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They've Got Next: the 40 Under 40

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Maggie Flores of Kirkland & Ellis

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Please describe two of your most substantial, recent wins in practice.

I have a diverse M&A practice that involves representing both public companies and private equity sponsors and two of my substantial recent wins reflect a deal of each type.

Most recently, I represented Carlisle Companies Incorporated in the sale of Carlisle Interconnect Technologies (CIT) to Amphenol Corporation in a transaction valued at \$2.03 billion. CIT has a global footprint and partnering with Carlisle Companies to successfully carve out that business line and accomplish the final step in Carlisle's pivot to a pure play building products company was incredibly rewarding.

I also represented Patient Square Capital, a health-care investment firm, on a deal to take Syneos Health, Inc., for a deal value of \$7.1 billion. Patient Square was part of a consortium that involved Elliott Investment Management and Veritas Capital.

I've partnered with Patient Square on a number of deals since their formation, and this represented the largest to date. The deal also required coordination across multiple law firms, across multiple jurisdictions around the globe and came together incredibly quickly. Consortium deals can feel a bit chaotic given the number of parties and this one was no exception, so finally getting everyone on the same page and across the finish line felt like a huge win..

What is the most important lesson you learned as a first-year attorney and how does it inform your practice today?

The power of saying yes. Opportunities come in a variety of shapes and sizes—they may be the smallest of tasks, they may be the biggest of deals, they may be in an area where you're knowledgeable, they may be topics of first impression to you. But establishing yourself as someone who is willing to grab an opportunity—to say "yes" to the challenges put in front of you, as daunting or as menial as they may seem, can really accelerate your growth and diversify your experience.

It also has the added benefit of establishing your reputation early in your career as someone who will not shy away from a challenge, or the work associated with it. Clients, both internal and external, learn they can count on you, and if you seize and capitalize on those opportunities, they will multiply.

Not being afraid of new challenges and taking the opportunity to dig in and learn different areas of the law, has made me a better adviser and has allowed me to grow with my clients as their goals and strategies evolve. I've also had big doors open in my career because I said "yes" to small tasks. For me, that's made all the difference.

How do you define success in your practice?

It's easy to suggest that success in M&A be defined by outcomes—the number of deals completed, the size of the deals, or the accolades won. But to me, the true measure of success in my practice has been the moments where I've been able to impart understanding, knowledge or simple practice tips to the associates and junior partners who've worked with me, and then to see those tips played back to me in real time as they develop their own skills.

The learning curve for transactional lawyers is fairly steep, and I find it extremely



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gratifying when I can help newly minted lawyers get up that curve. I came into the practice knowing little of what day-to-day life as a deal maker looked like, and I attribute so much of my personal growth and expertise to the mentors and sponsors who spent their time contributing to my growth.

Success to me, then, is paying that development forward to ensure that the legal profession continues to have a robust pipeline of diverse talent, who are cultivated and mentored. In that way, success truly breeds success.

Seeing gifted lawyers that I've been working with since they stepped through the doors at Kirkland become even more talented partners makes me both incredibly humbled to be a part of their growth and thrilled to see them catapult up the ranks.

What are you most proud of as a lawyer?

Lawyering is a team sport, and the proudest moments in my career have come from seeing our entire team work together cohesively, leveraging everyone's talents, to help our clients achieve their goals. There's always this moment of absolute chaos in a deal when issues seem to be popping up like the moles in a carnival whack-a-mole game, your team is against the clock and your client is looking to their lawyers to make method out of the madness—and that's where our team's mettle is really tested.

I'm fortunate to work with the best of the best and know our team will think creatively, commercially and innovatively to drive the deal to conclusion. There's no prouder moment than getting the deal to the finish line and having our client say the deal would not have come together without our team firing on all cylinders. You can't get to that point without each and every single member of the team not only working at the highest levels of the profession but also working together.

Who is your greatest mentor in the law and what have they taught you?

In what seems like an anomaly, I've spent my entire career at one firm, and I've been incredibly fortunate to have had numerous mentors who have made indelible impacts on me and my career.

Since it's hard to just name one, I'll include some of the lasting takeaways that continue to guide my practice from those I've been lucky to call mentors. One taught me not to shy away from a problem, even one that seems completely insurmountable—if you can't get through the front door, try the side door, the back door, a window—because practicing law requires stubbornness and creativity.

Another taught me the importance of forging lasting personal relationships with our clients—especially as AI is threatening jobs, personal connection is paramount. Another reminds me daily that there's no substitution for hard work, drive and passion.

Finally, one of my first Kirkland interviewers, the one that told me he thought I should be a deal lawyer (before I knew what that even entailed, but was so persuasive I walked out of the interview knowing that's exactly what I wanted to be), has taught me that the ability to rest and recharge, that balance, is as important to a long career as excelling at the practice itself. I'm not only a more well-rounded lawyer because of my mentors, I'm a more well-rounded person.

Tell us your two favorite songs on your summer music playlist.

I'm celebrating another summer of the Eras Tour by listening to "The Man" by Taylor Swift on repeat. Growing up in Nebraska, you couldn't have summer without some country music to accompany long road trips through corn fields, and my current favorite summer country car song is "I'll Most Wanted" by Beyoncé. It makes me want to grab the keys, hop in the car, roll down the windows and sing (off key) at the top of my lungs!