Three Lathrop Gage Partners Named Among Kansas City Business Journal's Best of the Bar

August 30, 2018

The Kansas City Business Journal announced its 2018 Best of the Bar honorees this week, and three of its 56 recipients are Lathrop Gage Partners: Richard N. Bien, Wallace E. Brockhoff and Mara H. Cohara. Lawyers named to this prestigious list have been selected by a panel of judges who examine each applicant's professional reputation, involvement in significant cases or deals and civic involvement. Those listed must also have at least 10 years of professional practice and be engaged in private legal practice within the Kansas City metropolitan area.

Bien leads the ERISA, Life, Health and Disability Litigation practice group and has been in the forefront of ERISA/employee benefit litigation. Additionally, he has handled more than 400 matters defending claims handling activities and has defended dozens of class action matters involving benefit plans. More recently, Bien's litigation practice has taken on a larger slice of trust company, fiduciary and financial litigation; insurance professional liability litigation and insurance coverage litigation. Actively involved in professional and civic associations locally and nationwide, Bien is a member of the Missouri Supreme Court's Commission on Racial and Ethnic Fairness' Practice of Law Committee, is a member of the Defense Research Institute's Life, Health and Disability/ERISA committee and is a former longtime board member of the Make A Wish of Missouri Foundation. He is also a member of the American Bar Association's House of Delegates, previously served on its Commission on Issues Affecting Women in the Profession and is a current member of the ABA's Center for Innovation's Governing Council. Bien has been included among the Best of the Bar list for several years; he has also been named to *The Best Lawyers in America* annually since 2007 and *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers* since 2005.

Brockhoff leads the firm's Corporate practice team and handles especially challenging and sophisticated Mergers & Acquisitions transactions, having closed approximately $1 billion in transactions in the first quarter of 2018 alone. He has more than 27 years' experience in mergers and acquisitions, corporate finance and securities matters and works with a broad range of pubic and private, local and national, middle-market companies. He is also an active member of the ESOP Association and the Employee-Owned S Corporations of America. Brockhoff's charitable involvement includes serving as Board President of the Children's Center for the Visually Impaired and on its Advisory Board. He is also a member of Trinity Lutheran Church's Endowment Committee and chaired a capital campaign for Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Brockhoff's additional honors include being named to *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2017-2018, and *Chambers USA*, 2012-2014.

Cohara is a member of the firm's Executive Committee and leads the Environmental and Toxic and Mass Tort practice groups. She focuses her practice on litigation matters involving religious institutions, toxic tort, nuisance, product liability, premises liability, breach of warranty and the defense of companies in a wide variety of industries. She has significant experience coordinating large-scale "bet the company" matters and defending high-profile lawsuits that involve media and community attention. Additionally, Cohara serves as Co-Chair of the firm's Women's Initiative Network and is active in many civic and legal organizations. Her memberships include but are not limited to The Federation of Defense and Corporate Counsel, the National Diocesan Attorneys Association, the Defense Research Institute, the University of Missouri Kansas City Law School Alumni Association Law Foundation and the Kansas City Association for Women Lawyers. She also serves on the national Board of Trustees for National Camp Fire, on the Board of Directors for the Greater Missouri Women Leadership Challenge Foundation, is Vice President of Lawyers Encouraging Academic Performance and Treasurer of the Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association Foundation. This is Cohara's fourth time being named to Best of the Bar. In addition, *Ingram's Magazine* selected her to its 2015 "40 Under Forty" list, and she has been named to *Missouri & Kansas Super Lawyers* annually since 2013, as well as among its "Top 50 Female" list (2014, 2016, 2017) and "Top 100" list (2017).

About Lathrop Gage

Lathrop Gage is a law firm whose clients form the backbone of our economy. Our attorneys provide strategic guidance in litigation, business and intellectual property law, with deep knowledge and experience in the industries we serve. We work as one integrated team from offices across the country to help our clients see beyond immediate challenges to achieve their most important objectives. For more information, visit www.lathropgage.com.

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