

## In Chicago, Zach Fardon Is Making His Mark at King & Spalding

By Jenna Greene

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It's been four months since former U.S. Attorney Zachary Fardon launched King & Spalding's Chicago office from a temporary, shoebox-sized Regus space with some supplies he picked up from the Walgreens across the street.

The top prosecutor in Chicago from 2013 until March of 2017, Fardon surprised the legal world by declining to return to Latham & Watkins, where he had been a partner, in favor of building King & Spalding's newest outpost.

Ensnconced these days in much plusher digs, Fardon has been busy staffing the office with former top prosecutors.

The latest addition: Patrick Otlewski, who joined the firm on Monday from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Illinois, where he tried 12 cases and won them all. Among them: the largest fraud case by dollar amount in the district's history.

He and Fardon go way back. When Otlewski was a new Latham associate, fresh off a clerkship with Judge Richard Wesley of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, he worked with Fardon in representing a lead witness in the prosecution of former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich.

They overlapped again at the U.S. Attorney's office, where Otlewski spent seven years and rose to deputy chief of general crime.

"He's smart as a whip, he's got great judgment, and he's a good person," Fardon said in an interview. "And he's a monster trial lawyer."

Otlewski is the seventh lawyer to join King & Spalding's Chicago office, and Fardon says "a couple more" are expected by the end of the month. Previous hires include Patrick Collins, another former AUSA in Chicago who went on to become a partner at Perkins Coie in Chicago before joining his old friend at King & Spalding in October.

Fardon said he has been "moved and at times overwhelmed by the positive reaction across Chicago to our practice... There has been a tremendous amount of interest in the prospect of joining the endeavor we've started. I didn't take that for granted. It's exciting and flattering."



**Zachary Fardon of King & Spalding in Chicago.**

At the same time, he remains "cautious of reaching for too much, too fast... There is a right way and a wrong way to grow."

Fardon said he sometimes gets asked about how big a book of business it would take for a lateral to be considered. While portable business is certainly "nice," Fardon said that's "not how we're approaching the process. We want talent and a cultural fit."

To date, the Chicago office has been focused on litigation as well as King & Spalding's marquee special matters and government investigations practice, but Fardon said the long-term plan is to diversify into other areas including health care, life sciences, corporate and M & A work.

"I respect the fact that Chicago is a difficult legal market to waltz into," Fardon said. Nonetheless his long-term goal is "to be the best law firm in town... lawyer over lawyer, to be second to none."