

40 UNDER 40

LEAKHENA MOM

Partner, Latham & Watkins LLP

In the past 18 months alone at Latham & Watkins, Leakhena Mom has helped clients, from Citigroup Global Markets Inc. to Platinum Equity, navigate the capital and financing demands of a total \$30 billion-plus worth of transactions. Mom also devoted time in the past year to represent unaccompanied minors from Honduras seeking juvenile immigrant status as part of her work with nonprofit Kids in Need of Defense (KIND), hearkening back to her own past as the child of immigrants who escaped Cambodia during Pol Pot's rule.

► **It must be a heady time to be working in this business climate?** Yes, and I think, in the past 18 months, what is also interesting is that a lot of the transaction structure has changed. We used to see a lot of the traditional bond offerings, and now we are seeing more things like privately placed notes and direct lending by these smaller, kind of niche banks.

► **How does your pro bono work around immigration connect to your own experience coming to the U.S.?** I came to the U.S. when I was a baby and was with my family. My clients, they were only 15 and 17. They started off in Honduras, went on to Mexico and then crossed the border into the U.S. on their own. To me, that's just amazing, the determination and the sacrifices that they're making to build a better life here. I could see that. That's why my parents escaped Cambodia as well.

► **What would you do if not**



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this? Probably a journalist. Just because I love learning things. I love figuring out stories about people and events. Either the historical context and how it interplays with current events

and how it can impact our future.

► **What did you originally want to be?** The first one was an astronaut because I wanted to explore. I love science.

– Carten Cordell

\$30B

Value of corporate transactions that Leakhena Mom advised on for her Latham & Watkins clients in the past 18 months

CLOSE UP

Age: 38

Residence: Arlington

Education: Bachelor's in political science, Yale University; J.D., University of Michigan Law School

Family: Husband, a puppy

First job: Cashier at a grocery store