

Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Justin Stolte

Law360 (August 24, 2018, 1:02 PM EDT) -- Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP partner Justin Stolte recently helped ArLight Capital Partners LLC close on its \$1.12 billion acquisition of Midcoast Operating LP, earning him a spot as one of five energy attorneys named to Law360's list of Rising Stars.

WHY HE'S AN ENERGY ATTORNEY:

Stolte worked as a petroleum engineer for Chevron in the oil fields of the Permian Basin before he earned his law degree.

"It was a natural transition for me, coming out of law school, to return to the energy industry," he said. "It was the best decision that I could have made professionally," citing how fascinating and challenging his practice is, and how it affords him the opportunity to work on cutting-edge transactions.

After a few years, he said, he "took a detour from practicing law" to work in the business development group at Apache Corp.

But he decided to return to law once again, and he joined Gibson Dunn last year as a partner focused on oil-and-gas related transactions.

"I'm very entrepreneurial, and one of the things that you're able to do as a partner at a law firm is run your own business as a subset of a broader business," he said.

ON PROUD MOMENTS:

Stolte said some of his proudest moments as an attorney have occurred this summer, given that Gibson Dunn's Houston office, which opened in February 2017 and of which he is a co-founder, has really been blossoming as of late.

RISING
 ★★★★★
STAR



Justin Stolte
Gibson Dunn

Age: 40

Home base: Houston

Position: Partner

Law school: University of Notre Dame, the Law School

First job after law school: Associate at Baker Botts

“Whenever you open an office in a new city, there’s some unease and apprehension about whether or not you’re going to be successful,” he said. “That’s one of those things that only time will tell.”

But fast forward to now, and in the span of just a few weeks the office racked up several major accomplishments.

For one thing, it helped Arclight Capital Partners LLC close on its \$1.12 billion acquisition of Midcoast Operating LP from Enbridge Inc., in a transaction led by Stolte.

Additionally, client Encino Acquisition Partners announced a \$2 billion agreement to buy all of Chesapeake Energy's Utica Shale oil and gas assets in Ohio, another deal led by Stolte.

“Doing all those things in the context of we’re an office that’s been open just over a year now, it’s pretty impressive and a testament to everyone’s hard work,” he said.

He added, “I think we are punching well above our weight on a pound-for-pound basis, given the number of attorneys that we have. So, it was really a neat point in time, to step back and say ‘wow, we’ve done a number of impressive deals the first half of this year.’”

WHAT MOTIVATES HIM:

Stolte said that, at the moment, his “singular focus” is on helping Gibson Dunn continue to grow the Houston office.

“What that means for me personally is trying to be the absolute best energy transactional attorney that I can be,” he said.

Additionally, he said it means helping those around him, whether members of his team or other partners in the office, provide exceptional client service.

“If we’re providing outstanding client service, then we’ll rise to the top,” he said.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST DEALS OF HIS CAREER:

Stolte cited Arclight’s acquisition of Midcoast as one of the biggest, most challenging and exciting transactions of his career.

“I was the partner running the transaction,” he said, and there were 30 to 40 Gibson Dunn attorneys working on the deal team.

“Coordinating and supervising that team, and at the same time negotiating the transaction, was a challenge in itself,” he continued. “And then we were moving at a fast pace.”

— As told to Christine Powell

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,200 submissions. This interview has been edited and condensed.

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