

## Brian P. Kerwin

Age: 39



**Specialty:** Corporate Law

**Law School:** George Washington University

To thrive in corporate law, attorneys must be skilled in negotiating complex business deals, expert at crafting the minute details of complicated corporate tax strategies and, perhaps most importantly, a deft touch when dealing with the varying needs, desires and wishes of corporate clients.

Those who nominated Brian Kerwin, a partner with the Chicago office of national law firm Duane Morris LLP, say he excels at all these areas and more, something that has made him a lawyer to watch in the always complicated arena of corporate law.

Denise Davis, a partner with the commercial law firm of Yoder, Ainlay, Ulmer & Buckingham, knows firsthand how skilled Kerwin is when it comes to corporate law. She has worked with him, after all, on several lengthy and detailed corporate transactions.

Davis first met Kerwin in 2001, when the two worked together to negotiate a complex corporate transaction. Kerwin's clients were selling a controlling interest in a business; Her private equity fund client was buying that interest. The transaction involved sophisticated tax planning to minimize the tax results of selling a multi-million-dollar business. Kerwin's clients were also retaining an equity interest in the business. To close the deal, Kerwin negotiated earn-out agreements tied to the future performance of the business, and crafted sophisticated operating agreements and employment contracts.

"(Kerwin) has demonstrated skill both in the structures he poses, documents he drafts and the negotiation process," Davis said. "In all of the transactions in which we have worked, he demonstrated a superb knowledge of business, and corporate structures and transactions."

This result is just one of many successful deals Kerwin has negotiated for his clients. During his career, he has helped clients complete transactions ranging from \$15 million to \$250 million, and has developed a \$2 million book of annual business.

Consider a typical month for Kerwin: He may be simul-

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aneously handling a private placement of equity for a startup entity, an acquisition financing on behalf of a large bank, a company in its sale of all assets to a publicly traded company and the acquisition of a company on behalf of a private equity fund. Ted Koenig, President and CEO of Hilco Capital LP, has worked on many matters where he witnessed Kerwin's capabilities. "Brian is an exceptional lawyer who is extremely creative with an unwavering commitment to his clients and his professional responsibilities as a lawyer," Koenig said.

It's not surprising, then, that Kerwin has crafted a stellar reputation in his field. He cemented this when he became one of the eight founding partners of the Chicago office of 600-lawyer firm Duane Morris, where he serves on the office's three-person Management Committee.

Kerwin's peers say that he supplements his tremendous negotiating and legal skills with a constant sense of professionalism and class. And it is these two features, nominators say, that truly set Kerwin apart.

"Perhaps the best testament to Brian Kerwin is the one thing that cannot be captured in a detailed laundry list of his closed deals, honorariums, earned degrees and acknowledgements," said Brian Gross, with Chicago's WindLake Capital Advisors, LLC. "What makes Brian unique are not the accomplishments, but what Brian had to become as a person to achieve these results.

It is that person whom I feel will continue to demonstrate excellence and balance in his personal, professional and community lives, will undoubtedly be a strong and compassionate leader and will certainly continue to be a symbol of contribution to both the legal profession and to our society."

Kerwin has indeed contributed to the community. He recently received, for instance, the Leadership Class of 2002 award from the Greater Illinois Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. This award recognizes outstanding professional achievement and community leadership. Kerwin is also past director and executive vice president of the Illinois Young Executives Club.