

# The Texas Lawbook

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## The Billion-Dollar Texas Lawyers

JANUARY 14, 2026 | BY MARK CURRIDEN & CHRISI TRAMMELL

There were two women Texas deal lawyers who led billion-dollar mergers and acquisitions in 2016, and only one ranked in the Top 20. That same year, Kirkland & Ellis had only one partner ranked among the Top 10 Texas-based lawyers who served as lead legal advisors on transactions that topped \$1 billion, and only five lawyers on the full list of 43.

What a difference a decade has made.

*The Texas Lawbook's* exclusive Corporate Deal Tracker data shows that, in 2025, 135 lawyers in Texas led or co-led billion-dollar deals for buyers, sellers or targets. The highlights of the 2025 CDT data include:

— Twenty-two Texas women lawyers led M&A transactions with a value of \$1 billion or more last year;

— Four women lawyers ranked among the Top 10 billion-dollar dealmakers, including the Top 3;

— Forty-nine of the 135 led two or more billion-dollar deals;

— Thirty-eight of the 135 attorneys are lawyers at Kirkland, including nine of the Top 10;

— Twenty-one Texas attorneys at Vinson & Elkins, including *Lande Spottswood*, *Robert Hughes* and *Doug McWilliams*, led billion-dollar deals;

— Fifteen lawyers in the Texas offices of Latham & Watkins — including *Justin Stolte*, *James Garrett* and *David Miller* —

### \$1 BILLION-PLUS DEALS (TEXAS-LED)

#### Lawyer leaderboard, ranked by deal count

| Lawyer (Office)             | Firm             | Deals | Value (\$M) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------|-------------|
| Brittany Sakowitz (Houston) | Kirkland & Ellis | 6     | 57,922      |
| Kim Hicks (Austin)          | Kirkland & Ellis | 5     | 77,234      |
| Melissa Kalka (Dallas)      | Kirkland & Ellis | 5     | 58,100      |
| Shamus Crosby (Houston)     | Simpson Thacher  | 5     | 40,520      |
| John Pitts (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 5     | 21,822      |
| Andrew Calder (Houston)     | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 78,000      |
| Doug Bacon (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 43,600      |
| Rhett Van Syoc (Houston)    | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 40,500      |
| Debbie Yee (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 9,425       |
| Will Eiland (Dallas)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 5,830       |
| Rob Goodin (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 3     | 37,921      |
| Breen Haire (Houston)       | Simpson Thacher  | 3     | 30,020      |
| Lande Spottswood (Houston)  | Vinson & Elkins  | 3     | 13,700      |
| Justin Stolte (Houston)     | Latham & Watkins | 3     | 12,905      |
| Robert Hughes (Houston)     | Vinson & Elkins  | 3     | 7,420       |
| Sean Wheeler (Houston)      | Kirkland & Ellis | 3     | 7,225       |
| Chris Heasley (Houston)     | Kirkland & Ellis | 3     | 6,900       |
| Eric Otness (Houston)       | Skadden Arps     | 3     | 6,400       |
| Tull Florey (Houston)       | Gibson Dunn      | 3     | 5,475       |
| Ryan Maieron (Houston)      | Latham & Watkins | 3     | 5,199       |
| Chad Smith (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 3     | 4,530       |
| Rahul Vashi (Houston)       | Gibson Dunn      | 3     | 3,475       |

#### Lawyer leaderboard, ranked by deal count

and a dozen attorneys for Gibson Dunn — including *Rob Little*, *Jeff Chapman* and *Tull Florey* — were lead counsel in 10- and 11-digit M&A transactions; and

— Five Texas lawyers led five transactions with deal values of \$1 billion or more.

There is one similarity with 2016 and 2025: The same Texas lawyer — Kirkland partner *Andy Calder* — ranked No. 1 in M&A deal value, according to CDT data.

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**Photo of Brittany Sakowitz**

The CDT tracks M&A handled by Texas attorneys, no matter if the clients are based in Fort Worth or Cowtown, New Jersey.

Kirkland partner *Brittany Sakowitz* of Houston sits atop the 2025 CDT leaderboard for billion-dollar M&A deal count, with six transactions that had a combined value of \$57.9 billion. Sakowitz was co-lead counsel with fellow Kirkland partner *Adam Larson* for New York-based Blue Owl Capital in its \$27 billion acquisition of Meta Hyperion.

Sakowitz was also co-lead counsel with Kirkland Austin partner *Kim Hicks*



**Photo of Kim Hicks**

## \$1 BILLION-PLUS DEALS (TEXAS-LED)

### Lawyer leaderboard, ranked by deal value

| Lawyer (Office)             | Firm             | Deals | Value (\$M) |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------|-------------|
| Andrew Calder (Houston)     | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 78,000      |
| Kim Hicks (Austin)          | Kirkland & Ellis | 5     | 77,234      |
| Melissa Kalka (Dallas)      | Kirkland & Ellis | 5     | 58,100      |
| Brittany Sakowitz (Houston) | Kirkland & Ellis | 6     | 57,922      |
| Doug Bacon (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 43,600      |
| Shamus Crosby (Houston)     | Simpson Thacher  | 5     | 40,520      |
| Rhett Van Syoc (Houston)    | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 40,500      |
| Rob Goodin (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 3     | 37,921      |
| Breen Haire (Houston)       | Simpson Thacher  | 3     | 30,020      |
| Adam Larson (Houston)       | Kirkland & Ellis | 1     | 27,000      |
| Mingda Zhao (Houston)       | White & Case     | 1     | 26,600      |
| Allan Kirk (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 2     | 23,200      |
| Rob Little (Dallas)         | Gibson Dunn      | 2     | 22,750      |
| Kevin Crews (Dallas)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 1     | 22,200      |
| John Pitts (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 5     | 21,822      |
| Lande Spottswood (Houston)  | Vinson & Elkins  | 3     | 13,700      |
| Justin Stolte (Houston)     | Latham & Watkins | 3     | 12,905      |
| Jeff Chapman (Houston)      | Gibson Dunn      | 1     | 12,800      |
| Ana Sanchez (Houston)       | Simpson Thacher  | 2     | 10,500      |
| Cyril Jones (Houston)       | Kirkland & Ellis | 1     | 9,700       |
| Debbie Yee (Houston)        | Kirkland & Ellis | 4     | 9,425       |
| Jackson O'Maley (Houston)   | Vinson & Elkins  | 1     | 9,100       |

### Lawyer leaderboard, ranked by deal value

for Brookfield Infrastructure Partners in its \$9 billion purchase of Colonial Enterprises.

Hicks, according to CDT data, ranked second in 2025's billion-dollar deal count rankings with five transactions.

Three other Texas lawyers — Kirkland partners *Melissa Kalka* of Dallas, *John Pitts* and *Andy Calder* of Houston and Simpson Thacher partner *Shamus Crosby* — each led or co-led five transactions valued at \$1 billion or more.

Crosby was co-lead counsel with partner *Breen Haire* in representing the private equity firm KKR in its \$22.2 billion purchase of Sempra Infrastructure Partners.

Calder ranked No. 1 in billion-dollar deal value, with four transactions that had a combined price tag of \$78 billion. Calder was co-lead counsel with Kalka in Artificial Intelligence Infrastructure Partners' \$40 billion acquisition of Plano-based Aligned Data Centers.

*Jeff Schnick contributed to this report.*