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A-LIST

## THE NEW & IMPROVED A-LIST

This year, we introduce a simplified scoring system and a metric to recognize firms for advancing women partners.



BY GINA PASSARELLA

**OUR ANNUAL A-LIST RANKING HAS ALWAYS AIMED TO** highlight the most well-rounded firms—the best of the best, if you will. On this list, profits don't reign supreme, nor does size. Since its inception, the A-List has recognized firms based on a combination of factors, both financial and cultural: revenue per lawyer, pro bono commitment, associate satisfaction and racial diversity, with RPL and pro bono given double weight.

But the scoring didn't take into account gender diversity at law firms—an area where many firms still struggle. We felt it was important to honor the firms that have made the most progress in advancing women in the partnership ranks. Although women now make up almost half of all associates at large firms—46 percent, according to our sibling publication *The National Law Journal*—their numbers still drop off drastically at more senior levels [see “Best and Worst Firms for Woman,” page 62]. The NLJ reports that only 21.8 percent of all Big Law partners are female. We debated whether to use those general partnership statistics for the basis of a new A-List metric—but decided that the number of women in equity partnership ranks was the true acid test.

### 1 MUNGER, TOLLES & OLSON Los Angeles

Munger Tolles, ranked second on the A-List last year, climbed a step to claim the No. 1 spot this year. Although Munger's associate satisfaction score and revenue per lawyer both dropped, its high scores in diversity, pro bono and female equity partners let it pull ahead of the competition. Munger's diversity score was the eighth highest among Am Law 200 firms, and its female equity partner score was the 15th best in *The Am Law 200*.

RPL Score	89.5
Pro Bono Score	98.5
Associate Satisfaction Score	83.5
Diversity Score	96.5
Female Equity Partners Score	93.0
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>	<b>92.7</b>



# 2017 The A-List

Rank	Firm	Total Score	RPL Score	Pro Bono Score	Associate Satisfaction Score	Diversity Score	Female Equity Partners Score
1	Munger, Tolles & Olson <i>Los Angeles</i>	92.7	89.5	98.5	83.5	96.5	93
2	Ropes & Gray <i>National</i>	91.9	92	93.5	94.5	86.5	91.5
3	Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison <i>National</i>	87.1	91.5	79	82.5	93.5	93
4	Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr <i>National</i>	86.6	91.5	93	78.5	67.5	91
5	Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher <i>National</i>	85.9	94.5	95	98	78.5	46
6	Debevoise & Plimpton <i>New York</i>	85.4	89	95.5	71	90	67.5
7	Paul Hastings <i>New York</i>	85.1	86.5	97.5	100	92.5	35
8	Shearman & Sterling <i>International</i>	85	82	96.5	90	89	59
9	Covington & Burling <i>Washington, D.C.</i>	84.4	75.5	92	82	85	88.5
10	Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe <i>National</i>	83.7	74	96	97.5	96.5	52
11	Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy <i>New York</i>	83.6	93.5	94	95	95.5	19.5
12	O'Melveny & Myers <i>Los Angeles</i>	83.4	83.5	90	99.5	83	54.5
12	Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom <i>National</i>	83.4	97	84	74	74.5	73.5
14	Simpson Thacher & Bartlett <i>New York</i>	80.5	96	68.5	67.5	87	80
15	Manatt, Phelps & Phillips <i>Los Angeles</i>	80.2	71	87.5	92	77	75.5
16	Arnold & Porter <i>Washington D.C.</i>	79.7	71	94.5	71.5	78.5	77
17	Kirkland & Ellis <i>National</i>	79.3	98	86	81.5	64	41
18	Latham & Watkins <i>National</i>	79.2	90	89.5	92.5	68.5	35
19	Hughes Hubbard & Reed <i>New York</i>	78.6	83	99.5	73	63.4	48.5
20	Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld <i>National</i>	78.3	85	88.5	89.5	70.5	41

So this year we've added a fifth component to the A-List formula: a female equity partner score. Like the other A-List metrics, it measures firms' relative performance: We rank Am Law 200 firms by their percentage of female equity partners, and base their score in that category on that ranking.

What sort of impact does this have on the A-List? Immigration boutique Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy ranked first in women equity partners, followed by a tie between Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison and Munger, Tolles & Olson. While Fragomen is not on the A-List, Munger was already near the top of the A-List, at No. 2 last year. It moved into first place this year. Paul Weiss jumped from A-List wannabe—26th last year—to third this year. (It also saw improvement in other categories.) Fragomen moved from 62nd last year to 35th this year, even with a zero in associate satisfaction, stemming from the firm's nonparticipation in our Associates Survey. Conversely, Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy fell from third on the A-List to 11th, largely on the back of having the lowest score among the top 20 in the female equity partner category.

Frequent readers of the A-List will remember that firms have traditionally been scored on a 200-point scale for each of the four historical categories, with RPL and pro bono scores

counted twice. This year, we decided to simplify the process to give every category, and the overall score, a 100-point scale. The RPL and pro bono scores continue to be double weighted as we move from a 1,200-point scoring system to a 100-point scale.

We were careful to account for any compression in the numbers and any possible impact on the rankings and ties: The firms were scored on the old system first and those numbers were converted to the 100-point scale. There was no difference in the rankings between the two lists.

Congratulations to this year's A-Listers! ■

