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Rising Star: Cahill Gordon's Douglas Horowitz

By **Christie Smythe**

Law360, New York (April 09, 2010) -- Making the most of preparation and opportunity, Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP partner Douglas S. Horowitz hit the ground running in the recent buyout boom and worked on notable transactions for SunGard Data Systems and Thomson Learning, landing him a spot on Law360's 10 corporate finance lawyers under 40 to watch.

Horowitz, 35, helped represent financing providers in the \$11.3 billion private equity buyout of SunGard in 2005, a deal that served as a milestone both in Horowitz's career and for the leveraged buyout industry overall.

A senior associate at the time, Horowitz helped work out a bond financing package that became a "fountainhead" for later transactions, giving him an edge in later deals, he said.

"Some of the nuances in the SunGard transaction still carry forward in the market today," he said. "Having had the opportunity to be there and participate in the negotiation of some of those provisions, and being able to understand the reasoning for those decisions, was ultimately very helpful."

As Cahill caught the wave of the buyout boom, Horowitz was able to land work in other major transactions, including deals involving VNU/Nielsen, Aramark Corp., U.S. Foodservice Inc., Biomet Inc., Avaya Inc. and TXU Corp.

In those deals and others, he has represented parties such as leading investment banks, commercial banks, and public and private companies.

At the tail end of the boom, in the \$7.1 billion buyout of Thomson Learning, now Cengage Learning, he was able to put his skills to a major test when he helped seal the deal despite the rapidly approaching credit crisis.

"It was challenging to get done on a tight time frame, right as the markets were beginning to suffer a little bit," he said. "There was a lot of pressure to move swiftly and think through complex issues under a tight time frame."

Although still relatively young in his field, Horowitz was prepared to excel rapidly in the rarefied world of high-yield financings and private equity-driven acquisitions.

After studying economics and philosophy as an undergraduate at Columbia University, Horowitz earned J.D. and M.B.A. degrees simultaneously through a specialized program at Cornell University, completing both by 2001.

Horowitz was not set on a career in corporate law throughout his studies, instead considering his full range of options, including investment banking.

But after working as a summer associate at Cahill, his mind was made up, and he knew he wanted to work for the firm.

At Cahill, “there is terrific deal flow,” he said. “That setting allowed me to take on a lot of experience and responsibility early on.”

“Not only did Cahill turn out to be the place that I hoped and thought it would be, but the type of work we do here turned out to be right what I hoped and wished it would be,” he added.

Horowitz acknowledged that his educational background likely aided his upward trajectory, noting that while many attorneys with less specialized backgrounds can become highly experienced in transaction work, an M.B.A. nonetheless can offer a young attorney a strong head start.

“I was fortunate to put myself in the right place here at Cahill and lucky to be there at the right time when things were very robust, to really be able to accelerate,” he said.

Raised on Long Island, Horowitz now lives in Manhattan with his wife, who is also an attorney. The couple celebrated the birth of their first child, Alexandra, about ten weeks ago.