MEET THE DEALMAKERS

Lou Barbieri

Lou Barbieri leads Kilpatrick's Corporate Mergers & Acquisitions and Securities (MASC) team. With deep experience in the SaaS software and healthcare services industries, Lou focuses on acting as outside general counsel to private equity funds and their portfolio companies, representing clients in M&A transactions, and counseling them on investment opportunities. He also works extensively with executive management teams to help growth strategies.

For multiple clients he has led efforts with management to develop and implement acquisition programs and new product go-to-market strategies which were recognized by clients as adding significant value and ultimately successful industry-recognized exit transactions.

Why did you decide to join Kilpatrick?
Its reputation for excellence and service amongst practitioners in the marketplace. However, only after joining Kilpatrick was I able to fully appreciate the value of this reputation. Our clients directly benefit from the expertise of Kilpatrick's specialist practice groups and their personal investment in our client's business. Specifically, our IP, privacy, tax, employment and benefits teams, and litigation partners are invaluable members of our client teams. They've been instrumental in helping us support our practice and grow our client services with efficiency and distinction.

The last several years have been a challenging environment for M&A transactions, yet Kilpatrick's MASC practice continues to do well. What is your secret?
As a team we focus on relationships and excellence. Most of our clients are long-term clients with whom we have strong, trusting relationships. These relationships allow us to work with them to develop long-term strategies and use creative and alternative transaction

structures that support our clients to continue making acquisitions in a challenging capital markets environment. For example, our middle market roll-up strategies for multiple PE and portfolio-company clients have remained active as we have developed and modified earn-out and other deferred payment terms.

What is your strategic vision for Kilpatrick's MASC practice?

We have been providing successful, efficient, value-add solutions for middle market clients focused on the technology sector for a long time, but we are a hidden gem in this segment. My top priority is to make us more visible.

We are also taking careful and deliberate steps to expand in a way that grows our specialization in key areas and our geographic footprint, as the market necessitates. For example, we recently expanded into Chicago through mergers with two firms, giving us a strong foothold in the Midwest. With this expansion, we now have offices in 8 of the top 10 financial centers in the United States.

What makes you most excited about the future of the MASC practice?

The Team. We have a first-class group of associates and upcoming partners who are well-equipped to seek expansion and growth in the marketplace. It's exciting to watch them not only take advantage of existing client development opportunities but also create new opportunities for our team.

The other thing that is so striking to me is the diversity of our group. In most transactions we work on now, we field teams that are over 50% diverse. Moreover, five of the last seven elevations to partner in our MASC Team were all diverse. We value the diverse thoughts and solutions that members of our teams bring, and we see that in the people that succeed here.

How would you characterize your leadership style?

I became team leader within the last six months, so I would say that my style is still developing. However, I view my role as facilitating our partners and associates in meeting their personal goals. I see each attorney as an individual and hope to support and encourage their personal growth as an attorney and a successful member of this team. Kilpatrick is very focused on pro bono and other opportunities to serve our communities, sometimes partnering with our clients in these initiatives. I do everything I can to support the community work of all our attorneys and professional staff.

I come from a family of educators, and it has colored my approach to everything I do, including leading this practice. We have invested in developing programs that increase the expertise of our associates and younger partners. These are practical and actionable training and mentorship programs designed to help our attorneys grow and succeed. And these programs are already yielding significant results because we've now seen a number of elevations to the partnership for attorneys who have been with the firm for well over five or six years.

How do you choose which community organizations to support?

I believe deeply in the power of education to create a better future for any individual, and therefore my community work revolves around education. For example, I sit on the board of Georgia Appleseed Center for Law and Justice, which has a long relationship with the firm. This organization supports education for children in foster care and helps children stay in school. It achieves its mission through four main prongs: education justice, housing justice, behavioral health, and advocacy initiatives for improving the foster care system. We often represent foster-care children in proceedings before suspension boards on a pro bono basis.

Also, just recently, I headed a firm event for the Boys and Girls Clubs as part of the firm's corporate citizenship program. Over 20 high-school students participated in this program. They learned about the M&A process and then got to do a mock negotiation. For many, this was their first exposure to corporate law, and I hope we've inspired at least a few future M&A practitioners!

To learn more about Lou and the firm's nationally recognized M&A Team, please visit *ktslaw.com*