

Rising Star: Cleary Gottlieb's Jamal Fulton

By Jasmin Jackson

Law360 (June 28, 2021, 3:02 PM EDT) -- Jamal Fulton of Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP has advised many investment firms in multibillion-dollar transactions, including a \$16.25 billion transaction in February between AT&T Inc. and private equity firm TPG Capital, landing him a spot among private equity practitioners under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

THE BIGGEST OR MOST INTERESTING CASE HE'S WORKED ON LATELY:

In April, Fulton was one of the lead Cleary Gottlieb attorneys representing investment firm KKR & Co. during fundraising for the KKR Asian Fund IV, a \$15 billion fund focused on investments in the Asia Pacific region.

"A huge deal in terms of the geographic scale," Fulton said as he explained the difficulties of remotely coordinating a multitude of moving parts during the coronavirus pandemic. "We raised the fund simultaneously at our New York and Hong Kong offices. We had a number of investors and we had the displacement of COVID-19. We practically raised the funds from home."

According to Fulton, the deal was an opportunity "to step up and step forward" at Cleary.

HIS PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:

A few years ago, as a Black senior associate, Fulton says he was momentarily "taken aback" after introducing himself and a Latino colleague as the representation for Cleary Gottlieb at the start of a conference call with private equity firm TPG Capital. Fulton said he "hit the mute button for just a second" to appreciate the diversity in leadership at the BigLaw firm.

"That introduction from a Wall Street law firm is still incredibly rare, Fulton said.



Jamal Fulton
 Cleary Gottlieb

Age: 34
 Home base: New York
 Position: Partner
 Law school: Harvard Law School
 First job after law school:
 Associate at Cleary Gottlieb

Law360 recognized Cleary Gottlieb as one of the top firms for minority attorneys in 2020, ranking it No. 1 for its percentage of minority attorneys and No. 4 for its percentage of minority equity partners.

WHAT MOTIVATES HIM:

In a field with "repeat players," Fulton aims to be known as an attorney who can successfully close a deal for his clients in an honest and straightforward way.

"We're across the table from the same people over and over again, and I'd say a motivating factor is my reputation and people perceiving me to be doing a thoughtful and good job," Fulton said.

WHY HE IS A PRIVATE EQUITY ATTORNEY:

Unlike some attorneys in his field, Fulton initially planned to be a litigator after earning a bachelor's in history from Yale University.

"I didn't grow up thinking I was going to be a private equity lawyer," Fulton said.

After graduating from Harvard Law, Fulton tested out different practice areas at Cleary Gottlieb as an associate and was drawn to the collaborative nature of private-funds work.

"Ultimately, our clients have principally signed off that this deal is going through, and what we're really doing is coming to terms and making it happen together," Fulton said.

OTHER NOTABLE CASES HE HAS WORKED ON:

Fulton takes pride in his work for social impact funds, which he says are a primary part of his practice. In particular, he highlighted his work on TPG Capital's Rise Fund, a \$5 billion fund intended for investments in environmental and social causes like digital education and agriculture.

"Investing around impact and considering the impact that the deployment of capital can make in the world is something that's a trend right now," Fulton said. "In some form or another it's going to be here to stay for some time."

In that same realm, Fulton finds his pro bono work for investment company Concrete Rose Capital particularly meaningful. He helped raise capital for the fund, which is devoted to helping underrepresented minorities "either as founders or businesses committed to issues that affect minorities," he said.

HOW HIS PRACTICE OR THE LEGAL INDUSTRY WILL CHANGE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS:

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fulton says clients were already interested in how law firms were investing in technological innovation. According to Fulton, the drive to service clients more efficiently through technology was only accelerated by the pandemic.

"There's lots of interesting things to do, and there's lots of technology out there that's looking to be or that can be exploited to make things more efficient," Fulton said. "I think that as law firms are able to figure that out, clients are going to appreciate it."

— *As told to Jasmin Jackson*

Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of

Law360 editors selected the 2021 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,400 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2021, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.

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