ Accolades and Recognitions
- ▶ Ideas for Improving the Alumni Program
- ▶ Updates to Your Contact Information

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