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2019 PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Dealmakers of the Year

Hyland Levin Real Estate Practice: 'Effort Level Must Match the Pace of the Deal'

The five-member real estate practice at Hyland Levin Shapiro in Marlton closed deals with a collective value of about \$1.2 billion, including 20 commercial acquisitions, 19 financings/refinancings, and eight sales of various types of properties, according to the firm. Its work came primarily in Camden and Gloucester counties, and elsewhere in South Jersey, but it did work in other regions as well, including closing on the purchase of five multifamily properties in Massachusetts.

The responses were provided by Lauren Beetle, a partner in the transactional real estate practice group, and Mark Shapiro, who heads the real estate practice.

What were some of your most satisfying successes of 2018, and why?

The continued growth of Hyland Levin Shapiro LLP's multifamily real estate practice was a significant source of pride in 2018. Led by Mark Shapiro and fellow partner, Lauren Beetle, the firm assisted clients in obtaining over \$650,000,000 worth of Freddie Mac debt for multifamily projects located throughout the mid-Atlantic region in 2018. The team also completed the \$92,000,000 refinancing of an apartment complex in Northern New Jersey with a non-agency lender. In addition to financings, the real estate group successfully closed on over 25 commercial acquisitions and sales involving properties in New Jersey and throughout the country, with limited assistance from local counsel. Our attorneys handled all aspects of the transactions from due diligence and contract negotiation through to settlement.

What recent economic factors have affected your practice area?

Population trends favoring more urban, pedestrian friendly lifestyles and real estate locations have continued, resulting in increased retail and industrial redevelopment projects and multifamily residential transactions. Low mortgage interest rates and a relatively strong labor market also produced positive impacts for financing, refinancing and workout loan transactions. Our real estate group handled several multi-million dollar retail, office and commercial property sales and acquisitions in New Jersey in 2018. In particular, we worked with our environmental law and land use practice groups on transactions involving industrial properties in the southern portion of the state.

Amid a changing market for legal services, what does it take to become a trusted transactional lawyer in New Jersey?



L-R: Mark Shapiro and Lauren Beetle of Hyland Levin Shapiro

Having a sophisticated command of the law and detail-oriented approach to negotiating documents and efficiently closing transactions is the starting point for becoming a trusted transactional attorney. Combining these skills with the responsiveness to address client concerns in real time and providing practical, proactive advice allows clients to build long-term relationships with our attorneys. Our lawyers' effort level must match the pace of the deal, which is often quite fast.

A prospective client in crisis calls and asks why your team should be retained. What is your answer?

Simply put, because we care more. With most of our lawyers having worked at large and midsize firms in the Philadelphia and southern New Jersey markets, our real estate team is highly experienced, with a deep knowledge of the subject matter and tenacious work ethic. The firm's size allows us to be agile and responsive in delivering the quality and level of service expected by sophisticated commercial real estate developers, owners and investors, large businesses, lending and other institutions. Our team consists of "true deal lawyers" who are passionate about closing transactions efficiently and effectively.

Dealmakers are extraordinarily busy people. What does the firm do to ensure that they remain engaged with pro bono work, their communities and their families?

Each of our attorneys invests in and contributes to the community through involvement in a multitude of civic and charitable organizations, with many of our lawyers serving as board members or officers, including chairs and presidents, of nonprofit groups in southern New Jersey. In addition, Hyland Levin Shapiro conducts firmwide projects and initiatives throughout the year. ■