

InsiderNJ Pashman Stein Walder Hayden Announces Launch of Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center

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Pashman Stein Walder Hayden is pleased to announce the launch of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden (Stein Public Interest Center). The Stein Public Interest Center will focus on impact litigation and appellate advocacy that advances social, racial, and economic justice, protects civil liberties and constitutional rights, and promotes an open and transparent government.

The Stein Public Interest Center is named after retired New Jersey Supreme Court Justice Gary S. Stein in recognition of his distinguished career of dedicated public service and contributions to the legal profession. During his remarkable 17-year tenure on the New Jersey Supreme Court, Justice Stein helped shape the law for generations to come. As special counsel to Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, Justice Stein is on the forefront of significant public interest issues and lawsuits, such as the pending effort to desegregate the State's public schools.

"I am deeply honored to be associated personally and by name with the Stein Public Interest Center, and I appreciate the work of my colleagues and the many partner organizations involved in our previous and current legal work," said Justice Stein. "I deeply believe in the power that impact litigation and effective appellate advocacy has to effect social change and raise awareness of inequality and discrimination. Public interest litigation seeks to directly remedy the wrongs imposed on disenfranchised individuals and groups, but also aims to clarify the intent and scope of our civil rights law through advocacy. I am proud that this law firm is prepared to assume a leadership role in that effort."

“My father has devoted much of his professional career to public service and he has always believed that as lawyers we have a heightened responsibility to use our resources to serve the public good. It is with tremendous pride that the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center honors my father’s legacy and will continue his work in promoting and advancing justice,” said Michael S. Stein, Managing Partner of Pashman Stein Walder Hayden. “The Stein Public Interest Center also reflects our firm’s long-standing commitment to lean in, and to leave an imprint on the public issues of our time. The Stein Public Interest Center is, in fact, the embodiment of that principle.”

Pashman Stein Walder Hayden partner CJ Griffin will serve as Director of the Stein Public Interest Center. Over the course of several years, Griffin built a reputation as of one of the leading Open Public Records Act litigators and has argued before the New Jersey Supreme Court numerous times on a variety of important public interest issues such as police transparency, First Amendment, and criminal justice issues. Under Griffin’s leadership, attorneys from Pashman Stein Walder Hayden will work through the Stein Public Interest Center to shape the law in areas affecting the public interest. To help staff the Stein Public Interest Center’s legal work, Pashman Stein Walder Hayden passed a pro bono policy that supports its attorneys in providing pro bono legal services.

“I am so honored that my colleagues have trusted me to run this Center and I hope the legal profession will immediately see the impact we have on shaping the law for the better,” said Griffin. “One of my immediate goals is for the Stein Public Interest Center to be involved in every New Jersey Supreme Court case that impacts the public interest, whether it is representing a litigant directly or filing an amicus brief for one of our many partner organizations.”

Added Michael S. Stein, “CJ tirelessly advocates for the protection of civil rights, earning landmark decisions that are shaping the law for the public’s right of access to government documents, meetings, and otherwise hidden or unavailable information. By leading the Stein Public Interest Center and partnering with advocacy groups on important social issues, CJ will continue to defend and advance constitutional rights and civil liberties and protect individuals and communities from discrimination and harassment.”