

Massachusetts Powerhouse: Skadden

By Aaron Keller

Law360 (September 2, 2025, 4:00 PM EDT) -- Since entering the Boston legal market in 1973, Skadden has spent five decades brokering billion-dollar deals and mastering emerging local issues that were at times harbingers of national trends for corporations that serve the Bay State, earning it a spot on Law360's Regional Powerhouses list for 2025.

Though Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP's Massachusetts presence dates back half as long as its century-old peers on our Regional Powerhouses survey, its embrace of the market is in no way half as strong. The firm has clients in the region's flourishing biotech, life sciences, financial services and insurance industries, and its Boston office helps spearhead global litigation.

Skadden's mergers and acquisitions attorneys recently advised Bedford, Massachusetts-based Aspen Technology Inc.'s board of directors on the software company's \$7.2 billion buyout by Emerson Electric Co. It also guided a financial adviser through AbbVie Inc.'s \$8.7 billion buyout of Cerevel Therapeutics Inc., based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Plus, Skadden attorneys from seven countries and 11 practice groups played roles in Massachusetts-based Vertex Pharmaceuticals Inc.'s \$4.9 billion acquisition of biotech firm Alpine Immune Sciences Inc.

In addition to advising clients on mergers and acquisitions, the firm focuses on tax, investment management, restructuring, government enforcement, healthcare regulation and litigation. It also offers legal advice on corporate governance, employee benefits and executive compensation.

James R. Carroll, Skadden's global head of litigation and controversy practices, said the Boston office, where he is stationed, is fully integrated into the firm and fully integrated into the community. Major M&A deals for New England clients often require a tapestry of talent, "and one of the things we're most proud of is that we're able to weave that together," Carroll said.

Founded in New York City in 1948, Boston was Skadden's first expansion outside the Big Apple. As of April 1, 58 of the firm's more than 1,200 global attorneys worked in its Boston office.

"We think of ourselves as one firm, regardless of where we are," Carroll said.



Moshe Spinowitz, who is head of the Boston office, said transactional work routinely spans jurisdictions and practice groups. A mergers and acquisitions lawyer in Wilmington, Delaware, may join an intellectual property lawyer in New York and a tax lawyer in Boston when advising a client.

"Then, after a deal, you have to integrate the parts that have been brought together," he said. "We'll work with our national tax practice on that piece of the post-merger integration."

Carroll said what sets Skadden apart is its "zealous commitment to client service."

"The ethos of Skadden and Skadden Boston is client service, first and last," Spinowitz added.

That means "walking through walls to get the best result possible for our client" and "bringing creativity and commitment to that task at all times," he said.

That focus allowed Skadden to identify two key legal issues for Massachusetts clients and parlay its knowledge to other cases nationwide.

With Skadden attorneys on board, Airlines for America, a trade association of 10 major carriers, prevailed in the District of Massachusetts against assertions by the commonwealth's attorney general that pilots, flight attendants and ground crewmembers were covered by Massachusetts sick leave laws.

The court agreed that the federal Airline Deregulation Act blocked the attorney general from enforcing the sick leave laws in the air transportation sector.

According to Skadden, the case was the first federal preemption argument of its kind to succeed at trial. Carroll said the firm's expertise on the issue has since been applied in other jurisdictions.

Additionally, because the outcome of a clinical trial can cause biotech and pharmaceutical stocks to gyrate considerably, companies in those sectors can face exposure to securities litigation and Employee Retirement Income Security Act claims, Carroll said.

Skadden's Boston attorneys developed early expertise in those matters and now handle them in cooperation with local counsel in other jurisdictions, Carroll said.

The office's litigation victories in the second half of 2024 and the first portion of 2025 included the dismissals of Medicare Secondary Payer Act claims against Boston-based Liberty Mutual Insurance Co. and its affiliates. Skadden attorneys also scored the dismissal, with prejudice, of securities fraud class action claims against iRobot Corp. in connection with its merger with Amazon.

In state court, Skadden helped investment and wealth management firm Eaton Vance Management and its CEO prevail on an investor's challenge to bylaw amendments adopted by several of its sponsored funds. The amendments said trustees could only be ousted when new candidates receive votes from more than 50% of outstanding shares, even if the challengers receive more votes in strict totals.

"The case tested the legality of establishing a heightened voting threshold for prevailing in contested director elections, an increasingly popular anti-takeover measure in the closed-end fund industry," the firm said in a statement describing the outcome.

Carroll said Skadden's Boston office is a natural destination for area law school graduates with a desire

to practice near the homes of America's forebearers, and where history and the present blend at every turn.

"You're walking the streets where the issues arose that led to the fundamental principles that govern us today," he said of the city's history. "It's in the air here, I would say."

Spinowitz said there are a "range of reasons why people come to law school in Boston, and then choose to stay in Boston to practice."

"The history is part of it," he said. "We're fortunate to do the legal work we do ... in such a great city."

--Editing by Kristen Becker.