

Rising Star: Covington & Burling's Scott Freling

By Jimmy Hoover

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Covington & Burling LLP's Scott Freling has climbed from a young general litigation associate to one of today's go-to experts in the mergers and acquisitions regulatory space for civilian and defense contractors, earning him a partnership at the firm and a spot among Law360's 2015 Rising Stars for government contract attorneys.

With a broad base of years performing investigations work and other matters, the 34-year-old **Rising Star** has now staked out a position in the deals corner of Covington's government contracts practice group by helping contractors navigate what he calls "the maze of regulations" that apply to buyers and sellers who work with the federal government as they undergo major transactions.

One such deal was Pacific Architects and Engineers' \$175 million acquisition of the Applied Technology Division of Computer Sciences Corp. in 2013, where the South Florida native led a group of about a dozen lawyers from more than five regulatory practices to help the company and private equity owner Lindsay Goldberg identify areas of legal risk and ink a deal.

"When a transaction goes very well, I'm behind the scenes advising and issue spotting. ... My practice is focused on helping a client go in eyes wide open," Freling said on the unique challenges of advising government contractors during large deals.

Although one of his preferred areas, mergers and acquisitions are just one ingot in the complex machine that is Freling's government contract work.

During his time as a law clerk for Judge Susan G. Braden of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, where he often jokes he first learned what a government contract was, Freling familiarized himself with the litigation sphere of the practice area. That training appears to have served him well during his successful defense of 2020 Company LLC's \$98 million National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration satellite contract award that others had challenged in federal district court and other forums.



Scott Freling

Freling, who made partner at the firm in October 2014, also serves as an outside general counsel to 2020 parent company, Acentia, helping it, with his Covington legal team, handle unexpected regulatory issues as they crop up during the course of its operations.

“He’s a very thoughtful, deliberative person no matter the issue; he gathers the facts and presents very clear, different options and paths to go forward on,” Acentia CEO Todd Stottlemeyer said about Freling. “He’s really just a great adviser in addition to being an excellent lawyer.”

Freling’s work in the security realm has also taken him outside the often beltway-centered defense industry and into the sports arena. In preparation of last year’s Super Bowl, for instance, Freling helped the National Football League and the Arizona Sports & Tourism Authority obtain a SAFETY Act designation and certification for security purposes at the University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, which hosted the game.

On that work, Freling said, “I like the homeland security focus. I like the fact that that work is being done to protect and advance security.”

In addition to assisting large corporate entities, Freling, who received his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 2005, has leveraged his government know-how in pro bono services to a World War II veteran seeking compensation for service-related injuries at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veteran Claims and the Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

Freling has also extended his pro bono work to the Washington Humane Society, representing the organization with matters related to its animal control contract with the District of Columbia government.

To young lawyers, the Rising Star’s advice is to figure out what makes you tick.

“Make sure you enjoy the subject matter that you’ve chosen and you can get passionate about it,” Freling said.

--Editing by Christine Chun.