

COVER STORY

SUDDEN IMPACT

Keep an eye on these lawyers... Before the tender age of 40, they've already made their mark, whether they're fighting for the underdog against corporate giants or spearheading programs to help recent immigrants. All things considered, this year's 20 under 40 are redefining the term

Golden Years

EVA DAVIS



At Kirkland & Ellis, no one handles megabuck mergers and restructurings like Eva Davis.

Davis, head of the firm's West Coast corporate practice group, is shepherding one of her biggest deals to date: the \$1.6 billion acquisition of ChipPAC, which packages high-powered semiconductor chips, by ST Assembly Test Services Ltd.

"Several publications have marked this merger as a sign that the tech sector has entered a full recovery," Davis says.

Fremont-based ChipPAC and ST Assembly, a Singapore company with operations across Asia, announced the merger in February.

The companies expect to close the deal by the end of June.

Since joining Kirkland & Ellis in 1999, Davis has spearheaded plenty of impressive ventures. In 2000, she helped ChipPAC and semiconductor testing company Therma-Wave go public. Like ChipPAC, Therma-Wave remains one of Davis's active clients. In 2002, she represented unsecured creditors in the \$3 billion restructuring of Williams Communications Group, and last year she represented the Fleming Cos. and DDi Corp. in \$300 million deals.

Small wonder that the firm, once a litigation boutique, tapped Davis to start its West Coast corporate group, which now includes 10 attorneys in Los Angeles and a San Francisco branch that opened last year.

"Coming to Kirkland was a great opportunity for me to grow professionally and grow my own practice," says Davis, 38, who holds degrees from Duke and Harvard Law School. "The firm has been very supportive, and we've stayed nimble, so we did lots of [initial public offerings] when those were hot in 1999 and 2000. Since then, we've done more private restructurings and debt financing. We try to react and stay where the business is."

Jeff Davidson, who heads both the litigation group of Kirkland & Ellis and its Los Angeles office, says that the firm hand-picked Davis to help it branch out from litigation. She was the right choice, Davidson says.

"She's a very bright woman who's very skilled at what she does. She's a very hard worker who's very dedicated to clients, all of which we expected," Davidson says. "But we've also found that she's a very fun person, a high-integrity person who's a great role model."

Beyond her work, Davis stays busy with activities both inside and outside the firm. She sits on the charitable Kirkland & Ellis Foundation, as well as the firm's national recruiting committee. She also remains active in the Duke University alumni group for Southern California, which named her one of its top volunteers of the 1990s.

Davis also spends much of her free time with her daughters, 5-year-old Alexandra and Elizabeth, 2.

— Draeger Martinez