

Lawyers



Francis J. Aquila

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The Financial Times has described Frank Aquila as “one of the most influential and high-profile M&A and corporate lawyers in the U.S.” who has “played a role in many of the largest and most complex deals.” In December 2019, Mr. Aquila was one of the dealmakers profiled in an article in *The Financial Times* titled “Deal lawyers are masters of seeing the next move.” *The Wall Street Journal* profiled him as one of the six top dealmakers of the year in 2019 and one of the seven top dealmakers in 2018. These recognitions highlight Mr. Aquila’s consistently broad multidisciplinary practice.

During the course of his career, Mr. Aquila has advised on deals totaling more than \$1 trillion in value, including advising on more than \$150 billion in 2015 and more than \$100 billion in 2019. He has been called upon by global leaders such as **Amgen, Andeavor, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Baxter International, Canadian Pacific, Cheniere Energy, Diageo, Diebold Nixdorf, GameStop, International Airline Group, Kraft, Navistar International, Novartis, Tiffany & Co.** and **United Rentals** to advise them and their boards of directors on M&A, proxy contests, activism, unsolicited bids, corporate governance, ransomware attacks, short squeezes, crisis management and a range of matters affecting corporate policy and strategy.

Mr. Aquila has been universally recognized as one of the world’s leading mergers and acquisitions lawyers. The strength of his practice has resulted in his being one of only a handful of lawyers who has been ranked by **Chambers Global** in Band 1 (their top tier), as an **American Lawyer** “**Dealmaker of the Year**,” as a recipient of the Atlas Award as “**Global M&A Lawyer of the Year**” and as a three-time **Law360 MVP**. For his work in corporate governance, Mr. Aquila has been named several times by the National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD) to their “**Directorship 100**” as one of the 100 most influential people in corporate governance and inside the boardroom. **Best Lawyers in America** named Mr. Aquila as its 2017 **Corporate Governance Law** “**Lawyer of the Year**.” In 2014, **Global M&A Network** recognized him as one of the top 50 lawyers in the world.

Mr. Aquila is widely acknowledged as an innovator and thought leader in the profession. In 2021 and 2019, Mr. Aquila was featured as a **BTI Client Service All-Star**. In 2018, Mr. Aquila was recognized by *The Financial Times* as one of the **Top 10 Legal Innovators in North America**. In 2015, *The FT* also recognized his representation of **Kraft** in its merger with

PRACTICES & CAPABILITIES

Healthcare & Life Sciences

Consumer & Retail

Crisis Management

General Practice

Corporate Governance

Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

Intellectual Property & Technology Transactions

Mergers & Acquisitions

M&A Financial Advisory

Restructuring

EDUCATION

1983, Brooklyn Law School, J.D.

1979, Columbia University, A.B.

BAR ADMISSIONS

New York

Heinz to form **The Kraft Heinz Company** as one of the most innovative in North America. In 2009, Mr. Aquila was selected by the **American Bar Association** as a “**Legal Rebel**” – one of the profession’s 50 leading innovators. In 2015, the ***National Law Journal*** named him as one of M&A’s “**Trailblazers**” for “excellence in dealmaking.” He is also a two-time winner of the **Burton Award for Legal Achievement** (2005, 2010) and led the Sullivan & Cromwell team advising on ***The American Lawyer’s*** 2016 “**Deal of the Year**” – **Kraft** merger with **Heinz**.

As a leader in his field, Mr. Aquila has advised numerous clients in many of the largest and most important global transactions that have been transformational across a range of business sectors. In pharmaceuticals he represented **The Upjohn Company** in its merger with **Pharmacia** to create **Pharmacia & Upjohn** and its subsequent acquisition of **Monsanto** to form **Pharmacia**. In beverage alcohol Mr. Aquila represented **Grand Metropolitan** in its combination with **Guinness** to form **Diageo** and **Diageo** in its acquisition of **Seagram Wine & Spirits**. In brewing he represented **InBev** in its successful bid for **Anheuser-Busch** and **Anheuser-Busch InBev** in its follow-on deals to acquire **SABMiller**, **Grupo Modelo** and **Oriental Brewery**. In biotech he represented **Amgen** in its acquisitions of **Abgenix**, **Onyx** and **Otezla®** and **Novartis** in its acquisition of **The Medicines Company**. In aviation he represented **British Airways** in its combination with **Iberia** to form **IAG International Airlines Group**. In consumer packaged goods Mr. Aquila represented **Pillsbury** in its combination with **General Mills** and **Kraft** in its merger with **H.J. Heinz** to form **The Kraft Heinz Company**. In equipment rental he represented **United Rentals** in its acquisitions of **RSC**, **Neff Corporation** and **BlueLine Rental**. In automated payment systems and ATMs Mr. Aquila represented **Diebold** in its combination with **Wincor Nixdorf** to form **Diebold Nixdorf**. In food and beverage retailing Mr. Aquila advised **Panera** in its acquisition by **JAB**. In oil and gas Mr. Aquila represented **Andeavor** in its acquisition by **Marathon Petroleum**. In luxury goods Mr. Aquila represented **Tiffany & Co.** in its acquisition by **LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton**. In medtech he represents **Baxter International** in its pending acquisition of **Hillrom**. In transportation he represents **Canadian Pacific Railway** in its pending acquisition of **Kansas City Southern**.

Mr. Aquila is a member of the Firm’s Management Committee and is Global Head of the Firm’s M&A Practice. Previously, Mr. Aquila was the co-managing partner of Sullivan & Cromwell’s General Practice Group (the Firm’s global corporate practice) and in that role he was responsible for almost 500 lawyers in 12 offices around the world.

Professional Activities and Community Involvement

- Frequent author and commentator on M&A, corporate governance and related trends on Bloomberg Radio, Bloomberg TV, CNBC and Fox Business and former columnist for Business Week
- Board of Trustees (former Chair) of The NALP Foundation for Law Career Research and Education
- Board of Directors of the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution (CPR)
- Board of Directors of Dress for Success Worldwide
- Board of Trustees (Chair) of Brooklyn Law School
- Board of Directors (Secretary) of the American Associates of the National Theatre
- Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Economic Club of New York and the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity
- Life Fellow of the American Bar Foundation
- *Practical Law The Journal*, “In the Boardroom” columnist

- Chaired Practising Law Institute's 2015 program on shareholder activism and regularly chairs PLI's "Hot Topic" Briefings

Rankings and Recognitions

- Named a "Healthcare Law Trailblazer" by *The National Law Journal* (2020)
- Named a Client Service All-Star by BTI (2019, 2021)
- Recognized by the *FT* as a Top 10 Legal Innovator in North America in 2018
- *Law360* MVP in M&A (2015, 2016) and Life Sciences (2013)
- Recognized in *The Legal 500 United States*
- Listed in the *IFLR1000* as a "Market Leader"
- *The Best of the Best USA*, Euromoney Legal Media Group
- *Lawdragon 500: Leading Lawyers in America*
- *Lawdragon 500: Leading Dealmakers in America*
- *The American Lawyer*, "Dealmaker of the Year" (April 2009)
- *The American Lawyer*, "Dealmaker of the Week" (November 21, 2008 and September 3, 2013)
- Recipient of the Atlas Award as the "Global M&A Lawyer of the Year" in 2010
- Selected by the American Bar Association in 2009 as a "Legal Rebel" – one of the profession's 50 leading innovators
- Recognized as a leading M&A lawyer in *The Lawyer*, "Transatlantic Elite"
- Recipient of the Burton Award for Legal Achievement (2005, 2010)
- Featured twice in *The American Lawyer*, "Daddy's Weekend on the Phone" (January 2002) and "Supersonic Lawyers" (May 2004)
- Featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, "Business Trips Leave Little Time for Luxuries" (May 31, 1996)
- Cited in *Seeing the World Through Clients' Eyes* (Nisus Consulting) as an adviser who had "really gone the extra mile and surpassed your expectations" (2004)

Mergers and Acquisitions

- *Chambers Global: The World's Leading Lawyers for Business*
- *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*
- *Guide to the World's Leading Mergers and Acquisitions Lawyers*, Euromoney Legal Media Group/International Financial Law Review
- *The Definitive Guide to Europe's Leading Advisers: Are Your Advisers Giving You the Edge?* (mergermarket)
- *PLC Cross-border Mergers and Acquisitions Handbook*
- *PLC Global Counsel Mergers and Acquisitions Handbook*, Practical Law Company
- *PLC Which Lawyer? Yearbook*, Practical Law Company
- *New York Super Lawyers*
- *The Best Lawyers in America*
- *The International Who's Who of Merger & Acquisition Lawyers*

Corporate Governance

- *Directorship 100* The National Association of Corporate Directors (NACD)
- *PLC Cross-border Directors' Duties and Liabilities Handbook*
- *PLC Cross-border Corporate Governance Handbook*
- *New York Super Lawyers*
- *Best Lawyers in America* Corporate Governance Law Lawyer of the Year (2017)
- *The International Who's Who of Corporate Governance Lawyers*

Leveraged Buyouts and Private Equity

- *The Best Lawyers in America*