

# Rising STARS

*The Deal chose these 21 attorneys as the most promising new M&A partners of 2019.*

Making partner at a law firm is an economic and psychological reward for years of labor, a signal of achievement to clients and colleagues and often the start of an even longer climb up the ladder of firm management. The 21 M&A lawyers we profile below all made equity partner within the last 12 months. They have become key members of client teams, and many will become firm leaders.

We selected the 21 by scanning new partner announcements at top corporate firms. We chose only one lawyer per firm and considered only U.S. lawyers. For some firms, the decision was easy: Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP; Davis Polk & Wardwell LLP; and Sullivan & Cromwell LLP, among others, didn't make a new partner in either area. Others, such as Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, had small classes that included only one.

In contrast, the new partner classes of 31 at Latham & Watkins LLP and of 46 at Jones Day presented difficult choices among multiple lawyers in different offices with divergent practices. A few firms made multiple partners in New York, like Shearman & Sterling LLP with three and Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz with four. We opted to focus on one lawyer in greater depth than attempt a group portrait in a few hundred words.

The announcements also showed the practice areas and geographies in which firms are investing and often offered unexpected insights. For example, Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati PC made only one new M&A partner but two in privacy and data protection and three in technology transactions, which suggests how important those specialties are to Wilson's tech clients.

—David Marcus

## Top 21 NEW M&A LAW PARTNERS



**Nick Dhesi**  
**Latham & Watkins**

Following the better part of a decade as an associate with Latham & Watkins LLP, Houston attorney Nick Dhesi has been elevated to partner.

"Nick is a fantastic M&A lawyer. He understands our clients' business needs and consistently provides thoughtful advice and innovative solutions to address their legal challenges," Latham & Watkins partner Ryan Maieron said of Dhesi. "Nick has rapidly established a reputation for excellent and pragmatic client service, and I look forward to his continued success."

In 2018, Dhesi worked on teams led by Maieron that advised Layne Christensen Co. on its \$536 million sale to Granite Construction Inc. (GVA) and Archrock Inc. (AROC) on its \$607 million acquisition of its master limited partnership, Archrock Partners LP.

Other notable transactions Dhesi has worked on include Ensco plc's (ESV) \$863 million acquisition of Atwood Oceanics Inc., which closed in October 2017, and Rice Energy Inc.'s \$2.7 billion acquisition of privately held Vantage Energy LLC and Vantage Energy II LLC in October 2016.

"Our clients face challenges with significant ramifications on their business," Dhesi said of his practice. "I enjoy working with clients on these impactful transactions and effectively addressing the legal, business and human dynamics associated with their deals. I'm also fortunate to work alongside a very talented group of Latham colleagues that I genuinely care about, respect and admire."

Dhesi, 34, began as an associate at Latham & Watkins in 2010 after earning his J.D. from the University of Texas at Austin that same year. He was raised in Houston and received his B.A. from Cornell University in 2007.

—Tom Terrarosa

