

IAG GLOBAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Claire Hughes, Senior Associate with UK Member Firm Aaron & Partners LLP, recounts her experience of the IAG Exchange Programme, May 2023

My Philly Citizenship by Claire Hughes, Aaron & Partners, UK

IAG Global Exchange between Aaron & Partners LLP (UK) and Miller Shah LLP (USA) - Spring 2023

In May 2023 I packed my bags, said goodbye to my family, double (and triple) checked my case files were up to date and flew across the Pond to Philadelphia, which was to be my temporary home for the next three weeks.

After a competitive application process, I was selected by Aaron & Partners to spend three-once-in-a-lifetime-weeks taking part in the IAG Global Exchange programme, with my hosts, litigation specialists Miller Shah LLP. Hoping to experience the US' work and life culture, widen my knowledge on the implementation of US law, explore Philadelphia and New York, and be a mascot for A&P on the international stage, I returned having had a completely unique personal and professional adventure.

It really would be impossible to recount this experience in all its true glory. From watching baseball's formidable Phillies from the best seats in the stand, running up the iconic Rocky steps, observing depositions, assisting on mediations, travelling to Miller Shah's New York office, having a local's tour around Williamsburg, attending Court, including a rare opportunity to see some of the most well-known US Judges hear Attorneys fight it out to have their state chosen to deal with specific class actions at the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation, being invited to sit in on strategy meetings, late evening discussions on the legal and social similarities between our jurisdictions, and the food, (the food, the food and coffee!), the grease poling festivities, to the most important aspect for me, the friendships I've forged with Alec, Sam and John of Miller Shah.

Feeling inspired and grateful to be part of a Firm who is an IAG Global member, enabling me to apply to participate with the exchange, this is a snap-shot of my experience and my top takeaways (personal and professional):

1. The opportunity to take part in the exchange sets A&P apart in the industry. There are not many competitor Firms who can offer me the opportunity to apply for a professional exchange, which lasts three weeks, a period that allowed me to embed with the Miller Shah team, have my own time to travel and explore, with no need to entirely uproot me from my general life, clients, files and responsibilities, unlike many of the secondment opportunities offered by competitor / larger practices.
2. I often work on commercial litigation matters with an international aspect, for example businesses in the UK with US owners or supply chains. This experience has expanded my personal knowledge of the workings of American culture in practice, in the legal industry and beyond, which I will take to enhance the service I provide to relevant clients.
3. Personal and professional opportunities have arisen as a direct result of the exchange. Being trusted to be a mascot for A&P at an IAG Global member firm has naturally resulted in becoming part of the Next Generation project. I have been able to travel, taking part in various Assemblies, meet and become friends with other IAG Global members, receive

referrals and refer clients to other members, as well as having more exposure to learn from and spend time with A&P's Partners from other departments, enhancing A&P's internal relationships.

4. The offer to take part in the exchange is an excellent tool for A&P to publicise, both in terms of recruitment in a competitive solicitor market and to clients for illustration of our international reach and relationships. From a personal perspective I've found it a fantastic talking point with colleagues and clients, who have been interested and eager to learn more about my experience.
5. The friendships forged during the exchange are ones I will never forget. The kindness shown to me by the whole Miller Shah team, ensuring I was welcomed and had everything I needed, and Jim's enthusiasm that I should get as much as possible from the experience. Alec, Sam and others taking whole weekends out to show me around their neighbourhoods, introducing me to family and friends.
6. Philadelphia is a hugely underrated "food-City", not to mention the roof top bars and the live music venues. The people are some of the friendliest I've come across. I'd go back in a flash and intend to, if not just for a La Colombe Americano.
7. The best and most authentic New York Cheese slice is found at Joe's, Brooklyn.

I depart the exchange as a more rounded lawyer, more knowledgeable, experienced, with strong ties to another firm, with a balanced benefit to A&P and myself. The IAG Global exchange is a truly unique opportunity, and has been my highlight of 2023.

