

Wigdor Bolsters Its Ranks With Trio Of Employment Pros

By **Amanda Ottaway**

Law360 (June 9, 2023, 4:10 PM EDT) -- Plaintiff-side employment firm Wigdor LLP has added new partners this month from Sanford Heisler Sharp LLP and Phillips & Associates, on the heels of picking up an of counsel from Valli Kane & Vagnini.

Marjorie Mesidor, from Phillips, and Meredith Firetog, from Sanford, started this week as partners at Wigdor, while Monica Hincken clocked in for the firm as of counsel in April. The trio will be based in the New York office, according to a spokesperson for the firm.

"All three of them come with substantial plaintiff-side employment experience. And anytime you can find someone of that caliber, within that training and experience — let alone three people — it's a huge win for our firm and for our clients," said founding partner Doug Wigdor in a phone interview Friday.

Mesidor was at Phillips from September 2011 until June 2023, ending her tenure there as managing partner. Prior to that she served as chief counsel at Project Hope: The New Direction, Inc., and as an associate at The Law Offices of Frederick K. Brewington.

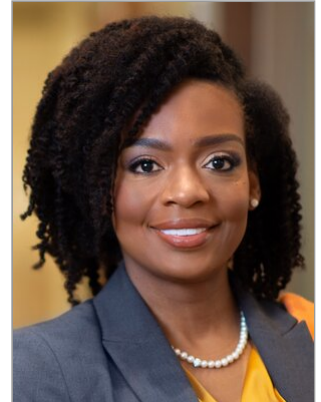
"I came to Wigdor because at this point in my career, I really wanted more. I always regarded Wigdor as really the gold standard in the employment field. There are no shortage of titans here who have done phenomenal things, including the very case law that a lot of us in this field rely on," she said, adding that it "was not an opportunity that I could pass up."

Mesidor said she has netted \$50 million for her clients in private settlements and awards. She has represented executives, celebrity staff members, and members of the Black elite in private settlements.

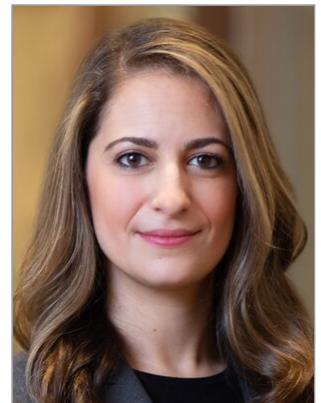
She represented the plaintiff in Johnson v. Strive East Harlem Employment Group et al., a case of first impression in which damages her client, a Black woman, won a discrimination suit over her Black boss' calling her the N-word.

"I think there's a platform at our firm where she can be recognized as one of the top plaintiffs employment lawyers in the country at some point," Wigdor said of Mesidor. "I think that's true with all three of them, by the way."

Firetog was named partner at Sanford Heisler Sharp in January 2023, she said, after having started there as an associate in 2018. Before Sanford, she was an associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP, and clerked for U.S. District Judge Gregory Woods in the Southern District of New York.



Marjorie Mesidor



Meredith Firetog



Monica Hincken

Wigdor's reputation lured her in, Firetog said. The firm has a reputation of "litigating those cases and pushing those cases through the courts in intelligent and creative ways, in a way that is necessary for this kind of advocacy, where it's often an uphill battle. Wigdor's willing to go all the way, and that is the kind of lawyer I want to be for my clients."

Firetog said that while most of her big wins are confidential, she has represented many fellow lawyers in discrimination suits against big-name firms as well as C-suite executives, and also tackled discrimination on college campuses under Title IX.

Hincken meanwhile served as an associate-turned-senior-associate at Valli Kane & Vagnini from June 2015 until April 2023. She said she's always looked to Wigdor as doing "exceptional" work.

"Their written product alone is exceptional, and something that I always kept track of and reviewed for my own purposes to become a better attorney. So I definitely was really excited to join," she said.

Hincken was part of the trial team that **helped snag a March 2023, \$25 million jury verdict** for a female former executive at Omni Hotels who claimed she was paid less than her male counterparts.

She also helped represent two former students of James Franco's film school who filed a putative class action alleging the school sexually exploited its students. In June 2021, Franco and his studio partners **agreed to shell out** over \$2.2 million to end the case.

Mesidor holds a bachelor's degree from Franklin University in Switzerland and a law degree from Touro University's Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center. Firetog completed her undergraduate studies at Swarthmore College, then earned a master's degree from the University of Oxford and a law degree at Stanford University. Hincken holds a bachelor's degree from Syracuse University and received her law degree from St. John's University.

Wigdor LLP has 15 lawyers and two law clerks in its New York office, according to a spokesperson.

--Editing by Amy Rowe.