

## Office Snapshot: Skadden Feels The 'Energy' In Houston Move

By Lynn LaRowe

*Law360 (March 26, 2026, 12:35 PM EDT)* -- After outgrowing its office of the past two decades — including nearly tripling its roster in just the last three years — the Houston team at Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP recently moved to a freshly designed space twice the size of its previous office.

"We were just busting at the seams," said Noelle Reed, who manages the Houston location. "So that was the primary driver, but we also wanted to provide our people with a real state-of-the-art space, with all the modern amenities, an office refresh."

Skadden's new home at Texas Tower as of last month is only five or six blocks from the firm's prior office in the downtown Wells Fargo building, but "it feels like we've moved to a new neighborhood entirely," Reed said. The location is the firm's sole office in the Lone Star State.

The firm has taken two floors with 52,000 square feet of space and built the office out "for the comfort of clients and ease of use."

"You can feel the energy people have in this new, bright space," Reed said.

As part of the expansion, the new location has more than doubled the number of attorney offices. There is room for all attorneys to have an office as well as offices for visiting attorneys or new hires, Reed said.

So it was surprising to Reed when the associates in Houston lobbied to keep a bullpen-type area for working that had been necessary in the former location because of space constraints.

"They like being in a single room, having kind of a collaborative space where people can choose to bring laptops and all work together," Reed said. "There are times when you need private space for privilege and confidentiality, but particularly for young attorneys, they learn so much just by talking and hearing. There's a lot of learning by osmosis."

Reed said the inclusion of a collaborative work area "increases interaction, and that's a benefit to everyone."



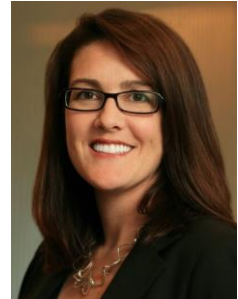
Skadden's newly designed space in downtown Houston is outfitted with the latest technology and offers expansive views of the city. (Courtesy of Skadden)

## The Leader

A former federal prosecutor who now handles a wide range of litigation matters, Reed has practiced with Skadden for two decades, the entirety of her private practice experience.

Reed began her legal career in government service with a yearlong judicial clerkship at the Second Circuit in New York followed by a combined more than six years with the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas.

"I started in the Department of Justice in D.C., working in terrorism and violent crime, and then I went to Richmond, Virginia, where I did gun prosecutions," Reed said. "Then I moved to Laredo, Texas, and did organized crime and drug enforcement before I went to Houston and did terrorism."



Noelle Reed

Reed said it was "serendipity" that led her to cross paths with a recruiter who persuaded her to have lunch with Charles Schwartz, the first litigation partner the firm had hired for its Houston office after planting a flag in the city in 1993.

"I wasn't looking to move, I loved my job, but in about an hour, Charles completely sold me on the challenge of switching to civil practice, and really, on the people and the culture of Skadden," Reed said. "Within a couple of years, litigators were half the office."

Reed handles commercial litigation matters that are headed for trial and a "fair percentage of securities litigation," which is the work Schwartz, her mentor, did before he retired.

## The Location

Texas Tower is a 47-floor building in the 800 block of Texas Avenue. It offers plenty of dining options, a fitness center, lots of other amenities and is adjacent to a green space.

Reed said the staff is enjoying the office's proximity to the city's theater district, a newly developing area "in terms of restaurants and food options," and the access to Houston's underground tunnel system.

From the new office, staff can gaze out of windows onto downtown, take in the city view from a private outdoor terrace or contemplate the firm's art collection, Reed said.

"People really enjoy the option of being able to step outside for lunch or just for a few minutes to take a break and sit in the sun for a moment," Reed said. "We have all new furniture, state-of-the-art tech, a lounge space for attorneys and a beautiful hub for dining, catering and entertaining."

Reed said her favorite part of the new space is the welcoming lobby.

"It's so light and bright," Reed said. "I could go the back way to get to my office, but I choose to walk through reception every day just to enjoy the space."

Reed said a committee worked on the design and selected art that "suits our personality as a firm."

Reed said that one of her favorite pieces of art selected for the new office is a piece that resembles a

geode, or a piece of rock with minerals or crystals inside, that hangs on the wall in the reception area.

"It's made out of junk mail, which is a nod to innovation. That is one of our core values."

## The Team

### **84 total employees**

12 partners

2 counsel

35 associates

35 nonlawyer staff

## The Work

Reed said the Houston office began as an energy-focused practice when it was launched more than 20 years ago but has grown to include much more.

The office handles work from clients in the energy, financial and petrochemical industries, including commercial and corporate transactions, and all types of litigation and investigations, Reed said.

The energy and infrastructure projects practice focuses on power plants, chemical plants, pipelines, liquefied natural gas facilities, energy commodity sales and upstream oil and gas investments, the firm said. Attorneys in the Houston office work on developing, financing, buying and selling projects located in the U.S. and abroad.

The project finance team in Houston represents utilities, developers, investors, contractors, operators, investment banks and financial institutions that are active in the energy and equity markets, the firm said.

Attorneys in the corporate group focus on mergers and acquisitions, private equity, public and private securities offerings, and corporate governance and compliance matters.

"We've also developed strong practices in tax, both tax controversy and advising," Reed said. "We've got executive comp and benefits, we've got capital markets."

Reed said the firm's client base is "familiar with our worldwide footprint and what we offer through all our other offices as well."

"We have quite a few partners who co-locate, who are resident in other offices and in Houston," Reed said. "Having space to accommodate them when they're here temporarily is great."

## Comings and Goings

Reed said the office's growth has come from lateral hires, associate recruitment and from within, as lawyers who previously practiced in other offices but who have Texas roots "raised their hands and were



Skadden's newly designed space in downtown Houston is outfitted with the latest technology and offers expansive views of the city. (Courtesy of Skadden)

excited to come down here."

One of those office transfers is Sean Shimamoto, head of the Houston tax group. Shimamoto previously practiced in the firm's Palo Alto office. Raquel Fox, head of the firm's U.S. environmental, social and governance practice and co-head of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission reporting and compliance practice, shares her time between Washington, D.C., and Houston, Reed said.

Last year in June, the Houston office grew with the additions of mergers and acquisitions partners Mingda Zhao and Emery Choi. In early 2025, Stephen Gill, a mergers and acquisitions and capital markets partner, came aboard in Houston.

"I'm confident our energy and infrastructure and mergers and acquisitions practices will continue to grow," Reed said. "Similarly, litigation. We have plenty of room in terms of serving our client base here and across the country with matters in the Texas region."

Reed noted energy litigation partner Michelle Scheffler, who came aboard in Houston in 2024.

"She is not only additive to our litigation practice but is a tremendous asset to the M&A and infrastructure practice," Reed said.

Reed said she expects the tax practice to continue growing, "because it's so much in demand it's hard for me to imagine that won't happen."

"We're always looking for the best talent," Reed said. "I think the new office is a real attraction for that."

--Editing by Haylee Pearl.