

MVP: Cahill Gordon's Kimberly C. Petillo-Décossard

By McCord Pagan

Law360 (September 8, 2021, 3:25 PM EDT) -- Kimberly Petillo-Décossard of Cahill Gordon & Reindel LLP helped represent 1-800-Flowers for a contested acquisition early in the pandemic and advised pharmaceutical services company ICON for its largest-ever deal, earning her a spot as one of Law360's 2021 Mergers & Acquisitions MVPs.

ON HER BIGGEST CHALLENGE OVER THE PAST YEAR:

Petillo-Décossard said her biggest challenge was dealing with the contested closing of the then-\$252 million deal between Bed Bath & Beyond and her client 1-800-Flowers.com for PersonalizationMall.com amid the pandemic. Announced in February 2020 and closed that August for \$245 million, she said the transaction raised new issues, such as whether the fallout from the pandemic qualified as a material adverse event or not.

Petillo-Décossard said it was incredibly difficult to advise her client on its rights while the bounds of law were shifting due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"We found ourselves in uncharted waters from a legal perspective," she said. "We all knew what the words on the page said and meant pre-pandemic, but they take on a totally different meaning and interpretation when you're trying to close the deal through a pandemic."

ON HER BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE PAST YEAR:

Petillo-Décossard was part of a Cahill Gordon team that represented Irish pharmaceutical services company ICON PLC for its roughly \$12 billion deal to buy clinical development researcher PRA Health Sciences Inc., a transaction announced in February this year.

The tie-up was both the largest for the company as well as the largest Petillo-Décossard has ever worked on, and was particularly satisfying given she's been working with ICON since she first started at Cahill 16 years ago, she said.

"To be able to grow with them professionally and be able to build that relationship over time, going through countless smaller acquisitions with them in pursuit of their growth strategy and then getting to



this point and doing such a significant transaction for them as a business was extremely rewarding," she said.

WHY SHE'S A MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS LAWYER:

Petillo-Décossard said she enjoys the collaborative nature of mergers and acquisitions work as the ultimate goal of both sides is to get a deal done.

"There are aligned interests and you're working toward that same conclusion and I think that our role as lawyers is to facilitate that transaction," she said.

HER ADVICE FOR JUNIOR LAWYERS:

Petillo-Décossard said she advises junior lawyers to always be prepared for meetings and tasks by knowing the small details and being ready to speak up when a senior member of a team doesn't know something.

"Whatever the task is, come prepared and be the person in the room that knows the minutiae, knows the detail, knows the in and out that the senior folks aren't paying attention to," she said.

Such a move helps one be remembered both by their peers and clients, she said.

"If you want to have a successful career as a lawyer, you need clients who want you on their matters and ask for you," Petillo-Décossard said.

— *As told to McCord Pagan*

Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2021 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 900 submissions.