

In The News

Rob Kibby Selected as "Attorney of the Year" in D CEO's 2021 M&A Awards

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D CEO

Last year was a challenging year for dealmakers, with so much of the economy shuttered during the pandemic. But even a once-a-century virus couldn't stop the top mergers and acquisitions professionals in Dallas-Fort Worth from doing what they do best: close.

D CEO was fortunate enough to host our 2021 M&A Awards and celebrate the best of the best in the M&A world. Guests also enjoyed a panel moderated by Gemma Descoteaux of Sheppard Mullin that discussed the acquisition of Electronic Transaction Consultants with Bret Kidd of Electronic Transaction Consultants, Matt Iodice of Align Capital, Joe Durnford of JD Merit, and Bowen Diehl of Capital Southwest.

Some of our winners looked to take advantage of a rocky market, while others were looking to exit their business and protect their legacy. Many of those involved saw an opportunity to grow a great concept into a company with more reach. They showed grit, determination, innovation, and creativity to have productive years in even the most difficult circumstances. Read on to learn more about our winners.

Winners Revealed

Small Deal of the Year: Latticework Capital Management's Investment in Beacon Behavioral Hospital

Mental health disorders and substance abuse were already a challenge when the pandemic came along and exacerbated the issue, inducing added stress and further isolating many who needed help. This transaction supports an underserved sector of the healthcare market, right when it is needed most. Latticework is a Dallas-based private equity firm that helps support eight outpatient clinics and four inpatient hospitals in Louisiana, with plans to expand into Texas soon.

Midsize Deal of the Year: Align Capital Partners' acquisition of Electronic Transaction Consultants Corporation

This deal involves the acquisition of Electronic Transaction Consultants, which is crucial to some of the largest government tolling agencies in the U.S., including the North Texas Tollway Authority, which collects more than \$3 billion in transactions every year. The company embraces innovation and incorporates artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and congestion management, and has a growing software and technology presence within Dallas-Fort Worth.

Large Deal of the Year: Rosewood Private Investment's sale of Novaria Group to KKR

During a year where the grounding of the 737 Max threw the global supply chain into turmoil, this deal was completed in less than a week—even though the buyer was not granted exclusivity. The speed of the transaction, especially given its complex nature, shows how committed the buyers and sellers were to getting it across the finish line. Shortly afterward, the aerospace market took a huge hit when COVID-19 hit. The players battled through without applying for or receiving government assistance.

Billion-Dollar-Plus Deal of the Year: Pioneer Natural Resources' acquisition of Parsley Energy

This deal is valued at \$7.6 billion and solidifies the Pioneer's place as one of the largest oil producers in the Permian Basin in West Texas and New Mexico. In a unique twist, the selling company was founded by the son of the buying company's CEO. According to reports, the men were not allowed to participate in deal negotiations. The deal was one of several oil industry consolidations that followed the energy downturn and uncertainty in 2020 and was overwhelmingly approved by shareholders of both companies, as it will improve cash flow and dividends for everyone involved.

Due Diligence Professional of the Year: Brad Porter of Moss Adams

Porter is well-regarded in the industry and consistently ranks as one of his company's most prominent new client revenue generators. He has a passion for making deals happen by providing fact-driven information to his clients, allowing them to make well-informed investment decisions. He and his team were essential in the acquisition of a global software company by a private equity-backed platform that had previously worked with a Big 4 firm. He leads a due diligence team of eight professionals and has seen his book of business grow exponentially in the last five years.

Investment Banker of the Year: Brad Purifoy of Corporate Finance Associates

Purifoy was involved in a unique deal that set him apart. After working with his client on an exit strategy for more than five years, the business owner became gravely ill before he was able to execute a transaction, leaving the details to our winner and the owner's wife. She was not intimately involved in the business. He worked with legal counsel, the owner's spouse, and the buyer to protect his client's legacy during the most trying times. He says the situation served as a good reminder for company owners to plan for all contingencies.

Private Equity Professional of the Year: Pierce Edwards of Velasco Industries

Edwards did not sit back after the pandemic caused deals to stall last year. He continued weekly conversations with key players to ensure that his firm would be well-positioned when the company was back in the market. For months, he diligently worked to do what he could to keep the deal in play, and in the end, he prevailed. The agreement is an excellent example of Edwards' ability to build relationships—critical connections that often extend beyond the closing of deals. His knowledge and deep understanding of deal structuring and the due diligence process make him a primary resource, from origination through the closing process, as well as post-close on the operations and portfolio management side.

Capital Provider of the Year: Jeff Matthews of East West Bank

Matthews has been in the business for 26 years. He joined his company in 2018 to manage the Texas region and has gone on to exceed expectations and built his group into a prominent player in the transactional lending market. His team closed more than 20 transactions in 2020. Our winner led a \$32 million senior financing for a majority recapitalization of an e-commerce platform in one standout deal.

Attorney of the Year, Robert R. Kibby of Munsch Hardt

Kibby this year is one of the best M&A attorneys in the country. He leads the corporate finance practice for his firm and serves as a member of its operations committee. He has helped put together deals with a transaction value of \$5 million to more than \$1 billion. And despite his busy practice, he still makes time to give back to the community and his profession, including serving as a past president of ACG Dallas-Fort Worth.

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