

Rising Star: Skadden's Matea Bozja

By Brent Godwin

Law360 (June 22, 2023, 1:23 PM EDT) -- Matea Bozja, a Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP partner, is a go-to choice for high-profile clients like sovereign wealth fund GIC, which she steered through a \$15 billion takeover of a net lease real estate investment trust, earning her a spot among the real estate attorneys under 40 honored as Law360 Rising Stars.

THE BIGGEST DEAL OF HER CAREER:

Bozja said the GIC buyout of Store Capital and the \$2.6 billion acquisition financing needed for the deal marked the first time the sovereign wealth fund had led on a take-private deal in the U.S. It also marked the largest deal in which she played a lead role.

"This transaction was challenging, as it involved coordinating multiple practitioners across several practice groups, including mergers and acquisitions, tax, regulatory, labor, capital markets and banking, in addition to real estate attorneys, on very tight timelines and for a very large portfolio of properties," she said.

Working with colleagues across offices and practices enabled the team to address challenges quickly and ensure a seamless closing for the deal, Bozja noted.

The deal was the second-largest REIT transaction in 2022, and the buyout resulted in GIC's ownership of a portfolio of 3,012 single-tenant commercial and industrial properties across the U.S.

WHY SHE'S A REAL ESTATE ATTORNEY:

Bozja said she discovered a passion for commercial real estate while she was still a Skadden summer associate.

"I chose real estate due to the fast-paced, complex nature of the work, and in particular the ability to work on corporate transactions with a tangible component," she said.



2023
LAW360[®]
**RISING
STAR**



Matea Bozja
Skadden

Age: 36
Home base: Chicago
Position: Partner
Law school: University of Chicago Law School
First job after law school: Associate at Skadden

The head of Skadden's Chicago real estate practice, Nancy Olson, described Bozja as the future of the group.

AN INTERESTING DEAL SHE'S WORKED ON:

In addition to the Store deal, Bozja led GIC's entry into a \$4.4 billion joint venture with Dream Industrial REIT to acquire and take private the Summit Industrial Income REIT in Canada.

"This deal was particularly interesting as it involved cross-border coordination with local counsels and cross-border differences in merger laws, real estate diligence processes and structuring considerations, for example," she said.

Bozja was lead counsel in the deal, which officially closed Feb. 17.

HER PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

Bozja is proud of her work training younger attorneys and, through serving as an associate co-chair and then a counsel co-chair of Skadden's Summer Associate Committee, helping the next generation of attorneys start their careers.

"I have also had the privilege to use my legal knowledge to effect change through my pro bono work, which has included serving as a guardian ad litem for minors through Chicago Volunteer Legal Services and working with the Foundation for Homan Square in connection with transforming the original Sears Tower into a new hub for arts, culture and community development," she said.

NOTABLE DEALS SHE HAS WORKED ON:

Bozja played an instrumental role in GIC's \$8.1 billion acquisition, joint venture formation and financing for a portfolio of industrial properties from IndCor Properties. This deal was the largest real estate transaction of 2014, according to information from Skadden.

Apart from representing GIC, Bozja is also a go-to attorney for other large clients.

"I played a leading role in representing Brookdale Senior Living Inc. in the negotiation of multipart deals with Healthpeak Properties Inc., formerly HCP Inc., including a \$510 million acquisition of a joint venture interest, the termination of certain management agreements — including a \$100M termination fee — and the restructuring of a portfolio of leased communities," she said.

She also led the team advising Resort Lifestyle Communities, a senior housing developer and operator, in the sale of an independent living portfolio for roughly \$650 million and the negotiation of ongoing management agreements.

ON THE FUTURE OF REAL ESTATE LAW:

Bozja said she sees the industry becoming even more reliant on digital records, and it will demand faster and faster information and more efficient recording in real estate record-keeping and digital interactions.

"I think we will also continue to see more and more global deals, as companies seek out investment opportunities in new markets," she said. "These deals will require firms and attorneys to have expertise and relationships in place to run deals across multiple jurisdictions and the ability to reconcile conflicting laws and regulations."

— As told to Brent Godwin. Editing by Adam LoBelia.

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2023 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,350 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of May 1, 2023, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.

All Content © 2003-2023, Portfolio Media, Inc.