

Bracewell Adds Former Starwood Energy Insider In New York

By Elise Hansen

Law360 (May 7, 2020, 5:23 PM EDT) -- Bracewell LLP nabbed a former general counsel at Starwood Energy Group for its energy and power practice in New York.

Martha Kammoun has advised domestic and international private equity firms and financial institutions on a range of transactions, particularly concerning energy and infrastructure investments, the firm announced last month. Most recently, Kammoun spent almost five years at private equity investor Starwood Energy Group Global LLC, where she rose from deputy general counsel to co-general counsel.



Martha Kammoun

"I'm at a stage in my career where I have a unique perspective to offer," she said, adding that her in-house experience gave her "the opportunity to be so close to the industry and be so close to clients and understand what's important to them and what's not."

Bracewell, in particular, was attractive because of its focus on serving the energy industry, Kammoun said.

"It's an energy firm, which is something that, as someone who has worked in the industry, I've come to value a lot," she said. "You want people who get it."

While at Starwood, she helped advise firms on mergers and acquisitions as well as obtaining the financing for deals, two skills she compared to being "ambidextrous."

Prior to going in-house at Starwood, Kammoun worked at O'Melveny & Myers LLP and Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP in New York and Abousleiman & Partners Law Offices in Beirut. She earned her LL.M. at Harvard Law School and her LL.B. from Lebanon's Université Saint-Joseph. She also has a master's degree in energy management from ESCP Business School in Europe.

"Martha's background is a perfect fit," G. Alan Rafte, chair of Bracewell's business and regulatory section, said in a statement. "Her in-house experience at a private equity firm that invests in energy infrastructure complements our existing platform and allows us to expand in other areas across the energy value chain."

She joins the firm at a time when much of the energy industry is reeling from the coronavirus pandemic and the drop in oil prices. But she said private equity firms may be uniquely positioned to navigate the turbulence.

"Energy has been hit with a perfect storm," she said. "Private equity, I think, is well-positioned to take advantage of opportunities: It has the dry powder, it has the expertise, and [private equity firms] are nimble — they're able to move very quickly."

Looking ahead, Kammoun says she's keen to explore the latest developments in carbon capture, including new technologies and the major players in the space.

Kammoun is the latest of several lateral partners to join Bracewell in recent months, including a renewable energy partner in New York and a pair of intellectual property partners, who rejoined the firm's office in Austin, Texas, after stints at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP.

"I'm very excited at this opportunity," Kammoun said. "I've been thrilled with the welcome."

--Additional reporting by Michelle Cassidy and Keith Goldberg. Editing by Steven Edelstone.