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TOP WASHINGTON LAWYERS

CORPORATE M&A



Stephanie Tsacoumis

GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER LLP

Age: 52

Family: Married, two adult children

Hometown: Silver Spring

Law school: University of Virginia

Residence: Silver Spring

If not a lawyer, you would be a ...an economist

Memorable case: Working on the sale of the Boston Celtics in 2002

Hobbies: Sewing clothing and draperies

Like many Washington lawyers, Stephanie Tsacoumis describes her practice as diverse. But a look at her roster of clients truly proves the broadness of her work at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher. Her list includes companies like consulting firm Watson Wyatt World-wide, which hired her for help with acquisitions. She worked pro bono for the Girl Scouts, which also needed representation in some mergers and acquisitions. Marriott Corp., the Corporate Executive Board and the American Red Cross have also hired Tsacoumis.

The bulk of her work is handling merger-and-acquisition transactions for mid-market private companies to large public companies. But she also serves as an adviser to boards of directors and senior management on corporate issues, securities disclosures and compliance issues, internal corporate investigations and corporate governance and investor relations matters.



Two of her most memorable cases were some of the most recent. She represented the Boston Celtics L.P., in its \$360 million sale of the basketball team in 2002 and then in a “going private” transaction that distributed proceeds of the sale to the public in 2008. She also worked on other transactions for the group, including the 2006 and 2007 restructurings of several former Celtics entities.

Her other memorable case was representing food company Del Monte in its 2002 acquisition of Starkist Tuna, Kibbles ‘n Bits and College Inn soups and broths from Heinz for \$1.9 billion. The deal involved a spinoff, a merger and bank and high-yield financing. When the deal closed, the company had a guy dress up as Sam the Starkist Tuna and ring the bell on the New York Stock Exchange.

Tsacoumis started her law career as a litigator. But she became frustrated at the waste of resources, namely the length of time it took for certain matters to be resolved. “A transactional practice seemed more gratifying and efficient,” she says.

“A client talks to you about a deal and you look at it and you figure it out, and you either do the deal or you don’t.”

She likens transactional work to putting together a puzzle, figuring out how to put certain pieces of a transaction together. But the nature of transactions has changed significantly in the last decade since the rise of technology and various economic changes.

“The acquisition environment has become much more strategic and targeted,” she says. “As the economic environments become more difficult, companies are being more careful and strategic in the acquisitions they undertake.”

Tsacoumis now sees her practice evolving to include governance matters and pure securities regulatory issues, as well as broadening her client base to include nonprofit organizations.