2026 RISING STAR

LAW360

Lee Blum

Lee Blum of Kirkland & Ellis LLP advised the buying group on the $55 billion take-private of video game developer Electronic Arts Inc., which the firm calls the largest take-private investment in history, earning him a spot among the private equity practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

Biggest case of his career:

Blum was on the Kirkland team that represented an investor consortium of three buyers — the Saudi Arabia Public Investment Fund, Silver Lake and Affinity Partners — in the take-private of Electronic Arts, which was announced in September.

Under the agreement, the buying group acquired 100% of Redwood City, California-based Electronic Arts, with the Saudi Arabia Public Investment Fund rolling over its existing 9.9% stake in Electronic Arts, according to the company's 2025 announcement.

"It was the largest take-private that was ever announced," Blum said. "So that was far and away the biggest deal that I've been a part of."

According to Kirkland, Blum played a central role in guiding the consortium and PIF, the lead investor, through the complexities of the high-profile, multiparty deal, which Blum said included raising an unprecedented amount of capital "on a highly accelerated timeline."

The deal was challenging because Kirkland attorneys were simultaneously negotiating the merger and acquisitions matter with Electronic Arts and the buyer consortium arrangements while leading several parallel work streams, including regulatory analysis across a variety of territories, Blum said.

"It required coordination across a whole bunch of different practice areas and jurisdictions," Blum said. "And we had to pull all of those threads together in a way that allowed us to deliver concise advice to the client in a very timely manner, given the speed with which things were moving. It was challenging but incredibly rewarding at the end of the day looking back on it."

Other notable deals he has worked on:

Blum advised San Francisco-based private equity firm Turn/River Capital on its $4.4 billion acquisition of SolarWinds Corp., an Austin, Texas-based software company.

Blum said helping the company on one of its most critical M&A matters was very rewarding.

"That was their largest deal to date, and they're a very sophisticated investor," Blum said of the deal, which was announced in February 2025. "That was an incredibly important transaction to them, given the size of it. Being able to work with the team there to help think

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through problems together and see them achieve their goal at the end of the day was very exciting.”

Blum also represented Turn/River and its portfolio company, PairSoft, a provider of procure-to-pay automation and payment solutions, on a majority investment in PairSoft from TA Associates. That deal was announced Dec. 17 and was a successful full exit for Turn/River, underscoring private equity interest in software companies that provide AI-driven solutions, Blum said.

More recently, Blum was on the Kirkland team that advised global investment firm KKR on Hometown Soccer Holdings, a joint venture with Major League Soccer. Hometown Soccer Holdings was created in part to support stadium development in new communities, according to Kirkland’s April announcement.

His proudest moment as an attorney:

Blum said becoming one of the point leaders of the firm’s growing Miami office is something that gratifies him. He said his proudest career accomplishment overall occurred about five years ago, when he was a mid-level associate and asked to take a trip overseas to Asia for a transaction.

“I was traveling with the client, and we were negotiating with the other side, and I was the only representative from my firm there,” he said.

He added: “I was very proud of that moment because it told me that trust was being placed in me in that I really could do this job, and folks thought that I was more than capable of holding my own. That was kind of the moment when I realized, ‘OK, I can do this and can do this at a high level,’ and people are trusting me to do it.”

What motivates him:

Blum said he enjoys seeing clients achieve their goals and appreciate the work that he does to help them get there.

“A simple ‘Thank you, great work’ from the client is evidence that we’ve done that,” he said. “Delivering for our clients is something that motivates me.”

He’s also energized by mentoring fellow Kirkland attorneys.

“You work on a matter with them. You take the time to teach them and develop them and see them grow,” he said. That is something that really motivates me from a career development perspective.”

Why he became a private equity attorney:

Blum first got exposure to corporate M&A work as a summer associate and has never looked back.

“I enjoyed the fast-paced nature of it,” he said. “There’s tremendous variety because the clients are varied, and every deal has a different dynamic to it.”

He added that private equity affords him the opportunity to work with some of the smartest, most sophisticated people who aren’t afraid of complexity.

“The more complex the problem, the more interesting it gets for me, and I think our clients really value the advice we give,” he said. “[Private equity] is something that kind of suits my personality and really keeps me going because there’s different problems every day.”

How he predicts the legal industry will change over the next 10 years:

Blum said it’s impossible to talk about the future of law without talking about artificial intelligence, adding that Kirkland has been at the forefront of AI developments.

“ The more complex the problem, the more interesting it gets for me, and I think our clients really value the advice we give. ”

He said that technology will change the way law is practiced, but will not change the fundamentals.

“Our clients are looking for advice on very complex matters, and they’re looking for judgment, experience and lawyers to help them think through problems and give them practical advice,” he said.done that,” he said. “Delivering for our clients is something that motivates me.”

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