



MICHAEL S. STEIN

Chair & Managing Partner

Pashman Stein Walder Hayden P. C.

Michael S. Stein has built a 35-year legal career founded on the principle that law firms have a responsibility to advance public interest alongside profitability. In 1995, he co-founded Pashman Stein, which has since grown to 85 attorneys under his collaborative leadership style. The firm was named 2023 Law Firm of the Year by the New Jersey Law Journal, largely because of its pro bono work.

“From my perspective, the award, which in and of itself led to substantial paying work, offers tangible evidence that a law firm can shoulder the burden of advancing important public interest initiatives in a way that aligns with its business interests in generating profit,” Stein said.

His notable accomplishments include establishing the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center in 2019, named after his father, a retired New Jersey Supreme Court Justice. The center has contributed over 20,000 pro bono hours in five years, addressing issues such as police transparency, civil rights, and criminal justice.

Stein’s leadership philosophy rejects hierarchy in favor of seeking diverse perspectives. He prioritizes firm culture, implementing work-life balance policies and flexible options comparable to large international firms.

A 1989 Rutgers Law School graduate, Stein left a lucrative investment banking career to pursue more meaningful work. His firm serves as New Jersey’s sole representative in Interlaw, connecting the state to a network of 8,000 lawyers across 150 global cities.