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Phone: +1 646 783 7100 | Fax: +1 646 783 7161 | customerservice@law360.com

Lead Surfside Litigator Joins Florida Firm As Name Partner

By **Jack Rodgers**

Law360 (March 13, 2023, 3:09 PM EDT) -- A Grossman Roth Yaffa Cohen partner who recently helped secure a more than billion-dollar settlement as co-lead counsel in litigation over the Champlain Tower South condominium collapse in Florida has joined Maderal Byrne PLLC as a name partner.

Rachel Furst joined Maderal Byrne, which will now be known as Maderal Byrne & Furst PLLC, after nearly a decade with Grossman Roth. Furst will continue her practice focused on complex injury, class action and mass tort litigation with the firm, according to a March 7 statement.

In her most recent role, Furst helped represent victims of the June 24, 2021, Champlain Towers South condominium collapse, which killed 98 in Surfside, Florida. Defendants in that litigation agreed to pay \$997 million in **proposed settlements** in May, less than a year after the disaster.

In an interview with Law360 Pulse on Monday, Furst explained that a second settlement finalized in August added a few defendants to the agreement, including the Champlain Condominium Association, its assets and the proceeds from the sale of the building. That bumped the settlement total to more than a billion dollars. That pool of funds has been almost entirely paid out to victims, Furst said.

"We live in a world where catastrophes happen, mass disasters happen," Furst said. "There will be another one, unfortunately. And I hope to continue the work I do, which is representing people who have been victims of tragedies like Surfside."

Furst reflected on her time as a commercial litigator for White & Case LLP, saying that making the transition from that role — where she represented businesses, largely in disputes over money — was in part motivated by her desire to be an advocate. Furst left that role for Grossman Roth in 2013, according to her LinkedIn profile.

"In making the shift to plaintiffs work approximately 10 years ago, I found out that I really enjoy being an advocate for families and individuals who have been wronged and who need my help," Furst said. "There is a much more personal connection in this type of work, for me. It makes it very gratifying."

A graduate of the University of Florida's Levin College of Law, Furst said both Frank Maderal and John Byrne, the firm's other name partners, were friends of hers, making the opportunity to lead



Rachel Furst

a "next-generation plaintiffs firm" all the more attractive.

Maderal and Furst were summer associates at the same Florida law firm, she said, and also clerked for Ursula Ungaro when she was a U.S. district judge for the Southern District of Florida, where the two lawyers briefly overlapped. According to Furst's LinkedIn profile, she spent the summer of 2006 as a Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP associate before her 2007 graduation.

"I spent nearly a decade at Grossman Roth learning from some of the best plaintiff lawyers in the country, and I'm grateful to my friends and my mentors there for their support," Furst said. "In making this move I felt it was time for me to begin a new chapter and to pursue the opportunity to take a leading role as a name partner in a firm, especially as a woman in this area of the law, where there are not a lot of us."

Furst said she'd continue focusing on a case that began during her time at Grossman Roth. That class action dispute involves Miami's parking tax, which Furst's clients say runs afoul of the state's constitution.

She'll also continue serving as liaison counsel in multidistrict litigation involving stock-trading app Robinhood, in which investors **accuse the platform** of blocking them from buying volatile stocks like GameStop in 2021.

In the statement, Maderal lauded Furst as a hardworking and brilliant attorney, "absolutely dedicated to her clients."

"John and I are thrilled Rachel is joining our firm; providing the highest-caliber representation and results is our brand, and she is the perfect addition," Maderal said.

--Additional reporting by Carolina Bolado and Nathan Hale. Editing by Karin Roberts.

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