

The Texas Lawbook

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The Billion-Dollar Texas Lawyers

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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 Maierson (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.