

MVP: Latham & Watkins' David Dantzig

Law360 (December 5, 2018, 1:07 PM EST) -- David Dantzig, a Washington, D.C.-based partner at Latham & Watkins LLP, has helped steer private equity giant The Carlyle Group through multibillion-dollar deals, all while working to address an affordable housing crisis in the nation's capital, landing him a spot as one of Law360's Private Equity MVPs.

HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT:

A regular adviser for Carlyle, Dantzig touted his work on AkzoNobel's €10.1 billion (\$12.5 billion) deal inked in March to sell its specialty chemicals business to Carlyle and GIC Private Ltd. as his biggest accomplishment this year.

"It is a deal the sheer magnitude of which I have never had to contend with," he said. "It's roughly three times bigger than the biggest deal we've ever done for Carlyle."

That deal also saw dozens of attorneys from the firm put their hats in the ring, Dantzig said. As part of the firm's efforts on the deal, more than 175 attorneys from 18 different offices logged time on the matter.

"Deals like this are really what the Latham platform is built for," Dantzig said.

HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE:

Dantzig also touted the AkzoNobel deal as the biggest challenge of his year, calling Carlyle's deals to sell the remaining business of The Nature's Bounty Co. to KKR and to concurrently sell Holland & Barrett to L1 Retail, part of Russian billionaire Mikhail Fridman's LetterOne empire, a "nice bookend."

"The thing that was really tricky about that is that they wanted to do a complete exit from the investment ... and as it turned out, the value-maximizing proposition was to sell off the European retail part of the business to LetterOne ... and to sell the remaining business to KKR," he said.

One especially challenging aspect, Dantzig added, was running the contemporaneous deals, which each



David Dantzig
Latham & Watkins

impacted the other.

“We had to sort of anticipate what it was that KKR was going to care about and try to structure the deal in a way that limited the friction,” he said.

HIS PROUDEST MOMENT:

Separate from his corporate practice, Dantzig cited his election in June to president of the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia.

The LAS, he said, is currently in the midst of an effort to make a dent in Washington, D.C.’s affordable housing crisis. As part of the effort, using roughly \$2 million from the city, the organization is building out a program aimed at taking on a larger in-house caseload on the subject and managing pro bono efforts of the city’s major law firms.

“It’s been a fun and interesting ride. I really enjoy working with the people and view it as an important part of my practice,” he said.

HIS ADVICE FOR YOUNGER ATTORNEYS:

In that same vein, while he recommends younger attorneys be mindful of clients’ needs and foster relationships with colleagues, Dantzig said it’s additionally important for younger attorneys to find ways to give back to their communities.

“We are incredibly lucky and what I’ve found is that being a lawyer gives you both a skill set and a degree of credibility that makes people defer to you on big decisions and you can use that to help organizations that make [your] city a better place to live,” he said.

— *As told to Adam Rhodes*

Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 1,000 submissions.

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