

Kimberly Smith Named to Inaugural *Forbes* America's Top Women Lawyers List

June 3, 2026

Katten announced today that Kimberly Smith, partner and global chair of the firm's Corporate department, has been selected to the inaugural *Forbes* America's Top Women Lawyers list for 2026. The list and accompanying feature story spotlight a rarefied group of elite attorneys in private practice and is based on a rigorous, multi-stage process of editorial research and analysis designed to identify the finest in the profession.

Kimberly, a member of the firm's Executive Committee and Board of Directors, leads over 120 corporate attorneys across the United States, the United Kingdom and China in strategic areas such as mergers and acquisitions (M&A), private equity (PE), capital markets, public finance and health care transactions. In her practice, Kimberly counsels private equity funds, family offices, independent sponsors and strategic acquirers on complex deals, including leveraged buyouts across multiple industries. Her clients range from private investment firms such as Equity Group Investments, founded by Sam Zell, and PSP Capital Partners, founded by Penny Pritzker, to private equity firms Chicago Pacific Founders, Shorehill Capital and North Branch Capital, among others. She also partners with new market entrants and emerging players to help them scale and position themselves for long-term success.

When asked about the work still to be done on issues related to advancement, equity and representation at the highest levels, Kimberly said, "It remains important to keep an emphasis on mentorship and professional development programs to support those entering the legal field. I personally enjoy meeting with junior attorneys for coffee to talk through any challenges they are facing and helping my mentees set goals that support their growth while giving them the confidence to reach them. Beyond mentorship, I suggest ways to raise their visibility—helping them make introductions at networking events, encouraging them to build connections with colleagues and clients. Such opportunities can directly contribute to their career growth and advancement."

Kimberly offered her thoughts on the business of law and the importance of maintaining strong client relationships. She said, "By staying ahead of market developments and sharing our perspective with clients, we position ourselves as partners who provide ongoing value regardless of the economic cycle. We have launched several industry reports reflecting Katten's market insights and our understanding of middle-market dynamics—exploring challenges, opportunities, and expectations for dealmaking amid economic volatility and regulatory uncertainty. This shows clients that we are arming them with market intelligence they can use when they are ready to move forward on a deal."

Forbes' methodology evaluated more than 2000 finalists from a variety of backgrounds, specializations and jurisdictions. Candidates were assessed on a range of weighted criteria, including reputation, industry honors, influence on the legal landscape, advocacy performance, practice impact, peer and client reviews, thought leadership, pro-bono work, mentorship, and community and diversity work. Although lifetime achievements were considered, emphasis was placed on recent accomplishments. Finalists were reviewed by an outside board of advisors.

"America's Top Women Lawyers On Career Success, AI, And Raising The Bar," *Forbes*, June 3, 2026

"Forbes America's Top Women Lawyers," *Forbes*, June 3, 2026

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