

## How 3 Mid-Law Firms Grew Their Partner Ranks

By **Emma Cueto**

Law360 (March 3, 2023, 4:24 PM EST) -- Amid an uncertain economic landscape, several Mid-Law firms this year posted their largest-ever partnership classes, growing their firms organically and promoting class sizes well above this year's average.

Law360 Pulse analyzed partnership classes announced by midsize, regional and boutique firms from Dec. 1 to Feb. 14 to determine which firms stood out from the rest during this year's partner promotion season. Overall, Mid-Law firm promotions held steady, with firms promoting an average of 5.28 attorneys compared to last year's average of 5.3.

# The Largest Mid-Law Partner Classes of 2023

Of the 109 firms analyzed by Law360 Pulse this year, Benesch had this year's largest partnership class, with several other firms also promoting notable classes.

Firm	Total Head Count	2022 Partner Class	2023 Partner Class
Benesch	303	13	20
Winstead	311	12	14
Bond Schoeneck	250	6	12
Morris Manning	195	N/A	12
Arnall Golden	174	3	11
Brown Rudnick	174	4	8
Parker Poe	239	6	11
Spencer Fane	388	7	11
Brownstein Hyatt	269	7	10
Genova Burns	70	N/A	10
Banner Witcoff	118	6	9
Bass Berry & Sims	307	6	9
Smith Gambrell	234	2	9
Waller	322	N/A	9
Finnegan	280	N/A	8
Lane Powell	155	4	8
McAfee Taft	175	7	8
Phillips Lytle	153	3	8
Reinhart	193	N/A	8
Rivkin Radler	206	3	8

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However, some firms stood out above the rest, with partner classes more than double the average.

John Remsen, head of the law firm strategy consultancy The Remsen Group, said that for many midsize firms, despite a more negative economic outlook this year, retention is still top of mind after the talent wars and uncertainty of the last few years — and partnership opportunities are a big way to retain talent.

"In our surveys [of midsize firms], we've seen retention soar to the No. 1 issue," Remsen said. "Attorneys, especially associates, get plucked off by BigLaw for the money. Smaller firms can't compete on money. So, to counter, they offer culture, collegiality, work-life balance — and a path to

partner."

## A LOOK AT MID-LAW PROMOTIONS

Law360 Pulse examined recently announced partner classes covering more than 100 Mid-Law firms, finding class sizes have stayed steady, a lack of progress for women attorneys and heavy activity in some regions. Read more here:

- [Mid-Law Partner Classes Growing Fast In Southeast States](#)
- [Numbers Stay Stagnant For Women In Mid-Law Promotions](#)

In addition to the retention benefits, those promotions can also help the firm by increasing a partner's billing rate, he noted, something firms especially consider when making nonequity promotions.

Partnership classes are the result of years of training and strategic decisions by law firms, he said, and homegrown talent remains important to many midsize firms. Despite the fact that organic growth takes a long time to achieve, it also has plenty of advantages for firms.

"We get to train and mold [attorneys] to our way of practicing," Remsen said. "My experience is that it's a long play, but the kids we bring in early tend to be the ones who stick around."

The three most notable firms in this year's analysis are below.

### **Benesch**

Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP promoted this year's largest partner class among Mid-Law firms by a wide margin. Benesch's 20-partner class was much bigger than the next closest contender, Texas firm Winstead PC's class of 14. It was also the largest class in Benesch's history, according to the firm.

Of the 20 partners, three-quarters are located in the firm's home base of Ohio — 14 in Cleveland and one in Columbus. The firm also promoted four in its growing Chicago office and one in Delaware. It was a litigation-heavy class, with eight of the group belonging to the firm's litigation department. The real estate, intellectual property and corporate and securities practices also saw multiple promotions.

Managing partner Gregg A. Eisenberg told Law360 Pulse in a statement that the large partner class size was a reflection of the firm's overall growth.

"Benesch has nearly doubled in size in the last six years," he said. "Fifty-four new attorneys joined the firm in 2022, with all of them retained as we head into 2023, but more importantly we have some of the highest retention rates in the country."

Looking ahead, the firm is especially hoping to grow its San Francisco office, he added.

After Benesch, the largest class sizes among Mid-Law firms were Winstead, with 14 new partners, followed by Morris Manning & Martin LLP and Bond Schoeneck & King PLLC, with 12 partner promotions each.

Several other firms also announced that this year's class was their largest, including Winstead; Arnall Golden Gregory LLP, which promoted 11 attorneys; and Davis Graham & Stubbs LLP, which promoted six.

### **Genova Burns**

Genova Burns LLC promoted the largest partnership class relative to its size. The New Jersey-based firm lists 70 attorneys on its website, 32 of them partners, and promoted a partnership class of 10 attorneys, accounting for more than 14% of its headcount.

The firm also had the largest partnership class of the firms with a headcount under 100 analyzed by

Law360 Pulse.

"Genova Burns is proud to add as partners great lawyers with a history of excellent service to clients," managing partner Jim Burns told Law360 Pulse in an email. "It's what we do — put on the field every day a full team with the best skill level in every position. This was the right move for our firm and for our clients, whose confidence each of our new partners enjoys."

All of the newly minted partners are based in New Jersey, though seven are dually based out of the firm's New York City office. Their practice groups include bankruptcy, real estate and labor and employment.

Other firms with partnership classes that were notably large compared to their total headcounts include Brach Eichler LLC, which promoted seven attorneys, accounting for 8.24% of its 85-attorney headcount; 118-attorney Banner Witcoff, which promoted nine attorneys, or 7.63% of its headcount; and Hagens Berman Sobol Shapiro LLP, an 82-attorney firm that promoted six attorneys to partner, equivalent to 7.32% of its total headcount.

## **Arnall Golden**

In addition to promoting its largest-ever class size, Arnall Golden Gregory LLP saw the most notable increase in its partnership class size since last year compared to other firms Law360 Pulse analyzed both years.

In January 2022, the firm announced that three attorneys had been made partner. The firm nearly quadrupled that number this year to an 11-attorney class.

Nine of the attorneys are based in Atlanta, and two are based in Washington, D.C. The class is also almost equally distributed across practice groups, with four attorneys in the firm's health care practice, three in the real estate group and two each in litigation and the corporate and finance group.

The firm did not respond to a request for comment.

Other firms that more than doubled their partnership class this year include Smith Gambrell & Russell LLP, which went from two to nine new partners, and Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP, which increased from two to seven.

*This analysis is based on information from 109 Mid-Law firms, and includes only promotions from non-partner positions to partner positions announced from Dec. 1 to Feb 14. Non-U.S.-based attorneys were excluded.*

--Editing by Alanna Weissman and Marygrace Anderson.

*Update: This story has been updated with additional information about the methodology.*

*Correction: A previous version of this story misstated the number of U.S. partners promoted at Brown Rudnick. This error has been corrected.*