

MVP: Latham's Les Carnegie

By **Al Barbarino**

Law360 (October 5, 2021, 1:18 PM EDT) -- Les Carnegie, a Latham & Watkins LLP partner who co-leads groups focused on economic sanctions and national security, has successfully completed transactions and sanctions work for a diverse set of clients including Duolingo, Hyundai, Blackstone and Slack, landing him a spot as one of Law360's 2021 Compliance MVPs.

HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OVER THE PAST YEAR:

Carnegie worked with the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control and U.S. Department of State to undo restrictions that had barred U.S.-based language learning company Duolingo from offering its app and English proficiency test in Syria, a sanctioned country.

Carnegie ultimately secured what he said was a rare license allowing Duolingo to offer the services in Syria, after which the CEO and co-founder of Duolingo, Luis von Ahn, tweeted on Nov. 19 that "the decision from OFAC confirms our belief that education is an undeniable human right."

"With a humanitarian crisis in Syria, it was gratifying giving people more opportunities through learning languages and potentially finding opportunities elsewhere," Carnegie said.

OTHER NOTABLE CASES OR DEALS HE'S WORKED ON:

Carnegie led the Latham team that advised German medical technology company Siemens Healthineers AG to obtain national security clearance through the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States for the company's nearly \$16.4 billion merger with California-based cancer care company Varian Medical Systems.

The merger closed in April 2021. Carnegie also led the Latham team that advised Worldline, the European payment and transactional services company, on CFIUS clearance for its \$8.7 billion October merger with French digital payments company Ingenico Group SA, he noted.

"There's so many facets to the work," Carnegie said about the CFIUS clearance process, noting that it



involves elements of negotiation and transactional law and requires an ability to respond to interrogatory-style questions from authorities.

Carnegie also advised Hyundai Motor Company and Kia Corporation on its CFIUS clearance, announced in May, connected to their investments in IonQ, a quantum computing company.

In addition, he advised Blackstone Energy Partners on CFIUS matters in connection with its \$7 billion sale of a stake in Cheniere Energy Partners, which closed in September; as well as social media company Slack on economic sanctions matters in connection with its nearly \$28 billion acquisition by Salesforce, announced late last year.

HIS PROUDEST MOMENT IN THE PAST YEAR:

Carnegie's pro bono work involves advising leading nonprofit humanitarian organizations including CARE USA and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Those efforts include advising on how to deliver assistance quickly to individuals caught up in conflict zones or areas subject to U.S. sanctions, such as North Korea, Syria, Iran, Burma, Sudan and Afghanistan.

"I'm very proud of advising these incredible organizations who are trying to relieve human suffering," Carnegie said. "The work is extremely gratifying because you're able to help and support, in some small way, the really amazing work that these organizations are doing in some pretty tough environments."

WHY HE'S A COMPLIANCE ATTORNEY:

Carnegie said he finds national security work inherently fascinating, and focusing on compliance requires many skill sets and allows him to work across a diverse set of industries. His clients span the energy sector, finance, tech, sports, entertainment, life sciences and more.

"The work is never boring or repetitive," he said.

— *As told to Al Barbarino*

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