

Rising Star: Gibson Dunn's Kristen Poole

By **Andrea Keckley**

Law360 (July 26, 2023, 1:02 PM EDT) -- Kristen Poole of Gibson Dunn & Crutcher LLP has worked on high-stakes deals in the private equity space, including a recent one that carried an enterprise value of \$16 billion, earning her a spot among the fund private equity practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 Rising Stars.

Why she's a private equity attorney:

Poole entered law school knowing she wanted to practice corporate law, but she wasn't sure which area she wanted to practice in. Looking back, she said she thinks what kept her in this line of work is how no two deals are the same.

"I think most people probably don't think that it's necessarily a very creative field, but I've actually found that not to be the case at all," Poole said. "I think, particularly in M&A and private equity M&A, specifically, it gives you the ability to really be creative and exercise problem-solving skills in a fashion that was really important to me."

The biggest deal in her career:

This one is easy. Poole co-led the team of Gibson Dunn attorneys advising Elliott Investment Management affiliate Evergreen Coast Capital and a private equity consortium on their \$16 billion acquisition of data analytics company Nielsen Holdings by Evergreen and affiliates of Brookfield Business Partners. The deal was highly complex, in part because Nielsen was a Securities and Exchange Commission registrant but domiciled in England, making it subject to a 75% shareholder approval threshold. Making matters even more difficult, one Nielsen shareholder, the WindAcre Partnership, announced plans to vote against the deal and accumulated a 27% position in Nielsen.

"I had another attorney on the deal refer to it as a once-in-a-lifetime deal in terms of the complexity involved," Poole recalls.

Her proudest moment as an attorney:

While the Nielsen acquisition was a major point of pride for Poole, she is also proud of her election to Gibson Dunn's partnership at the end of 2021.

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Kristen Poole
Gibson Dunn

Age: 39

Home base: New York

Position: Partner

Law school: University of Virginia School of Law

First job after law school: Associate at Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP

"After surviving what was almost a perfect storm of sorts, surviving the COVID lockdown — at that point, it would have been almost two years with a toddler in the house — and doing that while navigating a historically robust M&A market while trying to make partner was definitely a proud moment," she said.

On the future of the private equity practice:

Building a relationship-based career is becoming increasingly important in private equity, Poole noted. Many transactions now require the collaboration of several firms and their lawyers, she said.

"I think that as private equity becomes more and more robust, as they seek to do transactions of a larger and larger quantum, you're going to see more private equity firms working together [and] kind of see those relationships becoming even more and more important as time goes on," she said.

--As told to Andrea Keckley. Editing by Adam LoBelia.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2023 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,350 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of May 1, 2023, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.