

Rising Star: Vinson & Elkins' Lande Spottswood

By **Morgan Conley**

Law360 (October 11, 2019, 9:30 AM EDT) -- Vinson & Elkins LLP's Lande Spottswood has built a career working on some of the most sophisticated transactions for major players in the energy sector, including representing Energy Transfer Partners in its \$60 billion merger with Energy Transfer Equity, earning her a spot as one of five energy law practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

STANDOUT DEALS OF HER CAREER:

Spottswood credits her repeat client TPG Capital with helping her grow as an attorney by continuously challenging her with complex, exciting transactions.

One especially notable deal for Spottswood was advising TPG during the sale of their portfolio company Nexeo Solutions to a special purpose acquisition company, or SPAC, controlled by now-Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross.

"There's never a boring deal involving a SPAC. There's always a lot of moving pieces and that was a complicated transaction that had a lot of execution risk and the deal team trusted us to help them out on the legal side and it was really exciting for us," Spottswood said.

Most recently, Spottswood represented Blackstone's infrastructure fund when it acquired the controlling interest in midstream energy infrastructure company Tallgrass Energy LP for about \$3.3 billion. Last year, Spottswood worked with Energy Transfer Partners in its acquisition by Energy Transfer Equity, a deal valued at about \$60 billion.

THE FIRST TIME SHE REMEMBERS MAKING AN IMPACT:

Spottswood said the first time she felt like a key player in a deal was working on Devon Energy Corp.'s 2013 move to combine all of

RISING
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STAR



Lande Spottswood
Vinson & Elkins

Age: 35

Home base: Houston

Position: Partner

Law school: Harvard Law

First job after law school: Associate at Vinson & Elkins

its U.S. midstream assets with the assets of Crosstex Energy Inc. and Crosstex Energy LP to create a new midstream business.

“It was a really fascinating deal because we were taking a midstream business out of a big stand-alone E&P company and combining it with another stand-alone public midstream company,” Spottswood said. “But in doing that, we were, putting in this whole new structure on top and negotiating new governance arrangements and basically doing two IPOs along with a merger and a big contribution all at once in a very big deal.”

“One of the most fun parts about it was when the transaction was announced, it was a giant wealth-generating transaction for a lot of people because the market viewed [the combined company] as so much more than the sum of its parts,” she added.

WHAT DREW HER TO ENERGY:

Spottswood considers herself an M&A lawyer first and foremost but her interests and location greatly contributed to her extensive portfolio advising on energy transactions.

“I want to do the most sophisticated transactions with the most sophisticated clients and I sit in Houston, Texas. A lot of the sophisticated transactions happening geographically right around me are certainly in the energy space,” Spottswood said. “I don't think I made a decision to specialize in energy, so much as I made a decision to move to what I thought would be a very exciting market to be a young lawyer with the transactional practice. And the energy industry, since it's so capital intensive, helps make Houston that market.”

THE PART OF THE JOB SHE FINDS MOST REWARDING:

Spottswood said she works hard to foster strong relationships with her clients, wanting them to be able to rely on her not only for legal advice but for strategic advice as well.

“I get the most positive reinforcement, the most professional satisfaction when I find that I have one of those relationships where a client that I respect is looking to me for legal advice, yes, but legal advice as it fits into a larger strategic picture,” Spottswood said.

Spottswood also is proud of being a working mother to three young boys, saying statistically it is evident that M&A practices at big law firms tend to have a low retention rate of women.

“For me, it's always been not just worth it, but there was never really a choice. My three little munchkins are perfect, but I can't imagine not doing what I do from a professional standpoint,” Spottswood said. “They are the thing in my life I'm most proud of but I'm also proud that they have a mom who has her own professional identity and derives joy from that too.”

WHERE THE INDUSTRY IS HEADED:

Spottswood anticipates the energy industry will continue to evolve in the coming years.

“We are obviously in the middle of an energy transition,” Spottswood said. “I don't mean that fossil fuel-based energy is going away anytime soon, I don't think that's true. But I think that there's an intense focus, as there should be, on how to transition to lower carbon-intense forms of powering the world.”

— As told to Morgan Conley

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2019 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,300 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 years old as of April 30, 2019, in order to be considered for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.

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