

Office Snapshot: Morris James Enters New Era With HQ Move

By Rose Krebs

Law360 (September 18, 2025, 3:12 PM EDT) -- Delaware firm Morris James LLP on Thursday celebrated its move to a new headquarters in a 12-story building in north Wilmington, a relocation that firm leaders said is aimed at best meeting attorney and client needs and practicing law in a modernized setting.

Managing partner Keith E. Donovan and Sherry A. Leary, the firm's chief operating officer, told Law360 Pulse recently that the move to a building in a "live-work-play" campus on Avenue North Boulevard marks a new era in the firm's nearly century-long history.

"This wasn't simply a move," Donovan said in a statement. "It was a purposeful step forward. We chose spaces that reflect the evolution of our work, encourage collaboration, and allow us to exceed the needs of our clients and our teams with greater agility. It's part of a broader strategy to lead the market by aligning our physical presence with the way modern legal services are delivered."

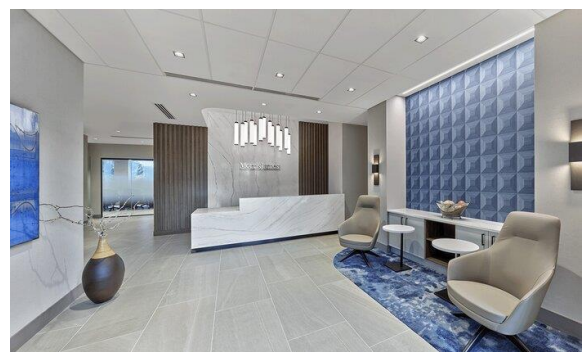
The firm has for years pondered its next move as the lease neared expiration on its previous headquarters in a 16-story office building at 500 Delaware Ave. in downtown Wilmington, Donovan said. The lease expires next year, but the firm has now officially moved to the north Wilmington site.

Morris James occupies about 42,000 square feet spread out over six floors in its new building, while it had roughly 69,000 square feet in its old headquarters over two and a half floors, according to firm representatives.

The downsizing was intended to better fit the way legal business is done these days, Donovan said. The firm added conference room space, since many lawyers now meet with clients in that setting instead of in personal offices.



Morris James has moved its headquarters to a mixed-use campus on Avenue North Boulevard in Wilmington, Delaware. The new office — which is in north Wilmington rather than downtown, like the firm's former headquarters — has upgraded features and more conference room space. (Courtesy Photo)



Morris James' Wilmington, Delaware, office features an updated reception area. (Courtesy Photo)

Leary said the square footage per attorney has been reduced to about 782 versus the 1,282 it was at the old headquarters.

"We did not need that much square footage per attorney," Donovan said. Generally, the aim was to create more shared space at the new location, he said. The new headquarters has 14 conference rooms, two more than at the Delaware Avenue location, according to information provided by the firm.

The new headquarters has 69 attorney offices, while there were 72 at the prior location. Like the old headquarters, the Avenue North site has a café, break room, kitchen and wellness room, Morris James said.

Donovan said the move a few miles out of downtown Wilmington is not expected to negatively impact the firm's culture or the services its clients have come to expect. "It doesn't change the dynamics that people are used to," he said.

"It was designed for us," Donovan said of the new headquarters. "It was designed to meet our needs."

So that the firm will still have a space in downtown Wilmington, Morris James said it will open a satellite office by year's end at 600 N. King St. in Wilmington, at what is known as Courthouse Square. There, attorneys and clients will have space near various court facilities to prepare for trials and other court proceedings.

The Courthouse Square location will have four conference rooms, three "huddle" rooms, five attorney offices, space for legal assistants, a break room and kitchen, the firm said.

In addition to its Wilmington headquarters, the roughly 70-attorney Morris James has offices in Newark, Dover, Rehoboth Beach and Georgetown.

The Leader

Donovan, who joined Morris James in 2002, has served as its managing partner since 2018, his LinkedIn profile says. As managing partner, he develops business strategies and policies for the firm, and oversees its operations, his profile on the firm's website says.

He has experience representing clients in personal injury, negligence mass tort and product liability matters, and represents plaintiffs in injury and insurance-related matters, according to the profile. Donovan has also been expanding his mass torts practice, the firm said.

He has been a member of the invitation-only American Board of Trial Advocates, a national association of trial lawyers and judges, since 2005. He has served as treasurer of its Delaware Chapter since 2011 and previously served as president of the Delaware chapter, the profile says.

Donovan earned a law degree in 1991 from Widener University Law School, now called Widener University Delaware Law School, and an undergraduate degree from the University of Delaware.

"My leadership style is client-centric and people-focused," he told Law360 Pulse in an emailed statement.



Keith E. Donovan

The Location

Morris James' new headquarters is in the Avenue North building at 3205 Avenue North Blvd., located on an 80-acre mixed-use campus. The 42,000-square-foot space includes a first floor with "modern law firm" features: boardrooms, meeting areas and a reception area, a firm announcement said.

The new headquarters will also feature common space with walls that can be moved to allow the firm to host events of various sizes, Morris James said. Each floor will have "plug-and-play" conference rooms and flexible workstations, the announcement said.

Avenue North is close to Interstate 95 and has free parking, according to the firm. Morris James will have use of outdoor space at its new headquarters, firm leaders said.

"Our new offices were designed with intention," Leary said in a statement. "We embraced flexible workspaces, seamless technology, and a layout that fosters team building and real-time connection. In today's evolving workplace, we believe in using office time strategically. These spaces are designed to support purposeful engagement and the energy that drives great work."

The Team (In Wilmington)

138 total staff
29 partners
7 counsel
3 of counsel
15 associates
84 other staff

The Work

Morris James provides legal services to clients in areas such as corporate and financial law, employment and real estate matters, and family law, the firm told Law360 in an emailed statement. Its corporate attorneys advise clients in fiduciary duty, governance, Delaware corporate law matters, stockholder disputes and transactional matters.

Morris James said its bankruptcy attorneys represent debtors, creditors and other stakeholders in restructuring matters involving companies from various industries.

The firm's finance team advises financial institutions, private equity firms, hedge funds and other clients about Delaware corporate law-related aspects of financings, the firm said.

Morris James said it also often partners with co-counsel to handle patent and trademark litigation in Delaware federal court, and has launched a blockchain, crypto and digital assets practice to advise clients about governance, compliance, and other matters in the "fast-evolving space."

The firm also has attorneys who represent Delaware public-school districts in labor and employment matters, advising about collective bargaining and workplace disputes, according to the firm.

Morris James said its real estate and land use attorneys handle zoning, permitting and other project

approvals for businesses across the state, while its finance lawyers help structure project deals.

The firm also fields a family law group to handle custody, divorce and other matters, and has a trusts, tax, and estates team that advises fiduciaries, entrepreneurs and families about preserving and transferring wealth, the firm said.

In recent years, Morris James has seen an increase in its mass torts case load, firm leaders said, and the firm has long represented individuals in personal injury and medical malpractice cases.

Comings and Goings

At the start of 2025, Morris James announced that it had elected attorneys Wilson A. Gualpa, Ryan T. Keating and Tara Pakrouh to its partnership.

In his practice, Gualpa represents clients injured in motor vehicle accidents and handles premises liability, and workers' compensation cases, the firm said. Keating focuses his practice on complex medical malpractice cases, while Pakrouh advises clients about corporate restructuring and litigation disputes in Chapter 11 cases.

In February, the firm announced that it had hired Jessica Tanzler as its personal injury operations coordinator to help steer the personal injury and work injury practices at Morris James. She previously was a paralegal in Morris James' finance practice and also has experience handling personal injury, workers' compensation and medical malpractice matters, a firm announcement said.

In July, the firm announced it had added Samantha L. Rodriguez as an associate in its bankruptcy and restructuring practice group. Prior to joining Morris James, she was a judicial intern for Judge Mark S. Coven of Quincy District Court in Massachusetts, a firm announcement said. She represents clients in Chapter 11 cases and related adversarial proceedings.

--Editing by Robert Rudinger.