

Transactions Department Co-Chairs Timothy Kincaid and Brad Vaiana Featured in *ALM's* “How I Made It” Series

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Winston & Strawn’s Timothy Kincaid and Brad Vaiana were featured in *ALM's* “How I Made It” series highlighting their appointment as Transactions Department co-chairs in June 2024. In the interview, they discussed topics including why they wanted to become department leaders, how their past experiences prepared them for their new roles, key priorities for the department, what skills make an effective leader, and more.

Brad and Tim said that as co-chairs of the department, they plan to leverage the strength of signature practice areas, including the Chambers-rated private equity and finance practices. One of their priorities is to continue to follow the momentum of the markets in direct lending and structured finance and continue to scale these practice areas both organically and through strategic lateral efforts. They noted that they are developing opportunities for leading practitioners to use their market-leading experience as a platform to increase the firm’s depth in those areas, including real estate, fund formation and secondaries, financial services, fintech and digital assets.

When asked how their new roles give them a sense of the strategic vision for the firm, they said that regular communication with practice group leaders who are knowledgeable of current legal trends and aware of the challenges that their practice areas are faced with is key. “Brad and I are able to synthesize and aggregate this knowledge base to help develop a well-informed macro-level view of the law firm,” Tim said. “We have leaders who are engaged, proactive, and will take the initiative to set strategic goals within their practice groups and take accountability for the performance of their group.”

They explained that their ability to play off their respective strengths and compensate for each other’s weaknesses will make them effective and successful in their roles. They said that being a good listener and engaging with partners so they can understand their practice, market, and needs are important to understanding how to lead effectively.

“Tim is really self-aware and cognizant of the fact that not only do we not have all of the answers, but to a certain degree we don’t even always know the right questions to ask,” Brad said. “Tim is really great about leaning in and drilling down on the different practice areas across the firm. You have to want to learn, learn about your partners, learn about their practices, learn about the market (both for clients and talent) and learn about the best opportunities for growth.”

“Another skillset is enthusiasm. Brad’s specialty. Energy is kinetic, palpable, and infectious. People feed off of positivity—which is why it is so important for leaders to lead with enthusiasm and excitement,” Tim stated. “Last but not least, patience. It takes time to implement and execute on a strategy. It takes time to get alignment. It takes time to address setbacks. Within the group, there is a diversity of thoughts and priorities, and it takes time to be able to work with all and get people on the same page. Patience is key.”

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