

DFW Corporate Counsel Awards — The Winners

By Mark Curriden of The Texas Lawbook

Brinker, Children’s Health, Comerica, Energy Transfer, Match, PGA, Schwab, Solo Brands and Trintech were the big winners at the 2025 DFW Corporate Counsel Awards.

Eight of the 14 award categories, including Business Litigation of the Year, M&A Transaction of the Year and Corporate Legal Department of the Year, featured multiple finalists, with judges describing them as photo finishes.

About 360 of the most prominent general counsel, senior in-house counsel and law firm partners celebrated the 2025 DFW Corporate Counsel Awards at the George W. Bush Institute. This was the ninth year that the Association of Corporate Counsel’s DFW Chapter and *The Texas Lawbook* partnered on the awards event.

ACC-DFW and *The Lawbook* received 97 nominations for the 14 categories. A dozen independent judges — all past award recipients — reviewed the nominations and selected the best of the best.

Profiles of all the 2025 DFW Corporate Counsel Award finalists can be found on *The Lawbook’s* General Counsel/Corporate Legal Department section. ACC DFW members can access all Lawbook articles by getting a free Lawbook subscription at <https://texaslawbook.net/subscribe-to-the-texas-lawbook-2/>.

Here are the award winners with links to each profile:

Rookie of the Year

[Brinker Corporate Counsel Cameasha Turner](#), who told those attending: “I’ve spent my entire life pushing through and beating the odds in a world that often tells me that I am not enough. I am grateful for a village and a father that reminds me that I am enough. When it is time to walk into your calling — don’t walk, run.”

Senior Counsel for a Small Legal Department (2-5 attorneys)

[Ted Koehler](#), deputy general counsel of PGA of America

Senior Counsel for a Midsized Legal Department (6-20 attorneys)

[Children’s Health Associate GC Kathleen Benner](#), who said in accepting her award, “I’m grateful to Children’s Health. Its unwavering commitment to children and families in this community has offered me the most wonderful opportunities of my career. I’m proud to be a part of an organization where mission actually guides the work.”

Senior Counsel for a Large Legal Department (21-plus attorneys)

[Match Group Associate General Counsel Stephen Myers](#) of Match Group, who told the audience that his job reminds him of the children's cartoon *Bluey*. "My niece and nephew love it. On the show, they play the game 'Keepy Uppy.' The point is to keep a balloon up in the air and don't let it hit the ground," Myers said. "I'm like, 'That's my job — except it is not one balloon but a thousand balloons.' Every day, you have to figure out which balloon you are going to focus on. One day, it is the class action balloon. The next day it is the patent balloon. Maybe it is a balloon from outside counsel that they are increasing their fees, and you just let that balloon go to the floor. But every day, we show up and keep the business moving forward."

General Counsel of the Year for a Small Legal Department (2-5 attorneys)

The judges declared a tie for this category. The award recipients were:

[Solo Brands GC Chris Blevins](#), who said, "It was a challenging year sort of in all the right ways. A lot of complex issues and fast-moving decisions and moments that really tested me."

[Trintech GC Heather Randall](#), who told the audience, "Sometimes being the chief legal officer can be hard, but what makes it all worthwhile is when you have a great team."

M&A Transaction of the Year

[Comerica Bank's \\$10.9 billion sale to Fifth Third Bank](#), which closed on Sunday. The Comerica in-house counsel honored included Chief Legal Officer Von Hays; Corporate Secretary and Deputy GC Nicole Gersch; Deputy GC Hope Schall; Deputy GC Shannon Barrow; Divisional GC Steven Franklin; and Deputy GC Ashley Fincher.

"The magnitude of the transaction, the hurdles we had to achieve and the time constraints we were trying to operate under simply could not have been achieved without the individuals behind me as well as the sacrifices that their families made to bring this to fruition," Hays said in accepting the award for the Comerica team. "A little bittersweet is that everybody did this transaction wholeheartedly with the uncertainty of what it meant for them come this next week."

Business Litigation of the Year

[Energy Transfer Deputy GC Sam Hardy](#)

Corporate Legal Department of the Year

[Charles Schwab and Chief Counsel Shamoil Shipchandler](#)

General Counsel of the Year for a Solo Legal Department

[Presidio Investment Holdings GC Brett Barnes](#)

General Counsel of the Year for a Large Legal Department (21+ attorneys)

[PepsiCo Foods GC Adrienne Mosley](#)

GC of the Year for a Nonprofit/Governmental Agency

[Parkland Hospital Interim Executive VP of Legal Affairs Brad Nitschke](#)

Lifetime Achievement

[DFW Airport GC Elaine Rodriguez](#)

Achievement in Diversity and Inclusion

[7-Eleven Corporate Counsel Nayelly Dominguez](#)

[Jacobs Deputy GC Sarah Wariner](#)

Achievement in Pro Bono and Public Service

[Phillips Enterprise GC Shannon Cagnina](#)

[Toyota Managing Counsel Scott Young](#)