

Rising Star: Kirkland's Robert Hayward

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By **Samuel Howard**

Matching consummate legal knowledge with deal-making mojo, Kirkland & Ellis LLP's Robert M. Hayward has represented marquee public companies including Kellogg Co. and The Boeing Co. in multibillion-dollar offerings, making him one of Law360's corporate finance attorneys under 40 to watch.

Hayward, 38, returned to his hometown in 2000, joining Kirkland & Ellis' Chicago office after having already built a prominent practice covering virtually every species of corporate transaction, from leverage buyouts and debt offerings to venture capital and public mergers and acquisitions.



A partner since 2003, Hayward has continued to burnish a comprehensive practice while developing a reputation for making deals happen, becoming a denizen of powerhouse boardrooms nationwide.

Rather than just cultivate a knowledge of the ins and outs of securities law, Hayward has devoted himself to deal-making, steering his practice to the hotbeds of corporate finance in order to master not just one discrete part of the deal process but the entire corporate life cycle.

Sought after by large public companies and emerging businesses alike, Hayward has overseen Kellogg debt offerings in excess of \$2.75 billion, counseled Boeing on \$3.8 billion in senior note offerings and guided Whirlpool Corp. in its offering of \$850 million in notes.

Hayward was also instrumental in completing the 2007 sale of Biomet Inc. to a consortium of private equity firms, including The Blackstone Group, Goldman Sachs & Co. Inc., Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. and TPG Capital LP.

The \$11.4 billion transaction proved a showcase for Hayward's talents, pivoting on his ability to anticipate the challenges in converting the deal from a one-step merger to a two-step sales process that extended for more than a year and posed a multitude of complex regulatory issues.

"It was an extraordinary transaction involving a lot of novel and complex [U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission] issues that had to be dealt with at the front end. My ability to anticipate the issues and resolve potential complications helped bring a very positive result for Biomet and its shareholders," Hayward said.

His ability to foresee pitfalls, to see several moves in advance and tackle issues before they threaten a deal might sound like omniscience, but it emerges from a rigorous approach to law that integrates every stage of the corporate continuum, "from inception to exit," he said.

"I've always worked as hard as I can behind the scenes, looking at every detail and scouring regulation, so when I need to move, I can sprint to the finish line," Hayward said. "Total readiness and practical experience allows you to come up with creative solutions and untie all the knots in order to get the deal done."

Hayward particularly relishes the boardroom, where he is able to apply his minute understanding to critical situations and provide dead-on guidance to industry leaders, he said, noting that his three children are starting to give him the gray hair that is somewhat de rigueur in those settings.

Richard Porter, his colleague in Kirkland & Ellis' corporate practice group, said that early on in Hayward's career, he topped the charts and had surged ahead ever since. Unsurpassed in his knowledge of the law, his business acumen and his character, Hayward is positioned to become one of the most recognized attorneys in his field, Porter said.

"Bob's all over both the law and the lore of securities practice," he said. "He's a trusted counselor to numerous public company clients and has the presence, savvy and judgment of the best boardroom lawyer."

For more information about Robert Hayward, please go to www.kirkland.com/rhayward

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