



Emily Kay Watson

Partner

Corporate

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When companies need a calm and skilled hand to navigate the complexities of corporate transactions, they turn to Emily Watson, whose extensive experience makes her the right choice in high-pressure, high-stakes matters. Emily's practice covers a wide range of industries and focuses on domestic and cross-border mergers and acquisitions, private equity and general corporate matters. She regularly represents private equity sponsors, closely held businesses, entrepreneurs, investors and management teams.

A value for high-quality service drives results

Emily knows the importance of doing jobs well, no matter how large or small. Clients benefit from the personal satisfaction she gets from providing high-quality advocacy and counsel.

In a typical day, Emily advises clients with respect to structuring and executing leveraged buyouts and other acquisitions, divestitures, joint ventures, control and growth equity financings, non-control and co-investments, and other complex commercial transactions. She has extensive experience representing private equity sponsors (whether traditional committed fund sponsors, alternatively funded or unfunded), family-owned and other closely held businesses, entrepreneurs, investors and management teams.

For private equity clients and their portfolio companies, Emily routinely serves as an outside general counsel, assisting in executing strategic, financial and commercial objectives. Her diverse client base spans a range of industries, including health care, business services, insurance, and manufacturing and distribution.

Representative Experience

- Represented an independent sponsor in an add-on acquisition for its precision machining and sheet metal fabrication platform.
- Represented the founders of a family-owned industrial packaging supply and reuse business in its partial sale to a global industrial container manufacturer.

Practices

- Corporate
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Private Equity

Education

- JD, University of Illinois, *magna cum laude*
- BA, BS, University of Illinois, *magna cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- Illinois

Community Involvements

- American Bar Association
- Illinois State Bar Association

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- Represented a global alternative asset manager specializing in private asset-backed credit in connection with multiple corporate reorganizations and the restructuring of various investments.
- Represented an international technology company that develops attention computing products in its sale of a major business line involving high-efficiency AI solutions.
- Represented private equity firm its investment in a provider of digital retail media programs; and its divestiture of a leading data analytics provider.*
- Represented a private equity firm in numerous platform and add-on acquisitions, divestitures, restructurings and general counsel matters.*
- Represented an independent sponsor in a convertible debt and equity investment in a communications network services provider.
- Represented an independent sponsor in its purchase of a leading telecommunications systems provider for infrastructure projects.
- Represented a private equity firm in its platform acquisition of a manufacturer of industrial-grade and programmable control modules for data monitoring, acquisition and automation.
- Represented a private equity firm, which invests in privately owned distribution, manufacturing and service companies in the lower middle market, in various matters, including the acquisitions of two manufacturers of products used for the building industry.*
- Represented a private equity and venture capital firm in numerous platform and add-on acquisitions, divestitures, restructurings and general portfolio company work, such as the initial platform acquisition, multiple add-on acquisitions and subsequent sale of each, including a manufacturer and distributor of home recreational outdoor products, a manufacturer and direct-to-consumer national provider of nutritional supplements, a national provider of healthcare technology solutions and a provider of design, development, technology and digital marketing services primarily to healthcare clients.*
- Represented a private equity firm in its acquisition from a provider and innovator of specialty insurance products and services to domestic financial institutions and their customers.*
- Represented a private equity firm, which invests in middle-market industrial companies with numerous acquisitions and divestitures, including the acquisition and divestiture of, a distributor of construction and product assembly tools and supplies; the

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divestiture of a distributor of cabinetry hardware, laminates and surfacing products; and the divestiture of a North American provider of Class B recreational vehicles.*

- Represented a private equity firm in its platform acquisitions of a packaging services supplier, and a manufacturer of custom precision molded products.*
- Represented numerous other private equity funds in portfolio company matters and leveraged buyout (LBO), merger and acquisition and divestiture transactions.*
- Represented numerous PE-owned portfolio companies and other private and public companies in general corporate governance matters, incentive equity and employment arrangements and merger, acquisition and divestiture transactions.*
- Represented a portfolio company director in an equity co-investment in a fund.*

*Experience prior to Katten

Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- *The Deal*
 - Top Women in Dealmaking, 2023

News

- Katten Guides Computing Firm's \$45M Deal To Buy Tech Biz | *Law360* (December 13, 2023)
- *The Deal Honors* Kimberly Smith and Emily Watson as 'Top Women in Dealmaking 2023' (March 31, 2023)
- Katten Adds Partner Emily Watson to M&A/PE Practice (December 12, 2022)

Publications

- Preparing for a Third-Party Sale of a Family Business: Key Business Considerations for Owners (February 11, 2026)
- Four Strategies for Family Business Succession Planning (January 28, 2026)

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Presentations and Events

- Navigating Legal Negotiations | Chicago Synergist (September 28, 2023) | *Moderator*