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Rising Star: Latham's Leah Sauter

By **Rose Krebs**

Law360 (August 10, 2026, 4:00 PM EDT) -- Leah Sauter of Latham & Watkins LLP helped lead a team advising FIS in its sale of Worldpay to Global Payments and advised FIS in its purchase of Global Payments' issuer solutions business, earning her a spot as one of the mergers and acquisitions attorneys under 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

Leah Sauter
Latham

Age: 38
Home base: New York
Position: Partner
Law school: Columbia Law School
First job after law school: Associate at Allen & Overy

The biggest deal of her career, and what was challenging about it:

Sauter, who joined Latham in 2017, said representing Fidelity National Information Services Inc. in concurrent deals with Global Payments Inc. was challenging, because it required "coherent" and "balanced" positions to complete the two transactions while ensuring FIS' interests as a buyer and seller were protected.

Representing a party who was buyer and seller makes things a little bit more complex, and there were a bevy of global regulatory matters and local law issues that had to be worked out, she said.

Global Payments unveiled plans in April 2025 to acquire payments giant Worldpay from private equity firm GTCR LLC and FIS for $24.25 billion, while divesting its issuer solutions business to FIS for $13.5 billion. The deals closed in January, Latham told Law360.

The firm characterized the concurrent transactions as among the most complex M&A deals of 2025, as it required the "simultaneous execution of two interdependent, multi-billion-dollar transactions, each with distinct regulatory, structural, and commercial considerations."

"The overall geographic scope was enormous," Sauter said, adding that there were more than 60 attorneys just from Latham who were involved.

"This is a deal where we showed every strength Latham has," Sauter said. "It displayed everything we can do."

Another interesting deal she's worked on recently:

Sauter said her work co-leading the Latham team that advised global security company CyberArk in its $25 billion sale to cybersecurity giant Palo Alto Networks involved interesting cross-border issues. The deal, which was announced in July 2025, closed in February, Latham said.

Her representation of Israeli-based CyberArk in the transaction was a "nice capstone" in what has been a yearslong relationship between her and the company, Sauter said, and those types of relationships are important to her M&A work.

The deal was made more complex because it involved a U.S.-based company buying an Israeli business that had most of its investors based in that country, meaning cross-border tax, legal and other issues had to be navigated, she added.

Her proudest moment as an attorney:

"I don't know that there is an individual moment that I consider my proudest moment," Sauter said. "When I reflect back on the practice that I have been able to develop over the course of my career so far, I'm just really proud that I've been able to do it while remaining very true to myself."

Sauter said she is a first-generation professional who didn't have a road map for her career. She doesn't consider herself to be a "wheeler-dealer that is out on golf courses" or who operates in that type of space.

"I'm really proud that I've been able to develop a practice where I can stay true to myself, which is truly just being friendly, relatable and as helpful as I can be to my clients, and that has been enough" to build a successful legal practice, she said.

What motivates her:

"I'm kind of a deal junkie," she said. "I just think that this stuff is really interesting. It is like coming to work and filling out a little puzzle every day."

She said it is easy to stay motivated, because she enjoys what she gets to do for her job.

"I just think it is really cool that I get to show up every day and help people strategize about how to put this jigsaw puzzle together that is going to make everybody happy from a deal perspective," Sauter said.

Why she's an M&A attorney:

Sauter said her practice is "at the intersection of strategy and policy," and "strategy and statute."

"There is hard law you can look at in terms of SEC regulations, but at the same time, a lot of it comes down to market practice and risk tolerance," she said.

"It does feel like kind of a jigsaw puzzle where some of the pieces are already there for you to put together and the remainder you kind of have to cut out yourself," she added. "It just is, I think, the best of both worlds in the sense that it is hard law and strategy and choosing your own adventure and coming up with solutions on your own."

How she thinks the legal industry will change in the next 10 years:

"The obvious answer is AI, if you want the one that's going to be front and foremost," Sauter said. "I think that is going to have ripple effects in terms of the timing expectations for folks that they're asking for in terms of documents or feedback on things. I think the timing expectations are really only going to get higher."

She said she is interested to see how firms continue to deploy AI and improve the level of precision and expertise that can be delivered to clients faster.

"This is just another instance of how client service needs to be at the forefront and how client service expectations are only ever going to be increasing," she said.

--As told to Rose Krebs. Additional reporting by Al Barbarino. Editing by Kristen Becker.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2026 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,100 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2026, to be eligible for this year's award.