

**New Release**

**For Immediate Release**

### **Law Firm Mergers Continue at a Strong Pace in 2018**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., March 30, 2018** – Law firm mergers in the first quarter of 2018 were nearly as high as merger activity in the same period last year, and already look strong for the balance of 2018, according to the merger research team at Fairfax Associates.

In the first quarter of 2018, we tracked 20 completed mergers (meaning the effective date of the merger occurred during the first quarter of 2018). This is slightly lower than the 22 mergers in the first quarter of 2017 and is on par with the first quarter historical average of 20 mergers per year, when analyzing our data over the last 10 years (from 2008 to 2017).

There was one cross-border combination in the first quarter: Dentons' combination with Uganda's largest law firm, Kampala Associated Advocates (KAA). This follows a very active 2017, which recorded 19 cross-border mergers out of 65 total mergers, up from 13 in 2016.

Most mergers in the first quarter were small combinations, with seventy-five percent involving firms with between 5 and 20 lawyers. The largest domestic merger of the quarter was Philadelphia-based Ballard Spahr with Lindquist & Vennum in Minneapolis (136 lawyers), which was effective on January 1.

New York led the way in terms of in-bound (the location of the smaller firm) merger activity, with four mergers, including two in New York City. The New York City mergers were: Orrick with white collar and securities litigation boutique Morvillo LLP (15 lawyers) and Haddonfield, New Jersey-based Archer & Greiner with bankruptcy boutique, DiConza Traurig Kadish (7 lawyers).

Other active markets included Florida with three mergers, and California, Missouri and Washington with two mergers apiece. States with one merger each included Georgia, Minnesota, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Washington, DC. Womble Bond Dickinson was involved with two of the mergers, combining with intellectual property boutique Blakely Sokoloff Taylor Zafman (24 lawyers) in Los Angeles and communications and technology boutique Bennet & Bennet (7 lawyers) in the Washington, DC area. The other California merger, also in Los Angeles, was Smith Gambrell & Russell's combination with 11-lawyer Los Angeles business law boutique, Rodi Pollock Pettker Christian & Pramov.

Looking forward, 13 combinations have already been announced for completion later in the year. Of these mergers, ten are cross-border and they are dominated by Denton's continued global expansion. The largest upcoming cross-border combination, effective in early April, is between Bryan Cave and the UK's Berwin Leighton Paisner. DLA Piper is also combining with Noguera Larrain & Dulanto in Chile, effective April 1. On the domestic front, Hunton & Williams' merger with Andrews Kurth Kenyon is effective April 2. Dentons has announced that it is combining with seven firms across Africa, Southeast Asia and the Caribbean; the combinations are expected to launch later in 2018.

*Fairfax Associates collects data from published reports, press releases and direct reports from law firms. Mergers are reported where the acquired firm has five or more lawyers. Upon routine verification of the data, some historical numbers may have been updated since previously issued reports, and the number of mergers contained herein may change as additional mergers are announced.*

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partnership issues including partner compensation, and governance and organization. We work with the largest international and national law firms and leading firms of all sizes.

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