

OUR PEOPLE

My White & Case Story

Nate Crowley shares his career journey to date.



The entrepreneurial spirit of the Firm is something that Local Partner, Hong Kong, Nate Crowley has experienced throughout his career at White & Case.

Nate was made Local Partner this January, a career milestone that he was delighted to have achieved after moving to the Asia Pacific region in 2020.

He explains: "At the beginning of my legal career with Linklaters in London in 2012, I spent nine months in Hong Kong and truly fell in love with the city and the wider region. The magic I felt the first time I came here (as a backpacker!) has never gone away."

Nate returned to London to work in Linklaters derivatives and structured products practice, but it wasn't too long before he sought a broader range of work, moving to the Firm in March 2015.

"Aside from the great international profile of the Firm, I got a good feeling – I loved the people and immediately felt at home. That feeling has never gone away."

He says: "I was actually looking into switching my practice to corporate law (given I had such a narrow focus at Linklaters) and interviewed with London Corporate Partner Inigo Esteve, who thought I'd be a good fit for White & Case, but that I'd be better off sticking with derivatives!

"I was then introduced to Partner Ingrid York and, having met Ingrid and the team, I knew it was the right move for me. Aside from the great international profile of the Firm, I got a good feeling – I loved the people and immediately felt at home. That feeling has never gone away."



Despite the Firm's global presence, Nate put his desire to move to Asia on hold, primarily for personal reasons as he had recently married his husband, Matthew, who was from the States and not quite ready to make another jurisdictional jump.

Nate says: "During those first years, I had so many great opportunities to grow my profile and practice and bring my ideas to the table. That culminated in December 2019, when an opportunity arose to return to Hong Kong.

"While we were doing some Asia-focused derivatives work out of London, clients often mentioned that they would value having someone on the ground. Our only partner with derivatives expertise in the region, David Barwise, had recently retired, so I asked if the Firm would consider moving me to Hong Kong.

"I was fortunate to have some enormously supportive people who made this ambition a reality, in particular Ingrid York who championed and supported my decision throughout and the Hong Kong and Singapore partners (in particular Jessica Zhou, Kaya Proudian, Eugene Man and Baldwin Cheng) who were willing to give it a go and gave me such fantastic support when I got my feet on the ground.

"White & Case put a lot of trust in me, but I believe it has proved a very good decision for the Firm and me, both personally and professionally."

Nate's return to Hong Kong started with a six-month secondment with BNP Paribas.

He says: "The secondment gave me a great insight into what's going on in the market and the different ways of working. That benefited me when I returned in July 2020 and, since then, I've been focused on building and growing our derivatives and structured finance practice in Hong Kong and Singapore."

Nate's time in Hong Kong started as an associate before he was promoted to counsel the same year. He was made local partner this January.

"My focus is now on clients in Asia, ranging from international banks to funds but also still the Middle East where our team has a very loyal group of clients," he says.

"Being the only senior derivatives lawyer in the region is sometimes challenging, but I have ongoing support from London, Dubai and other offices. Ultimately, it just requires being creative and looking a bit harder to find the right cross-border resources for each transaction, which is of course a strength of the Firm."



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Nate sees his story as a great example of the entrepreneurial spirit of White & Case.

Another example of this came when Nate was appointed to grow Spectrum, the Firm's LGBT affinity group, in London.

Nate explains: "The network had already been launched by a former associate but, since he left the Firm, things had gone quiet.

"The fact that the Firm supports networks like Spectrum is incredibly powerful and necessary. Not only is it great to know that you can be your full self at work, but embracing diversity and difference is vital to delivering a client experience that sets us apart."

"I don't think too many firms would give a new junior associate the opportunity and budget to run a group like Spectrum, but we achieved some amazing results with the support and guidance of Adrian Beasley, the sponsoring partner at the time.

"Leading Spectrum was a privilege and gave me the chance to grow my profile internally and grow my relationship with BNP Paribas, who we teamed up with to host Pride in London events for three consecutive years.

"This included organizing a float in the London parade and a ballet breakfast choreographed especially for the event.

"It was a brilliant opportunity to prove that Spectrum is not just good for our own people and the Firm's reputation; it's also good for business and a lot of fun. I've been really pleased since I left London to see other people continuing to grow and develop Spectrum and organizing brilliant events like drag bingo and other fun activities."

Since moving to Hong Kong, Nate has been involved in setting up the APAC Spectrum network.

He says: "We have fewer members here by nature of the office sizes, but we're working hard to raise our profile.

"We've hosted a panel discussion with Deutsche Bank on marriage equality in the region and we're continuing the theme of linking up with our people and our client base.

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