

Kirkland Corporate Duo Leaves for Latham

The new additions boost Latham's capabilities in Southern California and the Midwest, as well as Boston, the firm said.

By Andrew Maloney
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Amid one of the busiest periods for deal activity in recent memory, Latham & Watkins has snagged two corporate partners from competitor Kirkland & Ellis.

Latham on Monday said it brought on Tana Ryan, a partner in private equity and mergers and acquisitions in Los Angeles, as well as Elisabeth "Lisa" Martin, a partner in capital markets and public company representation in Chicago.

In an interview, corporate department chair Charles Ruck said he'd "be surprised" if the lawyers' clients didn't follow them to their new firm, but that the primary consideration for bringing them aboard wasn't their book of business, but their capabilities and cultural fit.

Latham noted that clients are increasingly looking for a "one-stop, globally integrated" firm for transactional advice. The new additions boost Latham's capabilities in Southern California and the Midwest, as well as Boston where Martin intends to expand her practice, Latham said.

Ryan has "led scores of complex transactions in a wide variety of industries," the firm noted. She has represented public and private companies, as well as private equity funds, and handled SPAC transactions, leveraged buyouts, recapitalizations and distressed acquisitions.

Martin represents companies and private equity firms in capital markets transactions, including initial public offerings, private placements and registered equity and debt offerings, among others. She advises companies on securities law, disclosure and corporate governance matters, as well.

Ruck said the additions come at a time when the firm was seeing high demand. Indeed, deal value reached \$1.3 trillion in the first quarter of 2021, representing a 94% increase year-over-year from the same period in 2020. Law firm leaders have said they've seen high activity in the second quarter too.

The key considerations when he evaluates law firm growth, Ruck said, are where the clients are and where they want their lawyers to be. For instance, he said he's "very bullish" on growth in Chicago, and there is demand for IPO expertise coming out of the life sciences industry in Boston, which Martin has experience with.

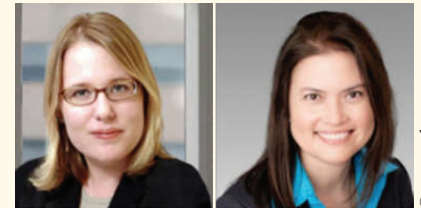
More broadly, Ruck said Latham has been conscientious about connecting with critical industries in each region, organizing around practices such as capital markets and M&A in London and Hong Kong, pharmaceuticals in China, and energy infrastructure in Malaysia, among others.

"We want for our global clients in each of those spaces to be able to build teams wherever they go. I do think that's something, in talking with both Tana and Lisa, that they found compelling," Ruck said. He added: "We spend a lot of time talking to clients, about where their priorities are and where they're investing, and try to be out ahead of them."

In statements, both Ryan and Martin praised Latham for having a collaborative and collegial culture.

Amid high deal activity, other firms are also tapping Kirkland partners for lateral additions. Holland & Knight said Monday that Ryan Jackson joined its Chicago office as a partner in its corporate, M&A and securities practice. He was formerly a partner with Kirkland, Holland said.

A Kirkland representative could not immediately be reached for comment on the departures.



(L-R) Tana Ryan and Elisabeth Martin, laterals joining Latham & Watkins from Kirkland & Ellis.

Courtesy photos