

M&A attorney's practice focuses on domestic, middle market deals

By Brian Cox

Cristiane “Crissy” Wolfe is a self-confessed “deal junkie.”

“I love negotiating and closing deals,” says the Atlanta attorney, who is a partner at Krevolin Horst, LLC, where she regularly represents middle market companies in multimillion-dollar transactions, on both the buy and sell side.

She thrives on the rush from working deep into the night, trying to get the final details of a deal in place. A tremendous sense of accomplishment comes from closing a deal.

“If you’re on the sell side, it’s somebody who put their blood, sweat, and tears into their company and when they walk away with millions, maybe hundreds of millions, it’s a big moment,” she says.



Krevolin Horst, LLC attorney Crissy Wolfe enjoys running and completed the Walt Disney World 2020 Marathon.



Wolfe discovered her affinity for mergers and acquisitions after first working in immigration law as a legal assistant at a small law firm in Washington, D.C., and then practicing tax law as a young associate in the Atlanta, Ga. offices of the international law firm Paul Hastings.

When eventually a department head forced her to choose between tax law – which she had been practicing for several years – and M&A, Wolfe says her preference was clear.

“Tax law is like a big puzzle, and if you like puzzles, it’s great,” she says. “But M&A is fun.”

It is fitting, in one sense, that Wolfe’s career path to corporate and transaction law should entail a few stops along the way.

When she was young, Wolfe’s family moved around a bit. Her father’s career as an executive for various furniture companies took the family from Wooster, Ohio, where Wolfe was born, to a suburb outside of Cleveland and then to Muskegon, Mich., when she was 7 years old. They moved again her senior year in high school, this time to Eldersburg, Md.

Wolfe learned to adapt and engage with different social circles, which is a trait that has proved beneficial in her legal career.

“I had to make new groups of friends quite a few times so I actually think it’s made me less fearful in business development scenarios,” she says.

After graduating from high school, Wolfe attended Boston University, where she met her future husband, Steven, who also had designs on becoming a lawyer. She graduated a semester early in 2002 and moved to Virginia as she further considered law school. For about 18 months, she worked at a small D.C. immigration firm as a legal assistant.

Her interest in immigration law was first piqued by her family’s history of hosting an exchange student from the former Yugoslavia as well as his younger brother when war broke out.

She found the work engrossing and meaningful. The firm largely worked with professionals looking to immigrate to the U.S. One of the senior attorneys she worked for had years of experience helping Iranians come to America. One of the first cases Wolfe ever

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Crissy Wolfe with her husband, Steven, and their two sons, Jacob and Caleb.

worked on was helping an Iranian man bring his brother to the U.S. It was a long and complicated process that ultimately ended in success. Afterward, the client delivered a beautiful rug to Wolfe's door as a gesture of gratitude. She still has the rug.

"Those clients were some of the most appreciative clients I've ever had," recalls Wolfe.

Her experience at the immigration firm convinced her that she wanted to be an attorney and she enrolled in the University of Virginia Law School. She landed a summer internship at Paul Hastings in Atlanta, attracted by the international firm's large immigration department. After graduating, she returned to Atlanta, where Steven was practicing after having attended Emory University School of Law, and accepted an offer from Paul Hastings in its tax department because there were no openings in immigration.

As it turned out, Wolfe discovered she loved tax law as well and she thrived in the Big Law environment.

"Big Law culture is fascinating, almost cultish," she says. "It worked very well for me and was a great foundation for my career."

She left Paul Hastings after three years to join McKenna Long and Aldridge, which eventually merged with Dentons where she made partner and made the switch from tax law to working in M&A.

After nine years at Dentons, Wolfe decided she needed a change. She now had two young children and was working primarily on complex international deals that required late-night or pre-dawn phone calls.

"What I realized was that I had focused on mostly domestic, middle market M&A for most of my career and that my practice had drifted away from what I had been doing for a long time and what I really enjoyed," she says. "I decided to find some place where I could practice the way I wanted to practice."

What she found was the boutique law firm of Krevolin Horst, LLC, where she has been since 2019. The firm has grown over the years from its initial focus on corporate, commercial real estate, and business litigation to include technology, employment, intellectual property, whistleblower claims, white collar criminal defense, nonprofit and education matters, crisis management, data breach and cybersecurity, election law, finance and lending, franchise, health care, mergers and acquisitions, and private equity/venture capital.

In the M&A arena, Wolfe started out working with provider-based health care companies and also has done work with aviation, manufacturing, and tech companies.

Currently, the middle market and lower middle market has had a lot of focus on it, according to Wolfe.

"There's a lot of dry powder out there," she says. "There's a lot of money out there to do acquisitions. I feel the lower and middle market has not been affected by general economic trends, though that could change at any time."

Now having lived and worked in Atlanta for nearly 20 years, Wolfe says the legal market remains fairly small and congenial, while the city is attractive to business.

"It's been a great market to practice in," she says. "It's small but sophisticated."

In elementary school, Wolfe says she wanted to be president or perhaps a doctor, but knew she didn't want to be a teacher, which is ironic because she now finds she appreciates that aspect of being a lawyer.

"I enjoy working with my colleagues and my associates and training them and seeing people flourish and grow both in their technical skills and their soft skills," she says.

Mentoring, she says, is unique to each attorney and works most effectively when it is organic rather than forced.

"If mentor and mentee don't hit it off, then they're not going to have ultimately the same quality of relationship as when you find a true mentor," she says. "Mentors can come in any shape or form. There are lots of women who have reached out to me to be a mentor to them as a woman and I'm always happy to do that. On the other hand, one of my best mentors was a man. So be open to mentorship from anyone."

Wolfe currently serves as vice president of Atlanta Legal Aid

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and helped form its Service Council. She is a co-founder of the tremendously successful fund-raiser, Beer Tasting and BBQ Battle, which until it was discontinued during the pandemic was one of the most well-attended summer events in the Atlanta legal community.

"At its height, it was pretty awesome," says Wolfe of the event. "It was totally fun."

Wolfe's husband, Steven, is an employment lawyer who in 2015 started his own law firm, Legare Attwood & Wolfe.

She tells the story that Steven came home to announce he had great news – the law firm was ready to get up and running. Wolfe had great news of her own: She was pregnant. They now calculate the age of the firm by how old their first son is.

A willingness to try new things is an integral part of Wolfe's personality. She is "game to try anything once," which is how she came to play in an inner tube water polo league for a semester during law school. It's also why she said "sure" when a friend asked if she wanted to run a 10 Miler even though she'd never been much into running. In school, she played basketball, rugby, and later picked up tennis.

Recently, she and her husband started learning karate along with their two sons, Jacob and Caleb.

"It's been a challenge mentally as well as physically," she says. "It's helped me get closer to the kids. It's sort of become a family thing."



Crissy Wolfe enjoys traveling with her family husband, Steven, and their two children, Jacob and Caleb.