

# Briefs

LITIGATION JOBS ■ MERGERS ■ EQUITY OUTLOOK ■ IN MEMORIAM

## Litigation Expected to Generate Most Jobs in 2013

**L**itigation, general business/commercial law and health care are expected to generate the most job opportunities this year, according to a survey of lawyers with hiring authority conducted by Robert Half Legal.

Almost one-quarter (22 percent) expect litigation will generate the greatest number of job opportunities in 2013. General business/commercial law and healthcare ranked an equal second, with each practice area receiving 19 percent. Legal professionals with expertise in high-demand practice areas may have employers vying for their attention: More than half (57 percent) of survey respondents cited at least some challenge in finding legal talent.

Labor and employment (8 percent), bankruptcy/foreclosure (8 percent) and intellectual property (5 percent) were the other popular choices.

Forty-five percent of lawyers surveyed said it is “somewhat challenging” to find skilled legal professionals today. Twelve



percent said it was very challenging while 37 percent said it was not challenging to find skilled legal professionals.

“As law firms expand their teams to meet client requests and enhance service offerings, competition for highly skilled legal professionals is rising,” said Charles Volkert, executive director of Robert Half Legal. “Although the market for entry-level associates should remain conservative, lawyers with five-plus years of experience, solid business development skills and client contacts in the hottest practice areas will likely see

lateral opportunities increase at small and midsize firms in 2013.”

Volkert noted that corporate legal departments also are seeking experienced lawyers and paralegals to handle more commercial transactions, litigation and employment-related matters in-house, and to contain outside counsel costs. “With a growing number of law firms and companies looking to hire from the same talent pool, many employers are bolstering their retention efforts to avoid losing valued staff members to other organizations,” said Volkert. ■

## 60 Law Firm Mergers Reported in 2012

**M**atching the total from 2011, there were 60 law firm mergers and acquisitions announced in the United States in 2012, according to Altman Weil MergerLine. After a year largely characterized by small strategic acquisitions, the fourth quarter of 2012 saw four large, international law firm combinations announced.

“There were 19 new law firm combinations announced in the fourth

quarter, including the four major cross-border deals” said Altman Weil principal Ward Bower. “We’ve now seen nine straight quarters of steady deal-making since the legal industry shook off the worst effects of the recession.”

In November, U.S. law firm Fulbright & Jaworski and UK-based Norton Rose announced they would combine to form a 3,750-lawyer firm. Also in November, New York-based SNR Denton announced two mergers,

one with European law firm Salans, and a second with Canadian firm Fraser Milner Casgrain. Together the three firms will form a new 2,500-lawyer international law firm.

In December, K&L Gates announced the acquisition of 300-lawyer Australian law firm Middletons, a combination that will put K&L at more than 2,000 lawyers in 2013.

Along with these four deals, there were five additional cross-border

combinations involving U.S. firms in 2012, for a total of nine – the largest number recorded since MergerLine began tracking the market in 2007.

K&L Gates made a second international acquisition in 2012, picking up nine-lawyer Marini Salsi Picciau in Milan. Baker & McKenzie, a 3,800-lawyer international law firm headquartered in Chicago, acquired

two law firms outside the U.S.: 91-lawyer Estudio Echeopar in Lima and 16-lawyer Rudolph Bernstein & Associates in Johannesburg. DLA Piper acquired 26-lawyer Friehe Bouhenic in Paris.

In a smaller deal, 72-lawyer San Francisco law firm Carroll Burdick & McDonough acquired five-lawyer Schweiger & Partners in Munich.

There were two other noteworthy combinations in 2012. Atlanta-based McKenna Long & Aldridge merged with California law firm Luce Forward Hamilton & Scripps in March, forming a new firm of more than 550 lawyers. In July, national personal injury firm Jacoby & Meyers combined with Chicago-based Macey Bankruptcy Law creating a firm of 300 lawyers. ■

# Outlook for U.S. Equities

**L**ast year was a year of volatility in the U.S. equity markets. The Dow began the year at slightly above 12,210, rose to above 13,600 in October, only to decline back to below 12,900 amid post-election jitters regarding uncertainties such as global economic concerns and the resolution of fiscal cliff issues. Is there an end in sight or is this the state of the market for the foreseeable future?

Unfortunately, market volatility is expected to continue. The connection and correlation between the U.S. and the global economy continues to be close. There is the fear that the global economy and, possibly, the U.S. economy, could tip back into recession. While we do not think this will happen, the uncertainty is expressed in the up and down market movement.

Currently, the trend seems similar to the last half of 2011, which also experienced significant volatility with a 2011 annual return for the S&P 500 in the 2 percent range. We believe it is possible for the market to continue its upward trend, although we do not anticipate that it will achieve double-digit returns.

However, there is an important distinction between slowing growth and negative growth. Although the growth rate may be slowing, it is growth nonetheless, which we view as a positive point.

In our opinion, Europe's malaise and somewhat ineffectual responses to the EU crisis, along with some countries dipping back into recession, are cause for concern. Even some of the larger, leading EU countries, such as France, have proved vulnerable to economic concerns. If Germany should also display economic weakness, this could have significant downside effects on the EU and the global economy as a whole.

In the U.S. equity market, we continue to favor high-quality equity investments that offer growth potential. We also feel that dividend focused ideas still possess growth potential. Such equities possess attractive characteristics, combining a potential

growth component while providing income. Such investments can provide a viable alternative to fixed income, as we expect the thirst for yield to continue, especially with short-term yields likely to stay low through at least 2015. ■

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## Clearing the Record

In the Winter 2013 edition, Matthew T. Stone, an associate with Cohen, Placitella & Roth, PC, was incorrectly identified in the 10 Questions interview with U.S. District Court Judge Eduardo C. Robreno. The Philadelphia Lawyer apologizes for the error. ■

### IN MEMORIAM

Alan W. Margolis  
Feb. 13, 2013, Age 79

Doris S. Casper  
Jan. 2, 2013, Age 85

John C. Wagner  
Jan. 31, 2013, Age 32

William R. Herman  
Dec. 6, 2012, Age 66

Alan J. Swotes  
Jan. 26, 2013, Age 86

Anthony J. Krol  
Nov. 29, 2012, Age 59

Earl H. Parsons  
Jan. 14, 2013, Age 92

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tplmag@philabar.org.

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For information, call Elizabeth Macoretta,  
Director of Development, at 215-238-6334.*