

Daily Journal

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TOP 40 UNDER 40

California's leading lawyers of 2018

Douglas K. Schnell

Schnell represents acquirers, targets and financial advisers in significant, high-profile mergers, acquisitions and takeovers. He counsels companies regarding complex corporate governance matters. And he's a big fan, along with his colleagues at Wilson Sonsini, of so-called "double bottom line" or social impact work.

"Wilson Sonsini had a relationship with Steve Jobs from Apple's IPO in the 1980s to the present, when [Jobs' widow] Laurene Powell Jobs' Emerson Collective has been a major client," Schnell said. The nonprofit Emerson Collective, named after poet and intellectual Ralph Waldo Emerson, focuses on education, environmental activism, immigration reform and other initiatives.

Schnell aided Emerson Collective in its acquisition of Amplify Education Inc. and, last year, in its purchase of stakes in the Washington Wizards and Washington Capitals sports teams. "Laurene wanted the teams as a way to further youth access to sports stars as a way to connect them to educational opportunities," Schnell said. "For me, deals like this are a way for me to use the same skills I use in combining companies for a larger social purpose."

In March, Schnell acted as U.S. legal counsel to Milpitas-based KLA-Tencor Corp., a provider of process control and yield management solutions, in its \$3.4 billion acquisition of Orbotech Ltd., an Israeli firm that develops ways to improve the manufacturing of electronic products. "This is a classic Wilson Sonsini cross-border deal for a client we have represented for many years," he said. "It's the sort of thing we do often for large serial acquirers."

In another deal, when San Francisco-based hedge fund Marcato Capital Management LP engaged in a yearlong proxy contest to unseat



**Wilson Sonsini
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Palo Alto

Practice: Shareholder activism, mergers & acquisitions, corporate governance

Age: 39

the board of directors of Schnell's client Deckers Brands, Schnell helped Deckers fight back. Deckers is a global leader in designing, marketing and distributing innovative footwear, apparel and accessories; its products include the Uggs footwear line. "This led to a great outcome for Deckers and for me personally," Schnell said after Deckers announced in December that company shareholders had rejected the Marcato bid and voted to re-elect all

of Deckers' directors to the board. "It showed that when a board and management act with conviction against an activist who wanted only a sale, the company can prevail," Schnell said. "And the company's stock price continues to increase."

Schnell likes the variety of work he does. "I can't say I enjoy every deal every day," he said, "but on the whole it's quite a lot of fun."

— John Roemer