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## 45 UNDER 45

How did we pick these outstanding young lawyers? Let us explain.

Edited By Julie Triedman

GERARD HUERTA

WHETHER IT'S "DEALMAKERS OF THE YEAR," "Litigation Department of the Year," "Big Suits," or "Big Deals," the pages of *The American Lawyer* typically brim with pictures of men. But time and again, we've come across remarkable women lawyers, many of whom fell outside of our deals-and-suits-heavy coverage. To give them their due, we decided to identify the best of the best among young women lawyers in The Am Law 200, and bring them together in a single issue.

We called various industry sources and also invited The Am Law 200 to submit a maximum of five nominations per firm. All told, we had more than ten nominees for each spot on our "45 Under 45" list, so our team of reporters and editors could afford to be picky. In the end, we passed over the many in-worthy "rising stars" in favor of a few dozen women who—despite their youth—have already arrived. Some are well-known, others less so. But all have achievements we could quantify: They are leading billion-dollar deals or financings, first-chairing high-stakes litigation, arguing appeals, or managing important firm clients. We also looked for those with an upward trajectory at their firms, whether taking on progressively larger roles, heading important firm initiatives, or bringing in significant new business. We also recognized a few women who have built successful original practices, like privacy law or clean tech, or have taken their practices to new places, whether that be public international law or the Middle East. One thing we didn't take into account: A lot of these lawyers are juggling careers with raising young children.

After the initial vetting, we got on the phones. Every finalist was screened by an *American Lawyer* reporter, who reviewed her record and called clients and opposing counsel. Then we tried to distill it all into approximately 125 words per profile. It was a big job, but these women are worth the recognition. Read on.

—JULIE TRIEDMAN



KERRY BERCHEM, 44

AKIN GUMP STRAUSS HAUER & FELD  
New York

WHEN BERCHEM, cochair of the firm's corporate practice, advised reinsurer Max Capital Group Ltd. in its merger with Harbor Point Limited last spring, it marked a professional high point: Berchem had helped structure Max at its formation, then served as its primary outside corporate counsel, helping take the company public in 2001. Remarkably, the \$3 billion merger closed 70 days after it was announced—during which time Berchem won approvals from the Securities and Exchange Commission and insurance regulators in Bermuda, Connecticut, and Delaware. "Her first position wasn't, 'No, they're wrong, we're right,'" says Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom's Todd Freed, Harbor Point's counsel. "She's looking for solutions, not problems." The newly merged company, Alterra Capital Holdings Limited, recently tapped Berchem to lead a \$350 million senior note offering. Other clients include Greenlight Capital, Inc., Anchor Glass Container Corporation, and the board of Exide Technologies.

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