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TEXAS ATTORNEY OF THE YEAR FINALIST

As a native Houstonian and M&A attorney who works with the energy industry, Ryan Maieron said he was skeptical at first of non-native law firms that were coming into Texas roughly 15 years ago and trying to capture big clients.

"Why would somebody in the oil patch care if my law firm has a Singapore office or a top high-yield practice?" Maieron said.

But when it came to Latham & Watkins, Maieron said he quickly came to realize that they were taking a smart approach toward their Texas expansion.

"Latham did one really important thing right, which is it opened with a collection of ... superstars who were already practicing in Houston, who were already known to the market, who already had relationships and credibility. ... That core group already had contacts and relationships and were able to pull from their knowledge base and their Rolodex," he said. "It was a much more organic growth strategy from there."

What he also found, first as a competitor and now as a partner, "is that clients, even in the oil patch, really do care," he said. "They may not need it every day, but they



RYAN MAIERON

LATHAM & WATKINS

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do care that their law firm represents 400 U.S. publicly listed companies, or that their law firm has a depth of expertise in high-yield debt, or that if a new, unusual financing product arises, their law firm is at the cutting edge of it.”

So Maieron left his position as a partner at Baker Botts to join Latham in 2011, about 15 months after they opened their Texas office. Leaders at Latham said Maieron has been a key driver behind the firm’s ascendancy into the top echelon of the Texas legal market, where Latham now has two offices and nearly 200 lawyers, and ranks among the top transactional deals year after year.

A finalist for 2025’s Texas Lawyer’s Attorney of the Year award, Maieron has had a standout past couple of years, from representing Equitrans Midstream Corporation in its all-stock merger with EQT Corporation; SLB (formerly Schlumberger) in its all-stock acquisition of ChampionX Corporation; and CenterPoint Energy in the sale of its Louisiana and Mississippi natural gas local distribution companies.

His work was instrumental in driving both Latham’s M&A and private equity practice and capital markets practice—the firm’s two largest practice areas—to achieve a banner year in 2024.

Out of all his recent transactions, Maieron said he likely learned the most from the SLB deal. As he worked with them, Maieron said he was impressed by SLB’s ability to keep its folks in the loop throughout the regulatory and antitrust review process.

“What I learned from that, mostly by observing my own client up close, is how well they managed their internal constituencies—their management team and board, and the external shareholder community—through a volatile and, at times, uncertain regulatory process,” he said. “I was furiously taking notes on every call, not because of the need to understand the facts. I understood the facts. I was taking notes at how deftly they managed the process and the communication.”

Communication is one of the three C’s that Maieron said he focused on during his recent four-year term on Latham’s executive committee: consensus, communication and culture. Attorneys at Latham “can only do what we do for the world’s most sophisticated clients if we treat each other like we’re team members,” and not “a group of 3,500 individual practitioners,” he said.

For the past 16 years, Maieron has also had an opportunity to share his M&A experience with students at the University of Houston Law Center, where he co-teaches a class with his brother-in-law, Professor Douglas Moll, on how to conduct transactional deals.

At most law schools, “you’re not exposed, generally, to any element of transactional work,” Maieron said. “Classes are taught with a focus on litigation. ... At most law schools, there’s no orderly fashion for learning the life cycle of the transaction, the terminology, the documents, the way a deal progresses.”

So Maieron and Moll put together a class that gives students a primer on these elements. Moll teaches the laws surrounding mergers and acquisitions, and Maieron walks them through a set of deal documents.

“So we start with: Your client calls you and says they want to sign a confidentiality agreement to buy another company, and we start that confidentiality agreement,” Maieron said. “We do a letter of intent, we talk about due diligence. We spend about half of the class going through an actual merger agreement. We talk about the shareholder approval process. It’s a systematic walk through the life cycle of a deal.”

Two of Maieron’s former students are now partners in Latham’s Houston office.

“I do get quite a bit of feedback from people in the first, fifth, tenth year of practice, that they still go back and think about the way we teed them up to be successful M&A lawyers,” he said.