Atlanta

MEET THE DEALMAKERS

The Next Generation

Sabrina Rodrigues

Sabrina Rodrigues is a Senior Associate in Kilpatrick's Corporate Mergers & Acquisitions and Securities (MASC) team. Based out of Atlanta, she focuses her practice on mergers and acquisitions, strategic transactions, corporate restructurings, private equity and general corporate matters for private companies, including strategic buyers and private equity funds, throughout the United States. She has worked on deals in a variety of industries, including building products, technology, and healthcare.

With experience across the whole array of M&A transactions, Sabrina handles traditional equity and asset acquisitions and dispositions, private equity investments, add-on acquisitions, and reorganizations.

Sabrina was recognized in 2024 and 2025 as one of the "Best Lawyers: Ones to Watch" for Mergers and Acquisitions Law by *The Best Lawyers in America®*

What is the focus of your practice?
My practice is primarily focused on private M&A work, representing both strategic buyers and private equity funds. While the strategics side of my practice is oftentimes focused on acquisitions, the private equity side is focused on platform acquisitions, add-on acquisitions, and the eventual sale of the platform. By representing strategic buyers with their acquisitions and private equity funds during the lifecycle of their ownership of these platforms, we become very acquainted with the business, and which, on the private equity side, makes the eventual sale of the platform an efficient process.

What do you find most exciting about your work?
First, I find the many opportunities to be creative very exciting. Even if two deals seem similar from the outset, oftentimes each deal has its nuances and differences that must be accounted for. Additionally, some deals involve issues that rarely come up or that few or no folks in our group has had much experience with. While these issues are rarer and not necessarily presented in every deal, that's when we get the opportunity to be really creative, thinking through how we should tackle all elements of this issue to make sure our client is fully protected from all angles and that risk is appropriately allocated. To me, this is super interesting because you are able to build something entirely new from scratch.

Second, building long-term relationships with our clients and integrating into their business is another exciting aspect of my work. I have clients with whom I've worked during my whole career, where I've become true partners in their growth story, which I find very fulfilling.

How would you describe the role of a senior associate within the deal team?
As a senior associate in the M&A group, I am tasked with leading our transactions, managing client relationships, and supervising junior associates; I manage due diligence, take the lead on drafting main deal agreements, and provide strategic legal advice to clients. As a senior associate, it's even more important now to nurture and maintain my relationships with clients, fostering and ensuring the strength and longevity of the relationship.

Being the senior associate on a M&A deal is a massive management undertaking. We not only oversee the junior associates on our team, but internal (and sometimes external) subject matter experts as well, including tax, labor and employment, IP, real estate, and so on. We ensure that everyone is on track and is well versed in the tasks for which they are responsible.

Organization, attention to detail and communication skills are the keys to success for M&A senior associates.

How did you decide to focus on M&A work?
My path to law in general and M&A in particular is a bit unconventional. I studied math in college without a clear direction on how to use that degree in the workforce. While the idea of being a corporate lawyer had appealed to me, being first generation American, one of the first in my family to go to college, and the first lawyer in my family, I did not have a clear idea on exactly what the duties of a corporate lawyer entailed.

Before committing to 3 years of further schooling and tuition, I worked as a paralegal after college in a BigLaw firm in New York – my home state. After a couple of years working in the litigation department, I realized that while I loved the environment of a BigLaw firm (i.e., the fast-paced nature, colleagues with a variety of different backgrounds and experiences, and the availability of so much expertise), corporate law was, as I suspected, a better fit for my interests and skillset.

As a summer associate at Kilpatrick, I gravitated towards M&A because of the people and its pace and high energy. And here I am, 7 years later, feeling very fortunate to have found such fulfilling work, surrounded by a group of brilliant and collegial people that make working here so enjoyable.

Is M&A a good area for a young associate to consider?
Absolutely! There's so much work. While we've always been busy, ever since COVID, our practice has been particularly skyrocketing. We're busier than we've ever been and there's always a need for junior associates who are excited to learn. I also think this is a great practice area to get into because there are a lot of on-the-job training opportunities that is invaluable, especially for someone recently out of law school. Having a good attitude and a willingness and excitement to learn can get you far.

What are some of the advantages to being an M&A associate in Kilpatrick's MASC team?
First and foremost, our group has many amazing mentors. I've been fortunate enough to become a part of this group where everyone is welcoming, go out of their way to help, and truly care about the growth and trajectory of each associate's career path. In having worked with a variety of different partners (and senior associates as a junior associate), I have had exposure to different styles of negotiation, each valuable in their own way, which has helped inform, and helped me craft, my preferred negotiation style. Now, I try to pay it forward by doing the same for our junior associates. It's very important to me to train the next generation and pass down everything I've learned.

Second, everyone in the group goes out of their way to help each other out. While we all do our best to juggle the large number of responsibilities we have, even the best of us sometimes need help. Our group very much has a "team" mentality, and each member is a team player by doing whatever is needed to get the deal done to our client's satisfaction, which sometimes may mean covering for others or vice versa. Knowing that the team has my back and that I have theirs helps reduce unnecessary stress and allows me to do my best work.

Have you had an opportunity to help organizations in the community?
For the first three or four years of my practice, I helped nonprofit organizations apply for tax exempt status. It was exciting to be a part of each nonprofit's story, and to learn about the visions and passion of those founders for their organizations and the missions behind the organizations.

With my husband being an active-duty Black Hawk pilot for the Army Georgia National Guard, I'm always looking for ways to help veteran-owned businesses. I'm fortunate to work at a firm that truly values pro bono and community work, with many great resources for different types of missions, including veteran-related missions. One of the organizations for which I obtained tax-exempt status was a veteran-owned food truck franchise. It was a very gratifying experience and a great way to give back to a community with which I have deep ties.

More recently, I've become involved with helping nonprofit organizations conduct transfer assets to other nonprofit organizations. I and another senior associate in our group have worked on a few matters through the Pro Bono Partnership of Atlanta (PBPA), which matches corporate lawyers with nonprofits who need legal services, which were very similar in nature to the deals we work on in our "day job." This enabled us to use what we have learned in our day-to-day job to help these nonprofit organizations with their desired outcome. In helping these clients transfer their assets, we've developed a system and built a small library of drafts and checklists. As the PBPA is seeing an increasing need for M&A services in the nonprofit sector, we're now working with them to create a more robust library of M&A documents for future transactions similar to these. I'm excited to help meet this need both through working with nonprofits directly and through supporting the PBPA.

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