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Foster Garvey Welcomes Accomplished Alcoholic Beverage Team

02.12.25 Foster Garvey Newsroom

Foster Garvey announced today the addition of principals [Susan M. Johnson](#) and [Claire Mitchell](#), associate [Max Fujii](#) and paralegal [Nealy Evans](#), who join the firm's [Commercial & IP Transactions](#) practice from Stoel Rives LLP. The former Stoel Rives team joins forces with Foster Garvey's nationally recognized liquor and cannabis team, led by [Emily Harris Gant](#).

“Welcoming Susan, Claire, Max and Nealy to Foster Garvey is an exciting new chapter for our work in the alcoholic beverage industry,” said Emily Harris Gant, Chair of the Commercial & IP practice. “They each bring complementary strengths and industry knowledge that immediately expand our ability to serve clients in complex transactions, legislative advocacy and regulatory compliance. This is a meaningful step forward in reinforcing our leadership in this space.”

Susan has spent more than two decades supporting breweries, wineries, distilleries, restaurant and hotel chains and other industry stakeholders on licensing structures, distribution agreements and policy matters. She represents clients in regulatory proceedings and works closely with government agencies on legislative initiatives affecting alcohol laws. She is licensed to practice in Washington and is nationally ranked in *Chambers USA*.

Claire represents a diverse range of clients, including national grocery chains, e-commerce retailers, alcohol brand owners and entertainment venues. Her work centers on complex state and federal liquor licensing matters, promotional advertising regulations, tied house issues, sponsorship agreements and other alcohol industry transactional matters. She is frequently sought out for her ability to resolve difficult compliance issues and to collaborate with regulators on securing mission critical and often time sensitive regulatory approvals. Claire serves on the Board of Directors of the Washington Wine Industry Foundation where she works in concert with other industry professionals to support the continued success of winemakers and vineyards in the state. She is licensed to practice in Washington, Oregon and New York and is nationally ranked in *Chambers USA*.

Born and raised in California wine country, Max is a rising star in the beverage and hospitality space. He advises breweries, wineries, distilleries and retailers on federal and state liquor licensing, compliance and corporate transactions. He assists clients with permitting, tied house compliance, direct-to-consumer shipping and distributor franchise matters. Max also supports retail expansions, winery acquisitions and operational plans for sports and entertainment venues. He is licensed to practice in California.

Nealy has more than 20 years of experience supporting attorneys and clients in the beverage and hospitality industries. She plays an instrumental role in coordinating regulatory federal, state and local filings and steers clients around compliance pitfalls. Her extensive experience with managing multistate license portfolios for alcohol suppliers and hospitality businesses, including restaurants, hotels, cruise lines, resorts and entertainment venues, is in high demand by companies of all sizes, from large, publicly traded companies to small privately owned businesses.

"This is a move that just made sense," said Claire Mitchell. "Uniting with Foster Garvey's exceptional regulatory and licensing team in conjunction with the firm's multidisciplinary platform provides an opportunity to deepen our bench and bring our collective knowledge and experience together to best serve the needs of our clients. We are absolutely thrilled to be here!"

Foster Garvey PC, a preeminent law firm with offices on both coasts, offers an extended national and international reach to serve many influential and innovative companies, government entities and individuals across a full spectrum of legal services. The firm's attorneys are consistently recognized for their deep industry knowledge and superior client service by prominent legal industry publications, including Best Lawyers in America®, Chambers USA, Chambers Global and "Best Law Firms." In addition to providing efficient and effective counsel, Foster Garvey upholds a strong commitment to community service, pro bono representation, diversity and inclusion efforts and a collegial and equitable work environment. The firm has offices in [Seattle](#), [Portland](#), [Washington, D.C.](#), [New York](#), [Spokane](#) and [Tulsa](#).

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