

## MVP: Latham & Watkins' Stephen Wink

By Philip Rosenstein

*Law360 (December 18, 2019, 4:04 PM EST)* -- Latham & Watkins LLP partner Stephen Wink played a leading role in advising four prospective founding members of the high-profile Libra Association and worked on the development of the GoodDollar Experiment aimed at addressing income inequality through the use of digital tokens, making him one of Law360's 2019 Fintech MVPs.

### ***HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE YEAR:***

In addition to having to navigate a host of companies through the regulatory issues associated with the Facebook-backed Libra project in 2019, Wink played a leading role in the Latham & Watkins team advising digital asset brokerage company eToro.

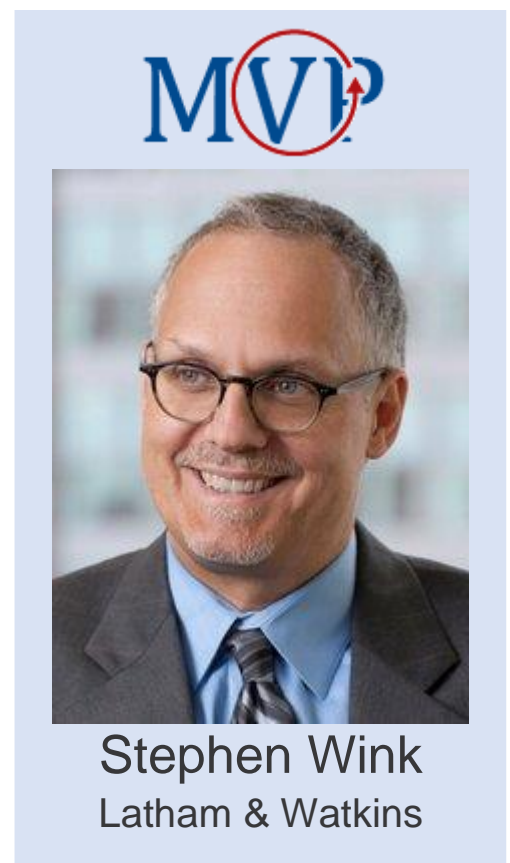
He worked on its GoodDollar Experiment, describing the pro bono effort as a "particularly fascinating project" aimed at addressing issues around income inequality across the globe. The experiment looks to distribute the GoodDollar tokens and would resemble a universal income scheme.

The interesting questions Wink and his team had to deal with stem from the particularly intricate regulatory framework governing digital assets in the United States.

"In the U.S., there are a ton of issues with any of these sorts of payments tokens that raise questions ranging from securities law issues to money transmitter issues and even commodity law issues," Wink said. "Those are the sorts of questions that we've been wrestling with."

Wink also pointed to his work helping blockchain company [ConsenSys](#) develop their convertible note generator as a significant accomplishment of the year. The ConsenSys convertible note supports startups looking to raise capital in a customizable way while also adhering to the complex web of securities laws.

The project has "been something very exciting for us," he said.



The convertible note generator, which is free to use, hopes to address issues that have been identified with the SAFT contract, or simple agreement for future tokens, Wink said. He added that he hopes the "tool finds broad acceptance in the marketplace."

#### **WHY HE IS A FINTECH ATTORNEY:**

Wink said that his previous experience in securities law working as general counsel for a broker-dealer progressively brought him into the fintech space. Working on projects related to online trading and other technology in the securities space meant that his "practice just organically moved in the direction of fintech," he said.

He added that "up to now, I've always sort of been a tech geek. I just enjoy that kind of work."

When four or five years back clients began coming to speak with Wink about how to trade digital assets including bitcoin, he found it a "fascinating experience to rethink all the old securities laws in this new context."

"I really enjoy helping founders and business people structure their business around the existing regulatory scheme," he said. "It's like renovating an old building in the sense that you have to work around the existing structure, and as a result you can come up with unexpectedly interesting things and the regulation ends up creating opportunity for innovation and creativity."

#### **HIS ADVICE FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:**

Given the ever-changing nature of the law and especially where it intersects with technology and finance, Wink admits that no one is fully prepared for what the future holds in the space, but says "it will be fascinating to see how it develops."

Wink said he absolutely recommends that junior attorneys looking for an area to focus on consider fintech, but says that regardless of what a recent law school grad focuses on, it's important to "find a subject matter that they are intrigued by."

Fintech will continue to be central to much of the financial industry, given that much of it is technology-driven, Wink said.

"If you are somebody that digs deep into a niche, it's not long before you are considered an expert in that particular area," Wink said.

— *As told to Philip Rosenstein*

*Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2019 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 900 submissions.*