

# Member Spotlight

## Edward (“Ed”) T. Paulis III

**Vice President & Senior Assistant General Counsel**

*Zurich North America*

Schaumburg, Illinois

**Current position since:** 2 years (as Senior Assistant GC)

**Years in-house:** 11 years, all at Zurich

**Law School:** Hofstra Law School

**Business School:** Columbia Business School, MBA

**Undergrad:** Dickinson College, BA, with a major in Economics and a minor in Computer Science

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### **Best thing about my current job:**

I am fortunate to work with an incredibly smart and talented group of people, who push me to bring my best to the job.

### **Most challenging thing about my current job:**

The shift in mindset between outside and in-house work. Before joining Zurich, I was a commercial litigator with a law firm in New York City, representing a variety of businesses, though primarily banks and other financial institutions. Although I represented multiple clients, my practice was specialized within a range of legal issues. At the time, I did not and could not fathom the variety of issues which I would deal with moving in-house. Also, my experience is that in-house counsel work is done in a more collaborative and faster paced environment compared to our outside colleagues.

### **An example of an interesting project I was involved in as an in-house counsel was:**

when in 2010, I and nine of my Zurich colleagues from around the world were invited to participate in a workshop in Zurich, Switzerland, to brainstorm how to create an integrated, global and diversified legal team. Some of the ideas developed at the workshop, like knowledge

sharing and management, a lawyers' directory and profiles, best practice groups, and aligned performance measurements and training, are now embedded into our department's global practices.

### **My most pivotal career move was:**

the decision to leave Manhattan and my law firm practice and start a family in Maryland. The move resulted in a number of positive changes in my personal and professional life, and began my in-house career. In addition to my three beautiful kids, dog and house in the suburbs, I was able to leverage my experience and passion to take on a number of leadership positions in the community, including serving as a member of the standing Ethics Committee of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA), and chair of the Corporate and In-House Counsel Committee of the Business Law Section of the MSBA.

### **A recent volunteer or pro bono activity that I participated in was:**

Junior Achievement of Central Maryland, which provides elementary programs promoting smart academic and economic decisions for at-risk youth in the Baltimore metropolitan area. My service included mentoring school-age children, recruiting volunteers, organizing bowling-a-thon events and securing corporate funding. I ultimately served on the board of directors for six years until I left Maryland.

### **Advice I would give to new lawyers, in-house or otherwise:**

Read "Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... And Others Don't" by Jim Collins. Then, give some thought on how the flywheel effect and doom loop concepts can be reimaged and applied to your own personal and professional life.

### **Hardest life lesson I've learned is:**

Your kids aren't you. Unfortunately, I still struggle with this one.

### **I achieve work/life balance by:**

actively relying on lists and checklists. Over the past few years, I found that technology can be a useful tool in improving this process for me. For instance, I now use Microsoft OneNote for my note taking and 'to do' lists, rather than slips of paper. My wife and I also share mobile phone apps for things like budgeting and shopping lists.

## **Best thing about ACC's Chicago Chapter is:**

it is incredibly welcoming. Being new to Chicagoland, I was immediately encouraged by new connections and with the support I received from the local in-house community.

## **If I were not practicing law, I would probably be:**

cultivating a small vineyard and winery for a spell.

## **My favorite vacation spot is:**

Disney World in the offseason.

## **The place I've never been but would most like to visit:**

A tour of the Nordic countries in winter, including a stay at the ICEHOTEL in Sweden to see the aurora borealis.

## **My favorite quote is:**

This month, my favorite quote is by J.J. Watt: "Success isn't owned. It's leased, and rent is due every day."

## **My all-time favorite movie is:**

Although I am partial to romantic comedies, I have to go with "The Empire Strikes Back, Episode V." It answered the age old question: Why did the Jedi cross the road? To get to the dark side, of course.

## **People may be surprised to learn that I:**

sit on the board of First Eagle Federal Credit Union, a financial institution spanning four states, with assets approaching \$100 million and over 10,000 members. Before joining the board, I volunteered to assist in re-shaping the credit union's Supervisory Committee. After successfully completing this goal, I was asked to join the board. Since then, I was elected chairperson of the Board of Directors, a role I have served since 2016.