

Massachusetts Powerhouse: Mintz

By **Brian Dowling**

Law360 (August 8, 2022, 2:02 PM EDT) --A record year for Mintz Levin Cohn Ferris Glovsky and Popeo PC had attorneys at the Boston-based firm running at "a breakneck" pace to keep up, with its litigation practice attorneys notching wins in complex cases while their corporate colleagues closed major deals, earning the firm a place among Law360's 2022 Massachusetts Powerhouses.

Mintz's head count of 280 attorneys in the Bay State and 550 in the U.S. puts it in the middle of this year's two other Massachusetts Powerhouse winners.

The firm — one of Boston's largest — has deep roots in the city where it was founded in 1933 by Jewish lawyers during the Great Depression. The firm grew over the decades, expanding into New York, Los Angeles, London and Washington, D.C., and has over the years represented some of the region's leading companies, including Liberty Mutual, General Electric, Mass General Brigham and ImmunoGen Inc.

Mintz litigators in 2021 fought for clients caught up in the U.S. Department of Justice's "Varsity Blues" college admissions case, won favorable plea terms for a Massachusetts executive caught embezzling from a shoe company, and successfully convinced the First Circuit to affirm a biopharmaceutical company's decisive win in a stock drop suit.

Billions of dollars' worth of private equity transactions, plus five special-purpose acquisition company transactions, kept its corporate transactions team busier than ever with deals involving Cardurion Pharmaceuticals, Bain Capital, Azenta Life Sciences, Thomas H. Lee Partners LP, International Data Group and others.

"Our colleagues were running a breakneck pace," Mintz litigation chair Scott Ford said.

The firm's bread-and-butter practices — life sciences, intellectual property, litigation, and corporate — fueled record gross revenues of \$585.5 million for 2021. It's the seventh year in a row that Mintz has recorded higher-than-ever revenues.

Michael Fantozzi, the firm's managing member for the Boston office, said the recruiting market cooled off on the associate side but was "as frothy as ever" as Mintz looked to add partner-level talent.



The firm's reputation for top work helped it bring aboard 13 lateral partners, including life sciences litigator John Dougherty, high-tech patent attorney Frank Gerratana, seasoned IP litigator Jonathan Engler, capital markets lawyer Jason McCaffrey, and land-use attorney William Squires III. The trend has continued, with more laterals joining in 2022, Fantozzi said.

Ford said hiring for his litigation team has also been boosted by the firm's reputation.

"Recruiting in Boston for Mintz, in general, and Mintz litigation is a lot easier than in other offices, because we have a strong base and a historical reputation," Ford said. "I think the firmwide culture that has developed and is present in the Boston office is unique in a lot of ways."

Attorneys at the firm have found Mintz to be "uniquely collaborative and collegial," Ford said.

A team of Mintz litigators led "Varsity Blues" case parent Elisabeth Kimmel to negotiate with prosecutors and convince a judge to accept a favorable plea deal with a six-week prison sentence, Ford said.

"Where that case began was federal agents barging into a woman's home in the middle of the night and dragging her out," Ford said, "to where we ended up, which was ultimately a good result for our client through a ton of hard work."

The same team of Mintz attorneys served as co-counsel with Black Srebnick Kornspan & Stumpf PA for another "Varsity Blues" parent, Amin Khoury, whose trial in June ended with the sole acquittal in the sprawling prosecution that swept up Hollywood celebrities and corporate titans. Ford called Khoury's not-guilty verdict a "crowning moment for the firm" that would likely reverberate through what litigation remains in related cases.

The firm's representation of Richard Hajjar, a former Alden Shoe Co. executive, resulted in a nearly six-year term that surprised U.S. District Judge Nathaniel M. Gorton for how favorable it was given the nature of the crime.

"In my many years as a judge, I have never seen its equal," the judge said.

Fantozzi, chair of the firm's corporate, tax, private client and immigration division, said corporate attorneys spent 2021 keeping up with the fire hose of work that hit Mintz attorneys in 2020.

"I don't think anyone was surprised, because we had 2020 under our belt," Fantozzi said. "It was a year in which law firms and businesses continued to flourish during pandemic and hybrid work."

The bull market in 2020 and 2021 that drove a wave of transaction work and financing isn't completely behind the firm. Capital market work isn't as active as it was in 2021, but the window hasn't closed, Fantozzi said. The firm did a SPAC transaction in mid-June with ProKidney, he added, and with valuations moderating there's plenty of appetite in the market for strategic deals.

After years of record revenue levels, however, managers like Fantozzi are welcoming a busy 2022 with moderated growth expectations that won't force Mintz to be bursting at the seams.

"If you compare this year to last year, we are basically working at the same level, but rather than the cycle looking like it is heading straight up, it's flat," Fantozzi said. "At this point, it's a welcome breather for a lot of us."

--Editing by Ellen Johnson.

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