

Ropes & Gray LLP

2018 TOP 100 LAW FIRM HIGHLIGHTS



#5 BEST TO WORK FOR

DIVERSITY

- #1 Overall Diversity
- #1 Diversity for Individuals with Disabilities
- #1 Diversity for LGBT Individuals
- #4 Diversity for Women
- #6 Diversity for Minorities

QUALITY OF LIFE

- #1 Formal Training
- #2 Firm Culture
- #3 Compensation
- #4 Satisfaction
- #5 Informal Training, Mentoring & Sponsorship
- #7 Hours
- #8 Associate/Partner Relations
- #10 Career Outlook
- #10 Selectivity

THE SCOOP

Ropes & Gray has expanded in every measurable way in the 21st century, acquiring smaller boutique firms in the States while claiming new turf in Asia and Europe. Known for its corporate and asset management work, the firm has adapted to law's accelerated globalization by bolstering practice areas such as intellectual property, litigation, life sciences, and healthcare.

From Microchips to Private Equity

In recent years, Ropes & Gray's litigation practices, including its intellectual property group, have tried seminal cases with far-reaching impact.

The firm's general litigation practice has been on a roll recently, helping win a big jury trial for Goldman Sachs in a case closely watched by the media, and representing a number of clients in several high-profile data breach cases, including The Home Depot, Target, Wyndham Hotels and Neiman Marcus. The firm's appellate group argued five recent cases before the Supreme Court, including a seminal case for the mutual funds industry and the landmark marriage equality case in 2015. The litigation practice has been bolstered in recent years by a strong government enforcement group, which has made a name for itself with high-profile anti-corruption work in China, including leading an internal investigation for GlaxoSmithKline. The firm also secured a favorable resolution in the prosecution of former BP engineer Kurt Mix relating to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, with the government dropping all obstruction of justice charges against him. Its IP matters range from touch-screens for video games to patents covering high-performance computer chips, and computer-driven annuities, and Ropes & Gray has been recognized by leading publications for its achievements. Recently the firm won high-stakes patent cases for Apple and Samsung at the appellate level.

As Ropes' litigation practices boom, its private equity practice continues to push forward. Led by partner and firm chairman Brad Malt—who founded the firm's private equity group—Ropes & Gray has built up a strong leveraged buyout practice, in addition to impressive financial services and asset management practices. The firm's private equity clients include many of the world's largest private equity firms, including Audax Group, Bain Capital, Berkshire Partners, KarpReilly, HIG Capital, TPG Capital, Thomas H. Lee Partners, TSG Consumer Partners, Silver Lake Partners, and Welsh, Carson, Anderson & Stowe. The firm is counsel for more than 1,000 mutual funds (or their directors). Ropes & Gray is also among the top firms in structuring IPOs, representing both issuers and many of the leading underwriters.

Pro Bono Pros

In addition to the impressive variety of its practices, Ropes & Gray is devoted to carrying on its tradition of pro bono work and community service. Associates and partners work in a range of areas—including child abduction cases, housing and homelessness, voting rights, nonprofit incorporation, immigration, and asylum—and for a variety of organizations—such as Immigration Equality, Lawyers'

FIRM INFO

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LOCATIONS

Boston, MA • Chicago, IL • New York, NY • San Francisco, CA • Silicon Valley, CA • Washington, DC • Hong Kong • London • Seoul • Shanghai • Tokyo

PRACTICE AREAS

Anti-Corruption • Antitrust • Appellate Litigation • Asset Management • Banking • Business Restructuring • Biotechnology • Business & Securities Litigation • Capital Markets • Colleges & Universities • Corporate • Cybersecurity • Debt Financing • Executive Compensation & Employee Benefits • Financial Services • Government Enforcement • Government Relations & Regulatory • Health Care • Hedge Funds • Insurance & Risk Management • Intellectual Property Rights Management • Intellectual Property Litigation • Intellectual Property Transactions • Investment Management • Labor & Employment • Life Sciences • Litigation • Mergers & Acquisitions • Privacy & Data Security • Private Client Group • Private Equity • Private Investment Funds • Public Finance • Real Estate Investments & Transactions • Securities & Futures Enforcement • Securities & Public Companies • Social Media • Sovereign Investment Group • Special Situations • Sports • Tax & Benefits • Technology, Media & Telecommunications

THE STATS

No. of attorneys: 1,307

No. of offices: 11

Summer associate offers (2016):

144 out of 144 (2Ls only)

Chairman: R. Bradford Malt

Managing Partner: David C. Chapin

Hiring Partner: Peter Erichsen

EMPLOYMENT CONTACT

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Committee for Civil Rights, Accion, Human Rights First and Veterans Consortium. High-impact opportunities from the past year included the firm's role arguing for marriage equality at the U.S. Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, and the historic resolution of a multi-year class action litigation that sparked meaningful prison reform at New York City's Rikers Island jails.

IN THE NEWS

March 2017: Canada Goose on the Loose

With winter on its way out, Ropes & Gray represented leading outerwear maker Canada Goose Holdings Inc. in its initial public offering. Canada Goose is dually listed on the TSX in Canada and the NYSE in the United States, and closed its first day of trading up more than 25 percent on the NYSE.

February 2017: Human Trafficking in Tanzania

Although Tanzania passed the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act in 2008, forced labor and sex trafficking continue to be a serious problem. As part of Ropes & Gray's global pro bono partnership with Lawyers Without Borders, a team of attorneys spent a week in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania providing training to local justice officials in the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes. This marked Ropes & Gray's second collaboration with Lawyers Without Borders since 2015; the first was in Kenya.

February 2017: Docs v. Glocks

In a highly anticipated decision in *Wollschlaeger v. Florida* (known as the "Docs v. Glocks" case), the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals struck down the bulk of the Florida "gun gag" law that had curbed doctors from asking patients about firearm ownership. Representing doctors and medical groups that had challenged the law on First Amendment grounds, Ropes & Gray successfully argued that the law impermissibly restricted physician speech. The decision will have direct impact on the health and safety of Florida families.

August 2016: Guiding Gawker

In a case that had all of New York media talking, Ropes & Gray represented Gawker Media Group in its Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings, as well as in the divestiture of its assets to Univision for \$135 million.

July 2016: Coffee Case Canned

Ropes & Gray litigators secured dismissal of a securities class action suit against Keurig Green Mountain. Relying heavily on statements from six confidential witnesses, plaintiffs asserted that the company had made false statements to investors about the technological success of the Keurig 2.0 product. When interviewed by Ropes & Gray, four of these witnesses stated that the pleadings were not accurate and that they had never made the statements attributed to them. After oral argument on motions for dismissal and for sanctions filed by Ropes & Gray, the plaintiffs agreed to voluntarily dismiss the complaint, with prejudice.

GETTING HIRED

Vault's Verdict: Ropes & Gray is looking for smart lawyers who will fit its team-oriented and laid back culture. Expect behavioral interview questions mixed in with the standard conversational questions.

Hiring Process

- "Ropes is very concerned with fit. To maintain an environment of mutual respect and excellence, the firm is very careful in this respect. That means that there have been candidates who may have airs about them or something indicating that they are not collaborative or may be condescending and, even though they did very well in law school, they are passed over due to fit."
- "The firm seems to particularly prize a confident earnestness in potential associates. The firm culture is a little bit nerdy (which I mean as a compliment and if you took it as such, you'd probably be a good fit here). It is inclusive and above all (given the many stresses of life in Big Law) humane. If, however, your motto is 'work hard, play hard' or some such nonsense, you'd probably be happier with a NY-based firm."

OUR SURVEY SAYS

Vault's Verdict: Ropes associates can hardly find a negative word to utter about their employer, which is probably why the firm is perennially near the top of our ranking of the best firms to work for. The firm's culture is committed to both professionalism and work/life balance, the comp is market-rate, the training is top notch, and the substantive work starts on day one.

Satisfaction

- “Very satisfied. Both as a junior and mid-level, colleagues were supportive and intent on helping associates learn how to be a lawyer. Responsibility is given at an early age, but the firm’s partners and associates are also willing to explain and help lawyers grow. Now that I’ve become a senior associate, the firm is transparent about our expectations and I enjoy helping younger lawyers learn the same way I was taught. The firm has great clients, complex matters, but also has a relaxed atmosphere that lets us be flexible in our work-life balance.”
- “I’m very satisfied with my job at Ropes & Gray. The firm is among the best in the business in a number of practice areas, which keeps the work challenging and engaging. There are many opportunities for associates to contribute meaningfully, and formal and informal training are top notch. The vast majority of colleagues are both extremely talented and all around good people. As with any top-tier law firm, hours can be demanding at times, but overall a sustainable work-life balance has been achievable.”
- “The job is great, the people are great, the clients are great. The hours and unpredictability are the only thing that keep it from being a 10, but I think Ropes does a better job than anyone else at actively creating an environment where people can be appreciated and professionally developed.”

Firm Culture

- “The positive culture at Ropes comes more from everyday interactions than planned social events. The atmosphere is always friendly and collegial; people genuinely care about picking each other up. But people also respect each other’s space to have private lives, so there isn’t a strong culture of happy hours or things of that nature—people leave at the end of the day (unless they’re still working, of course).”
- “The culture here is very friendly, if a bit reserved. Attorneys are encouraged to (and generally do) keep office doors open, and most are more than happy to help out a colleague who stops by with questions. Diversity is highly valued, while the firm is otherwise understated politically. Firm-organized social activities occur a few times a year, and are generally well attended and regarded.”

Associate/Partner Relations

- “By far the partners are one of RG’s greatest assets—partners thank you for working, and genuinely seem appreciative when you have to work bad hours. Usually partners are right there with you on tough weeks—they are requiring you to do it on a fast timeline because they need it, not because they want to exert control or make your life miserable. Transparency of firm leadership is pretty much non-existent. However, you know where you individually stand, which is nice. Performance reviews are not a surprise—people make an effort to talk to you about stuff you need to work on before the review, and often don’t include it in the review.”
- “Every office place has a range of personalities, and that is also true at Ropes. While there are some partners that are known to be difficult, overall my experience working with partners has been really positive. They are personable and encouraging, and willing to give the opportunity to prove yourself, while being generally understanding of the learning curve involved in this job. Most partners are down to earth and reasonable in their requests, especially when you consider how much they are working.”

Hours

- “Face-time is neither required nor especially encouraged. This is still a big-law firm and we still work long hours at times, but there is plenty of flexibility in how that work gets done.”
- “There is essentially no face-time requirement, and the overall work hours are impossible to beat for big law. They try to distribute work evenly and genuinely do not want you to burn out. They will work with you if you are overbooked. Weekend and evening work still happens fairly regularly, but it is occasional and for the most part only when circumstances require it. And it is always done from home, never from the office.”

Compensation

- “The firm generally matches market comp, though does provide for slight bumps above market. If you exceed the billable target of 1900 (inclusive of pro bono), you generally receive a modest bump to your market bonus (the extent of these bumps is somewhat opaque). You also receive annual payouts from a firm investment plan (for which the firm contributes capital on your behalf). The ultimate upshot is you generally end up modestly above strictly market comp, which is nice considering the relatively humane nature of the firm.”
- “We get paid very very very well. The firm even went to bat for associates with low hours last year and still offered a substantial bonus to those who missed hours by a lot in recognition of certain practice groups’ low volume. Very impressive.”

Quality of Work

- “As a mid-level, all my work is substantive. Whether I’m representing a fund sponsor or an investor, the firm has a great paralegal staff which are always available to assist with some of the more administrative items. First-years can expect to do some (but minimal) non-substantive work (e.g. maintaining closing checklists, obtaining signature pages etc.)”
- “I am thrilled with the work that I’ve been getting. Sure, there is document review involved, but most of my time is spent doing legal research and getting involved in the nuts and bolts of a case—drafting pleadings, interviewing experts, preparing for depositions, and it’s been really exciting and fun.”

Training & Mentoring

- “It’s hard to imagine a firm with a better combination of formal and informal training. Formal training is offered regularly, with substantive topics ranging from basic to advanced. Within my practice group, partners and senior associates regularly meet during informal lunches to discuss issues du jour. Almost all attorneys are willing to offer ‘informal training’ if you swing by their office with a question.”
- “The firm provides a huge amount of formal training for associates, especially first year associates. I spend at least 3 hours a week in formal training. The firm has provided me with multiple mentors at different levels of seniority who check in, give me work, etc. I’ve also been given the opportunity to do more academic work, researching and presenting on trends in certain legal practices.”
- “Ropes’ commitment to formal training is pretty well documented (I think we have more formal training than any other firm). But I think the firm excels at informal mentoring as well. As my practice starts to become more specialized I’ve spent a lot of time grabbing lunch or drinks with more senior associates to learn about the various practice areas at the firm and they are always happy to chat or give advice.”

Career Outlook

- “Promotion to partnership is realistic (but far from a guarantee) for those willing to dedicate themselves to the pursuit. The firm offers many alternative career paths, including making counsel, working off-site, secondments, and flexible-schedule arrangements. If you produce good work and are well liked nothing seems to be off the table.”
- “Exit opportunities are good, and the firm encourages associates to look for good jobs and maintain a relationship with the firm in the future. Many people here transition to government over time, some eventually come back as partners.”
- “There is a path forward for people not looking to be a partner, which is most people. Moreover, the partners actively track job opportunities with clients to tee up associates looking to go in-house. Ropes understands that the best way to maintain clients is to place their own associates with a client. They openly discuss opportunities.”

Pro Bono Commitment

- “Ropes has a great pro bono culture. Participation is frequently encouraged and there is no annual cap on pro bono hours (which count toward the annual billable requirement). All attorneys are encouraged to do at least 20 pro bono hours a year; all of my peers do well in excess of that. My recent years have included 200+ pro bono hours.”
- “Pro bono work is strongly encouraged. Most associates are involved in some form or fashion. The firm also is active in a number of high profile pro bono matters (gay marriage a couple years back, human trafficking this year, etc.).”

Diversity Efforts

- “Our younger classes are wonderfully diverse but I think there is still room for improving diversity in the partnership, where it would be great to see more women and people of color. The firm is working hard to educate its staff about challenging issues, like subconscious bias, and I am really heartened to see the firm delving into these difficult and sometimes unpopular discussions.”
- “My firm has typically been in the vanguard of diversifying its workforce and creating a productive environment for people from all walks of life.”
- “R&G is wonderful about diversity with women, minorities and LGBT. Our paternity/maternity leave is great and well-respected.”

SUMMER PROGRAM

Social Scene

- “My time as a summer associate was one of the best summers of my life. The social events were always fun (and frequent), the work I did was interesting and helped me really understand what I would be doing when I rejoined the firm, and my fellow summers were wonderful people and I have close friendships with many of them. My class also still gets together throughout the year to hang out because we all enjoy each other so much.”
- “I really enjoyed my summer at Ropes. Instead of a lot of drinking (as I heard about some other firms), we had a lot of very fun events including cooking class, museum night and many other practice group events. My summer class bonded very well and we had the chance to meet a lot of associates and partners through the social events.”

Training & Assignments

- “There was a lot of formal training and it was easy to get work assignments from my assigned mentor attorneys or through the general assignment system.”
- “I had great assigning attorneys who made sure I received a variety of work in the areas I expressed interest in. The training opportunities were extensive as well.”

Associate Experience vs. Summer Expectations

- “Associates gave an accurate portrayal. Pleasant surprise that the reputation for culture and restraint in overworking associates is accurate.”
- “It has actually been very similar. There have been fewer social events and somewhat more serious work expectations but otherwise not a huge difference.”