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Top 100 Lawyers AND DISTINGUISHED COUNSEL



PETER STRIS

STRIS & MAHER LLP
COMPLEX CIVIL LITIGATION
BEVERLY HILLS

Inside the Delaware Court of Chancery, a Stris & Maher team faced off against a Kirkland & Ellis trial group representing the other side of a \$250 million earnout dispute. The case involved the founders of Unknown Worlds, the studio behind the video game franchise Subnautica, in a fight over corporate governance and money owed after the studio's sale. "Our firm went to trial against a large Kirkland & Ellis team in the Delaware Court of Chancery and secured a sweeping victory," Stris said.

That victory sits alongside another the firm secured this year: a settlement on behalf of nearly 300,000 current and former AT&T employees, who alleged the company underpaid pension benefits by relying on outdated mortality assumptions. "We litigated that case for more than five years before reaching a \$184.1 million settlement this year," Stris said.

Stris graduated from Harvard Law School in 2000 and has practiced business litigation since. "What drew me to business litigation in particular was that the disputes are rarely just about abstract legal questions. They involve real companies, real economic stakes, and real-world messiness," he said. Over the past two years, Stris & Maher has obtained close to \$1 billion for plaintiffs, a result Stris attributes to concentrating the firm's resources on high-stakes matters.

Getting those matters in the first place is, in Stris's account, the harder task. "Because we litigate with and against America's leading megafirms, our biggest challenge is getting in the room. Once we do, and clients can see the judgment, experience and strategic thinking we bring to the table, we're often found to be the right choice," he said.

The firm has added more than a dozen lawyers this year, including a group of

intellectual-property litigators that includes Mieke Malmberg, herself a Top 100 Lawyer honoree. Stris said the firm plans to add two dozen more lawyers "in short order," describing the approach as building strength on strength rather than growth for its own sake.

Stris & Maher has also expanded geographically, opening offices in Washington, D.C. and Dallas, breaking ground on a headquarters in Beverly Hills, and planning an entry into New York. Stris described the moves as part of a strategy to build a national platform for business litigation.

The firm brought on marketing strategist Michael Fanuele this year, whose past campaigns include Dos Equis's "The Most Interesting Man in the World" and Arby's "We Have the Meats," to help shape the firm's brand as it scales.

"I think of my role as looking several years ahead and working backward. What kinds of matters should we be handling? Which people would make us materially better? Where do we need to be physically present? And what does the institution need to support all of that?" Stris said. "We have tremendous momentum right now, and the opportunity is to turn that momentum into an enduring national institution — a new center of gravity in American litigation."