

NEWS & INSIGHTS

William Costopoulos, region's top criminal defense lawyer, joins Saxton & Stump

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HARRISBURG, Pa., June 9, 2021 — Criminal defense attorney [William C. Costopoulos](#) has joined Saxton & Stump in Harrisburg to bolster its [White Collar Defense](#) practice and support the firm's [Appellate and Post-Trial Advocacy](#) and [Attorney and Judicial Ethics and Discipline](#) teams. Costopoulos is working alongside two former judges — [Hon. Lawrence F. Stengel, \(Ret.\)](#), former Chief Judge for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and [Hon. Robert A. Graci \(Ret.\)](#), former Pennsylvania Superior Court Judge and former Assistant Executive Deputy

Attorney General — as well as former Pennsylvania Deputy Attorney General Carson B. Morris. The firm counsels institutional and individual clients in all aspects of criminal and administrative investigations.

“Bill is considered one of the top criminal defense lawyers on the East Coast and we are thrilled that he is joining us,” said Saxton & Stump CEO [James W. Saxton](#). “We recognize a growing need in our region so adding the expertise Bill has developed over a brilliant career is an excellent fit for our already established team.”

After serving briefly as a Dauphin County Assistant District Attorney, Costopoulos began his career in private practice, handling many complex and infamous cases. His best-known cases include the defense of Dr. Jay Smith, who was eventually freed from prison by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. That case became the subject of three books and a CBS mini-series. He defended former Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Rolf Larsen in a historic impeachment trial on the state senate floor. In 2002, Costopoulos obtained the acquittal of former City of York Mayor Charles Robinson, charged with murder during the 1969 riots in York, PA. He represented former Senate Whip Jane C. Orie, and former Speaker of the House, H. William DeWeese on public corruption charges. He also recently represented state Supreme Court Justice J. Michael Eakin before the Judicial Conduct Board.

“Joining Saxton & Stump’s team of skilled defense attorneys is an excellent opportunity for me,” said Costopoulos. “As I am winding down my current firm, I’m excited to add to their impressive team. The combination of a former federal judge, a former state judge, former prosecutors and renowned defense attorneys is the perfect recipe for arguably the strongest team to fight clients’ legal battles.”

Costopoulos is an active lecturer on legal matters, speaking before bar associations, continuing legal education seminars and civic groups. He was formerly an adjunct professor at Dickinson School of Law. He is also an accomplished author of three non-fiction books and three novels. Costopoulos earned a B.A. in political science from Dickinson College, his J.D. from Duquesne University School of Law, where he was valedictorian and editor in chief of the law journal, and his LL.M. from Harvard University School of Law. Prior to attending college, Costopoulos served as a sergeant in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1968.

Building a powerhouse defense team

Saxton & Stump’s White Collar Defense team represents businesses, municipalities and individuals facing criminal or regulatory investigations, legislative inquiries, whistleblower accusations and other proceedings involving allegations of misconduct. Saxton & Stump also has an established team handling [Internal Investigations](#) and [Regulatory and Government Affairs](#) attorneys to protect clients’ interests in often complex and high-stakes circumstances.

Hon. Lawrence F. Stengel (Ret.)

In 2018, Judge Stengel announced his retirement from the federal bench and joined Saxton & Stump to lead its Internal Investigations team. He served for fourteen years as a federal judge, including as Chief Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and fourteen years as a judge on the Lancaster Court of Common Pleas. Judge Stengel also leads [Optimal Dispute Resolutions](#), a rapidly growing regional and national ADR provider. Since joining Saxton & Stump, Judge Stengel has served as [special investigator](#) in the National Football League’s (NFL) Concussion Settlement program and as chair of the [Independent Oversight Committee](#) for the Archdiocese of

Philadelphia's Independent Reconciliation and Reparations Program (IRRP). He has also served as Special Master in complex civil cases and as a Title IX hearing officer for higher education institutions.

Hon. Robert A. Graci (Ret.)

Judge Graci, former Pennsylvania Superior Court Judge and retired Chief Counsel to the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania [joined the team in 2019](#) to lead its Attorney and Judicial Ethics and Discipline team. Judge Graci served on the Superior Court from 2002 to 2004 before becoming a Member in the Harrisburg office of Eckert Seamans Cherin & Mellott, LLC, focusing his practice on appeals, white collar criminal defense, general litigation, regulatory and administrative law and governmental relations. Prior to his appointment to the bench in 2002, Judge Graci was the Assistant Executive Deputy Attorney General for Law and Appeals of the Criminal Law Division of the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General. As a Deputy Attorney General for nearly 18 years, he briefed and argued cases in each of the state and federal appellate courts in Pennsylvania, as well as the U.S. Supreme Court.

Carson B. Morris

Earlier this year, [Saxton & Stump welcomed Morris](#) who formed the firm's White Collar Defense team. He previously served at the Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General (OAG) in Attorney General (AG) Josh Shapiro's administration. During his time in the OAG's Appeals and Legal Services Section, Morris focused on grand jury litigation and regularly shepherded the OAG's most significant investigations through the grand jury process. Notably, Morris coordinated a years-long campaign defending the constitutionality of Pennsylvania's sexual offender registration system that culminated in several Pennsylvania Supreme Court opinions affirming the constitutionality of these statutes. Prior to joining the OAG, Morris was a trial and appellate attorney with renowned Philadelphia firms focused on white collar criminal and regulatory defense in federal and state courts.

Saxton & Stump's strategic growth outlook

With 113 professionals, including 65 attorneys, the firm continues to grow and based on their strategic plan for 2021, will continue to expand its current team of lawyers and professionals, focusing on bringing additional resources to support client needs.

Saxton & Stump provides solutions for complex legal issues and partners with clients to create a roadmap for their success. The firm is committed to empowering clients by delivering five-star service and results-focused advice.

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