

## MVP: Vinson & Elkins' Stephen Gill

*Law360 (December 10, 2018, 4:11 PM EST)* -- Stephen M. Gill, a partner in Vinson & Elkins LLP's mergers and acquisitions and capital markets practices, has wielded his vast experience in the energy space this year to keep intense competition at bay as lawyers from other big-name firms swoop into Houston and try to grab market share, making him one of Law360's 2018 Energy MVPs.

### ***HIS BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS YEAR:***

Gill takes pride in a high-horsepower competitive drive, and nowhere is that more evident than in making sure the firm represents big names in high-stakes transactions.

"We're known as the best in the energy space. There are a whole lot of firms outside of Houston who are trying to open offices and take that market share," he said, crediting his practice with "taking and expanding the market share despite that we have all these new firms that have come in."

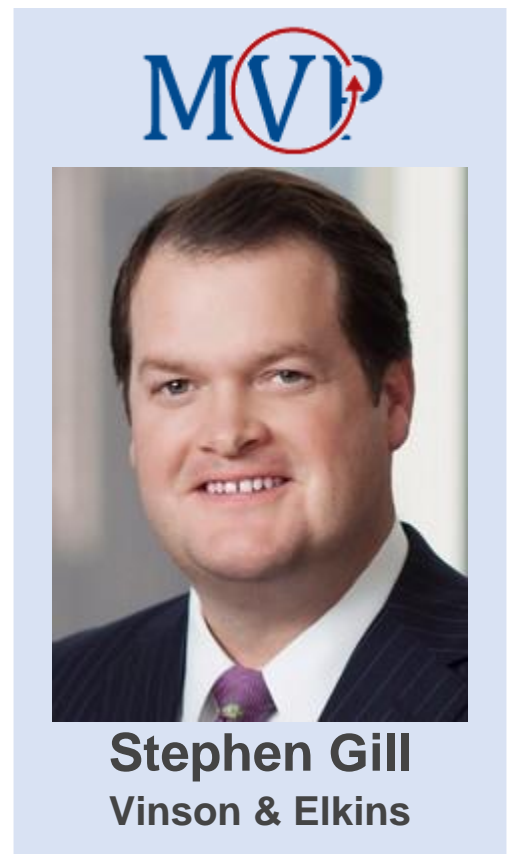
Houston, as de facto energy sector central, has a lot of indigenous law practices that specialize in the field, but Gill is laser-focused on keeping Vinson & Elkins top-tier.

"We still have maintained a very solid market position," he said. "I view that as my own and the firm's own biggest accomplishment."

### ***HIS BIGGEST CHALLENGE THIS YEAR:***

The flip side of achieving and retaining a big chunk of the market is that a solid position also presents its unique difficulties. Facing off with other top firms in competing for clientele is one of Gill's most notable challenges day-to-day.

The big energy deals that tend to consume Gill's and his firm's time also attract aggressive legal talent from New York and elsewhere, he pointed out.



"With national and New York-based firms trying to move into Houston to try to capture that kind of work," he said, "that has been a challenge, and I think it's been a challenge that we've wholeheartedly accepted. A number of historical Houston firms have been hurt by that infiltration. We have in many cases expanded our market share.

"We're pretty optimistic about the future," Gill added.

***WHAT MOTIVATES HIM:***

For Gill, he's usually putting points on the board, no matter what the challenge in his work/life balance.

"I'm a very competitive person by nature, and I want to achieve success, and I obviously want to provide for my family," he said.

"Then it is a desire on my part to be remembered as someone who was one of the best M&A attorneys of their generation," Gill said. "It's that competitive drive, that's what fuels me."

"It's really a desire to be the best."

***ADVICE HE HAS FOR JUNIOR ATTORNEYS:***

To make it big in the world of megamergers and acquisitions — especially in the highly competitive energy space — Gill offers young lawyers advice that might befit a pro athlete: Make plenty of repetitions, and you just might get there.

Gill said he would advise them to make sure they are positioning themselves at a place that gives them as many "reps" as possible.

"The more deals you do, the better you get as an attorney," he said. While junior lawyers definitely need to watch out for getting overburdened, they should make sure they're getting enough work to get noticed and move up, he said.

"The practice of law can be demanding, and they're worried about getting overworked, and that's a valid concern," Gill said. "It's obviously a balance."

Gill also offered that up-and-coming attorneys should make a point of picking a place where "people are invested in your career" and really like the teaching role.

"I think there are a lot of firms where you can get reps, and I think there's a lot of firms where you can get mentorship," he said.

"Those two combinations are the things you want to make sure you're looking out for," Gill added. "You want to have success professionally, but you also want to have a good balance personally."

— *As told to Christopher Cole*

*Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2018 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 1,000 submissions.*

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