

DONALD COOLEY

ASSOCIATE

LATHAM & WATKINS LLP

Donald Cooley is a senior associate in the Washington, D.C. office of Latham & Watkins LLP and a member of the Finance Department. His practice focuses on representing sponsors and borrowers in secured lending and other financing transactions, including fund finance, acquisition financings, cash flow and asset-based loans. Mr. Cooley specializes in fund-level subscription lines of credit, having worked on over 15 subscription facilities in 2020 alone. Mr. Cooley is well versed in all aspects of the fund finance market having worked for both private equity and private debt funds. He has extensive experience ranging from multi-billion umbrella facilities to bespoke facilities for separately managed accounts and small first time funds.

Mr. Cooley obtained his JD from New York University School of Law and his BA in Political Science and Philosophy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mr. Cooley is a member of several affinity groups at Latham & Watkins LLP and currently serves as one of the Global Chairs of the First Generation Professionals Affinity Group.



Donald has been working in Fund Finance for four years.

WHAT STARTED YOUR CAREER IN FUND FINANCE?

I began my legal career working in New York and when I first moved to DC and began working at Latham, I had no experience with fund finance. Shortly after I arrived, my practice group was working on a number of fund line transactions, and I was staffed on two or three deals. Up until that point I had primarily worked on acquisition financings, but working on the subscription lines of credit I quickly realized that I was drawn to this particular line of work. I really liked how each deal was unique and required me to understand complex fund structures and the underlying business interests in creating such facilities. Once I was up and running on those initial subscription facilities I never looked back, and have maintained an active fund line practice ever since.

HOW HAVE YOU CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHERS?

I thoroughly enjoy mentoring junior associates. Practicing as a transactional lawyer - especially in the finance world - isn't something that law school readily prepares law students for and I remember quite well the feeling of confusion when I first started practicing. I make it very clear to junior associates that my door (now virtual) is always open and I thoroughly enjoy teaching them about subscription lines of credit.

Aside from mentoring associates within my firm, I also serve as a mentor to a number of law students. I regularly participate on panels discussing my career and tips for success. When I was in law school there were so many people who opened doors for me and I've made it a guiding principle of mine to "pay it forward" whenever possible.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

While at Latham I had the privilege to serve on the Pro Bono Committee for two years, which allowed me to work with a number of my colleagues to oversee all of the pro bono projects that came through the DC office. My pro bono practice largely consists of representing transgender individuals in navigating the name-change and gender-identity marker change process and assisting non-profit organizations with a host of corporate governance issues. I've also been an active member of the firm's Black Lawyers Group and LGBTQ Lawyers Group for many years.

Outside of Latham I serve on the board of directors for a non-profit called Strength In Our Voices, which operates in DC-area schools in the areas of suicide prevention and mental wellness. Recently, I have joined the Fund Finance Association Diversity Committee and look forward to working with my fellow committee members on initiatives to increase diversity within the fund finance industry.

JUST FOR FUN:

WHO AND/OR WHAT SHAPED YOU?

My father. He was a man who expected the absolute best from me but was also my biggest cheerleader.

WHAT WAS YOUR DREAM JOB WHEN YOU WERE 5?

For almost all of my childhood (and leading up to my first year of undergrad) I wanted to be a physician.

IF YOU COULD ONLY EAT ONE FOOD FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Sushi, definitely sushi.

