

MVP: Latham's Lewis Kneib

By Lauren Berg

Law360 (November 26, 2025, 4:03 PM EST) -- Lewis Kneib of Latham & Watkins LLP helped space exploration firm Voyager achieve liftoff with a \$440 million initial public offering, led self-storage operator SmartStop's \$810 million IPO and worked on warehouse giant Lineage's \$4.4 billion IPO, earning him a spot as one of the 2025 Law360 Capital Markets MVPs.

Why he's a capital markets lawyer:

Having double-majored in finance and accounting at the University of New Mexico, Kneib began working as a certified public accountant at KPMG, but he soon became frustrated by his inability to be an advocate for his clients. So, going to the University of Michigan Law School seemed like the "next logical path."

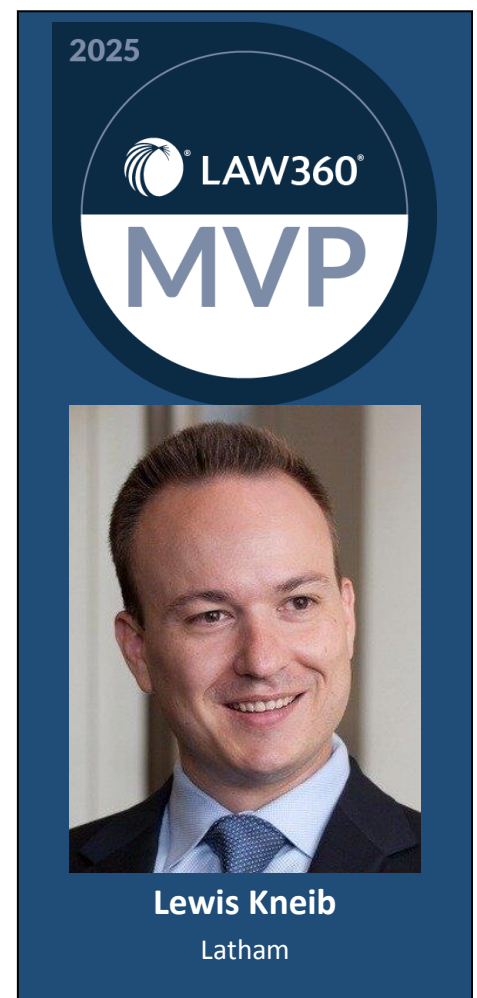
Initially, Kneib wanted to work as a federal prosecutor in the Southern District of New York, where he could focus on advocacy, but he started to change his mind after clerking for U.S. Circuit Judge Paul J. Kelly Jr. of the Tenth Circuit and U.S. Circuit Judge John M. Walker Jr. of the Second Circuit.

"I think I might have let those clerkships wear me down on litigation," Kneib said, laughing, adding that he realized he preferred the transactional realm and wanted to make use of his accounting skills.

In 2007, Kneib joined Latham's Los Angeles office as an associate focusing on corporate finance, mergers and acquisitions, and corporate governance. He made partner in 2015, bringing his expertise to transactions in the real estate, hospitality, gaming and alternative asset management industries.

His biggest accomplishments:

In April, Kneib led the team representing the underwriters in SmartStop Self Storage REIT Inc.'s \$810 million IPO, which marked the first U.S.-listed self-storage real estate investment trust IPO since April



2015, according to Latham.

The IPO for SmartStop, which manages U.S. and Canadian self-storage properties, was a complex process that started in January 2022, with Kneib and the Latham team working hard to help transform the company's capital structure into a marketable publicly traded REIT, according to the firm.

SmartStop priced 27 million shares at \$30, within its range of \$28 to \$35 per share. SmartStop slightly reduced its range while marketing the IPO, which it initially projected to sell between \$28 to \$36 per share.

Kneib then helped defense and space exploration firm Voyager Technologies' \$440 million IPO blast off in June, coming in above a marketed range of \$26 to \$29 per share at \$31 per share, according to the firm.

Voyager, which is known for its work on projects like the NASA-funded Starlab space station, indicated the IPO proceeds would be used for research and development investments and capital asset acquisitions. Kneib and the Latham team helped Voyager navigate complexities with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission process, the company's legacy investors and its new dual-class stock structure, the firm said.

"These are very different assets classes with a wide spectrum of issuers, which goes back to why I do this job," Kneib said. "I get the opportunity to be exposed to an incredible breadth of different issuers and companies."

"You might have a surface level knowledge of a product, like self-storage, and think you understand it, but you end up going so much deeper and learning a lot about the business," he added.

As if those transactions weren't challenging enough, Kneib at the time was also navigating a move to New York following wildfires that destroyed much of his neighborhood in the Pacific Palisades. But both Latham and his clients were incredibly supportive, he said.

"It's hard to describe," Kneib said.

Other notable deals he's worked on:

Kneib in July 2024 co-led the team representing cold-storage warehouse giant Lineage in its upsized \$4.4 billion IPO, which was the largest IPO in 2024 and the largest IPO of a real estate company or REIT in history, according to Latham. Lineage, which initially planned to offer 47 million shares for an estimated \$3.6 billion IPO, intended to spend most of the proceeds on repaying debt.

In the transaction, Kneib and his team pioneered a novel private permanent capital structure for Lineage, which has been a Latham client for more than 13 years, according to the firm. To enable the IPO, Kneib helped restructure the company's private permanent capital to transition it to \$18 billion of public liquid capital, the firm said.

This June, Kneib also led the corporate team representing Lineage in a \$500 million senior notes offering. The complex transaction required the attorney to navigate multijurisdictional issues, with guarantors in the Netherlands, Canada and Australia, among other parts of the globe, according to Latham.

What motivates him:

The opportunity "to work with incredibly intelligent people — often leaders in their fields" and to bring his particular expertise to the table is what gets Kneib into the office every day.

"Helping these sophisticated clients navigate these issues, and being able to take some of their concerns off the table, is just so gratifying," the attorney said.

For Kneib, whose mentor encouraged him to go to Latham's Los Angeles office to pursue the kinds of transactional work that interested him, the firm is just the right fit, no matter if he's in the Golden State or the Empire State.

"The culture is firmwide," Kneib said, noting that he works with colleagues all over the world on a daily basis. "Latham is an amazingly globally connected law firm with a very well understood collective culture."

"You pop into any office," he said, "and you're going to get Latham."

His advice for junior attorneys:

Kneib, who was a hiring partner in Latham's Los Angeles office for a couple of years, said he always tells junior attorneys that "the key to being a good associate is taking absolute ownership of what you do."

While associates may not have external clients and might be trying to figure out how they fit in at the firm, Kneib reminds them that they do have clients: their supervisors and fellow attorneys.

"When I give an associate something to do, I want them to take ownership. I'm giving them license to find the answers," Kneib said.

Recalling similar advice once given by former President Barack Obama, Kneib said he tells junior attorneys that "whatever you do in your life, if you can solve someone's problem — no matter how small it is — if I can call on you, you will always have value."

"It doesn't mean you'll always have perfect answers, but you will be there and will take pride in what you do," he added. "At the end of the day, you're the one who has to own your career and future."

--As told to Lauren Berg. Editing by Amy French.

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 2025 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 900 submissions.