

New Release

For Immediate Release

Law Firm Mergers in First Quarter 2019 are Outpacing Prior Years

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 29, 2019 – Law firm mergers in the first quarter of 2019 were higher than merger activity in the same period last year, according to the merger research team at Fairfax Associates.

In the first quarter of 2019, we tracked 24 completed mergers (meaning the effective date of the merger occurred during the first quarter of 2019). This is higher than the 21 mergers in the first quarter of 2018 and higher than the first quarter historical average of 20 mergers per year, when analyzing our data over the last 10 years (from 2009 to 2018).

There were three cross-border combinations in the first quarter: Clark Hill with O'Gradys Solicitors (nine lawyers) in Dublin, Ireland; Littler with Hombly Olsby (12 lawyers) in Oslo, Norway; and K&L Gates with Straits Law Practice (33 lawyers) in Singapore.

Mergers in the first quarter were dominated by small combinations, with eighty-three percent involving firms with between 5 and 20 lawyers. The largest domestic mergers of the quarter were Birmingham's Burr & Forman with McNair (84 lawyers) in South Carolina, Washington DC's Arent Fox with Posternak Blankstein & Lund (55 lawyers) in Boston, and Boston-based Manning Gross + Massenburg with Kurowski Shultz (23 lawyers) in O'Fallon, Illinois.

California, Illinois and New York were the leading states in terms of in-bound (the location of the smaller firm) merger activity, with three mergers each. Two of the New York mergers were New York City-based firms: New York-based Schwartz Sladkus Reich Greenberg Atlas with Mayerson Abramowitz & Kahn (six lawyers) and Baltimore-based Offit Kurman with Salon Marrow Kyckman Newman & Broudy (10 lawyers). On Long Island, Moritt Hock & Hamroff combined with Karol & Sosnik (seven lawyers). Two of the Illinois mergers were Chicago-based firms: Columbus-based Porter Wright Morris & Arthur with Butler Rubin Saltarelli & Boyd (19 lawyers) and Chicago's Mandell Menkes with Leavens Strand & Glover (five lawyers). In California, the mergers were: Arent Fox with Kay & Merkle in San Francisco (seven lawyers), Fresno's McCormick Barstow with Sinsheimer Juhnke McIvor & Stroh in San Luis Obispo (six lawyers), and Dowling Aaron (also in Fresno) with Saqui Law Group in Roseville (six lawyers).

Eleven other states and the District of Columbia had one merger apiece, including these combinations: Day Pitney with Richman Greer (15 lawyers) in Miami, Dykema with Loss, Judge & Ward (12 lawyers) in Washington, DC, and Smith Gambrell with Mazursky Constantine (12 lawyers) in Atlanta.

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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About Fairfax Associates

Fairfax is a specialist firm of highly experienced consultants focused on serving the legal industry. Our services and areas of focus include merger strategy and search, merger integration, strategic planning, 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.

CONTACTS

Lisa Smith
202.365.4180
lisa.smith@fairfaxassociates.com

Kristin Stark
415.215.9294
Kristin.stark@fairfaxassociates.com