

# The Texas Lawbook

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## M&A Newsmaker: A Wild, Busy Week for Brittany Sakowitz

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In the *April 7* edition of the CDT Roundup, we reported three separate deals led or co-led by Kirkland & Ellis M&A and PE partner *Brittany Sakowitz*.

One involved Kirkland's representation of Gainsight, a client management platform owned by Vista Equity Partners, in its acquisition of Skilljar. Another involved a \$5 billion investment in Rogers Communications by a group of funds led by Blackstone. And, in the third, Sakowitz worked alongside her longstanding client Brookfield Infrastructure Partners on its \$9.4 billion acquisition of midstreamer Colonial Enterprises.

Said Sakowitz of that wild first week of April: "[It] was an exciting one ... Three important clients, signing three different types of transactions and in three different industries, all in the same week."

After pausing to catch her breath, the Houston-based partner recently sat down with *The Lawbook* to discuss her career, M&A and her predictions for the rest of 2025.

*The following interview has been edited for length and clarity.*

**The Texas Lawbook:** When did the idea of becoming a lawyer first pop into your head?

**Brittany Sakowitz:** I applied to law school to buy time to figure out what I wanted to do after graduating a year early from college. It really wasn't until I started practicing and felt deal adrenaline that I realized how much I would love being a corporate lawyer, so I got my JD/MBA



Photo of Brittany Sakowitz

to focus on transactional work. More than fifteen years later, I'm still energized when I get hired on a new deal or negotiate an important deal point.

**Lawbook:** What has your journey to becoming a lawyer been like?

**Sakowitz:** I've always worked hard as a baseline and then took advantage of some incredible opportunities. I started my career at Baker Hostetler with a more generalist transactional practice and then moved to Vinson & Elkins as a fourth-year associate to focus on M&A and made partner in 2017. Around that time, Kirkland was transforming the Texas legal market and becoming the biggest player in the M&A and PE space. I joined Kirkland in 2021, and the move supercharged my career.

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**Lawbook:** Who in the space were your role models or idols?

**Sakowitz:** I'm inspired daily by friends and leaders who are at the very top of the profession: *Andy Calder, Roald Nashi, John Pitts, Elisabeth Press, Gabe Nwuli, and Teresa Mattamouros*, to name a few. I have a framed photo on my desk of an email that I received after I made partner from my friend and mentor *David Oelman*. The email encourages me to take a minute to reflect on the accomplishment. Dave O's email always reminds me to take a pause and feel thankful.

**Lawbook:** What kinds of clients have you represented throughout your career, and who do you primarily represent now?

**Sakowitz:** I represent private equity sponsors and their portfolio companies and other public and private companies in the energy, infrastructure and technology sectors.

**Lawbook:** I know you joined Kirkland in July 2021. What about the firm initially attracted you to it to move away from V&E? What has enticed you to stay?

**Sakowitz:** I came to Kirkland for the deal flow and because it was an opportunity to grow my existing M&A practice. I stay here for my colleagues, the clients and the resources. There's simply nothing like this team of lawyers in Texas and around the world and the clients we're so fortunate to represent.

**Lawbook:** What has your experience working as a woman in the M&A space been like?

**Sakowitz:** Same as that of a man in M&A, though with more exclamation marks and better wardrobe options.

**Lawbook:** How often have you sat across from a woman M&A partner on the deals you've worked on in your career?

**Sakowitz:** Not often, but more every

day.

**Lawbook:** What needs to change for more women to have an opportunity to enter the M&A universe successfully, as you have?

**Sakowitz:** When people ask me what the key is to making partner at a firm, my advice is always the same, regardless of gender. Stay! You have to be technically excellent, earn trust with clients, take initiative and be a team player. The speed and intensity of M&A deals is what makes it fun. You can't maximize your potential as a professional or make partner at a firm if you leave in the toughest growth years as a midlevel associate. The opportunity, infrastructure and pipeline are in place. Young lawyers who love this career need to stick with it.

**Lawbook:** What deals are you the proudest to have worked on during your career?

**Sakowitz:** Working on the life cycle of a private equity deal, meaning buying the company, helping with add-ons and growth strategies and ultimately leading the exit transaction. I love it when the client views our team at Kirkland as an extension of their in-house team.

**Lawbook:** What do you feel separates your approach in advising and working with clients versus other attorneys out there who are working within the same industries you are?

**Sakowitz:** My goal in every deal is to negotiate the best terms for the client, but to ultimately get the deal done. I'm always trying to find solutions and build bridges between counsel and counterparties. Recently, our client in a co-invest consortium said at the conclusion of a 20-person call that it was the least painful issues list walk-through with a lawyer they'd ever had. That's the goal.

**Lawbook:** What are your expectations for M&A for the rest of 2025?

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**Sakowitz:** I am hopeful that infrastructure buyouts, joint ventures and structured equity will continue to be bright spots in the otherwise choppy M&A deal market.

**Lawbook:** What is keeping you busy this year?

**Sakowitz:** In addition to the regular M&A deal work, an increasing amount of my practice is advising clients on minority equity investments by private equity and credit funds in strategic companies

in the infrastructure space. I've worked with clients on both sides of these transactions.

For example, earlier this month, I represented Blackstone in signing its investment in Rogers Communications, and in late 2024, I advised EQT Corporation in connection with an investment in its regulated midstream assets. This type of transaction is an equity financing solution that allows strategics to raise significant capital to fund capital projects and maintain operational control without materially impacting leverage.