

## Star Litigators Launch Selendy & Gay With Quinn Emanuel Expats

The new firm boasts a roster of top-flight litigation specialists based in New York.

By Scott Flaherty  
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Top litigators Philippe Selendy and Faith Gay formally launched a new law firm, Thursday—nearly a month after Quinn Emanuel Urquhart & Sullivan announced their departure.

Joining Selendy and Gay at the new firm are eight other partners from Quinn Emanuel.

In an interview with *The American Lawyer*, the two partners said the firm, Selendy & Gay, will focus on litigation and investigations work and do a mix of plaintiffs and defense side matters.

“Our goal is to have a firm that’s capable of doing everything [within the realm of] litigations and investigations,” Selendy said.

The firm is starting with 10 partners and intends to have about 30 associates on staff within the next several months, he said. They will all be based in New York, at 1290 Avenue of the Americas, in an office space that can accommodate about 70 partners and associates. Selendy said he expects the new firm will grow “in a very disciplined fashion” and that it might eventually have enough lawyers to fill the office space in New York.

The well-known litigator said he and others decided to make the move because they wanted “complete autonomy” to rethink the traditional law firm model, including how clients are served and how best to develop a new generation of talented lawyers.

Gay, also a prominent litigator, added that the move to a smaller platform would allow her and the



Boutique litigation firm Selendy & Gay launched Feb. 15, 2018.

others to avoid client conflicts while also working in a way that’s “absolutely service oriented, absolutely collaborative.” She said the intention is to align the firm’s interests with clients’ on everything from fee structures to their business goals.

“We can be focused on excellence and industry depth,” she said.

The new firm’s founders left leadership roles behind at Quinn Emanuel in order to start their firm. Selendy previously headed Quinn Emanuel’s securities and structured finance group, while Gay, a former federal prosecutor in Brooklyn, New York, was co-chair of Quinn Emanuel’s nationwide trial practice.

Another of Selendy & Gay’s new partners, David Elsberg, also had a leadership position at Quinn

Emanuel as co-chair of the firm's investment fund and fund adviser litigation practice.

Selendy was selected by *The American Lawyer* as a Litigator of the Year in 2015, due in large part to his work on litigation against many of the world's largest banks over their dealings in mortgage-backed securities in the run-up to the global financial crisis. In a series of cases, Selendy served as lead outside counsel for the Federal Housing Finance Agency, which alleged that financial institutions' sales of shoddy mortgage-backed securities caused massive losses to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Banks agreed to pay more than \$25 billion to the FHFA as a result of the litigation campaign.

Gay, meanwhile, has represented top name companies including Coca-Cola Co., Colgate-Palmolive Co., and Morgan Stanley. Her civil litigation work has focused on antitrust, securities, complex financing disputes, and consumer class actions. She was also part of a Quinn Emanuel team that represented former New York Gov. David Paterson in successfully beating a constitutional challenge to his mid-term appointment of Richard Ravitch as lieutenant governor.

Along with Selendy, Gay and Elsberg, the new firm's original partners include Jennifer Selendy, who is also Philippe Selendy's wife, and Andrew Dunlap. They will be joined by Christine Chung, Maria Ginzburg, Sean Baldwin, Jordan Goldstein and Yelena Konanova. All 10 practiced most recently at Quinn Emanuel. Elsberg and Jennifer Selendy will serve as Selendy & Gay's managing partners, while Dunlap will head recruiting and associate development, and Chung, a former federal prosecutor and senior trial attorney at the International Criminal Court, will serve as general counsel.

"The 10 of us are at the top of our game. We've had a series of successes ... and we expect to continue to have interesting, impactful work," said Selendy. "It's a rare thing for 10 partners of this stature to come together, and we feel there's a space for this."

Both Selendy and Gay described their departure

from Quinn Emanuel in positive terms, saying they hold their former firm in the highest regard and expect to work alongside lawyers there in the future in co-counsel arrangements.

"It really has everything to do with wanting to be masters of our own fate," said Gay. "It's us wanting to create a new kind of law firm, nothing about any displeasure."

Selendy and Gay also said they'll be bringing most of their clients with them, adding that the client roster is international in scope.

"We've been very gratified by the response from the overwhelming majority of our clients who want to come with us, Selendy said.

Quinn Emanuel announced their impending departure in January, while Gay, Selendy and the others mostly avoided talking to the press. Gay explained that the near-silence ahead of the new firm's launch stemmed from a desire to respect Quinn Emanuel and to follow, "to the letter," their partnership agreements there.

In the January statement announcing the departures, managing partner John Quinn and New York managing partner Peter Calamari both characterized the development as a testament to the strength of talent at Quinn Emanuel. Quinn added that he did not believe the departures would have any significant effect on his firm's business.

"Our firm has never been stronger and has never had a deeper bench of veteran and next-generation talent. We, of course, respect our valued colleagues' decision to take their practice to a smaller platform, but we do not expect these departures to have any significant impact on our practice or our revenue," Quinn said.

**Scott Flaherty**, based in New York, covers the business of law with a focus on legal ethics, lawyer misconduct, conflicts-of-interest and litigation involving law firms. He can be reached at [sflaherty@alm.com](mailto:sflaherty@alm.com). On Twitter: [@sflaherty18](https://twitter.com/sflaherty18)