

MVP: Weil's Paul Wessel

By **Kellie Mejdrich**

Law360 (November 24, 2025, 4:00 PM EST) -- Paul Wessel of Weil Gotshal & Manges LLP advised large employers on the benefits and executive compensation aspects of mergers, acquisitions and other financial restructurings over the past year, including Home Depot and Kroger, earning him a spot among the 2025 Law360 Benefits MVPs.

Why he's a benefits attorney:

Wessel, who was named a Benefits MVP in 2018 and is chairman of Weil's tax department and head of the firm's executive compensation and benefits group, said he began practicing employee benefits out of law school in 1987.

"And I've been doing it ever since," he said.

Wessel said his family's labor background, with his dad working as an aircraft manufacturer in Buffalo, New York, also drove his focus on employment in law school.

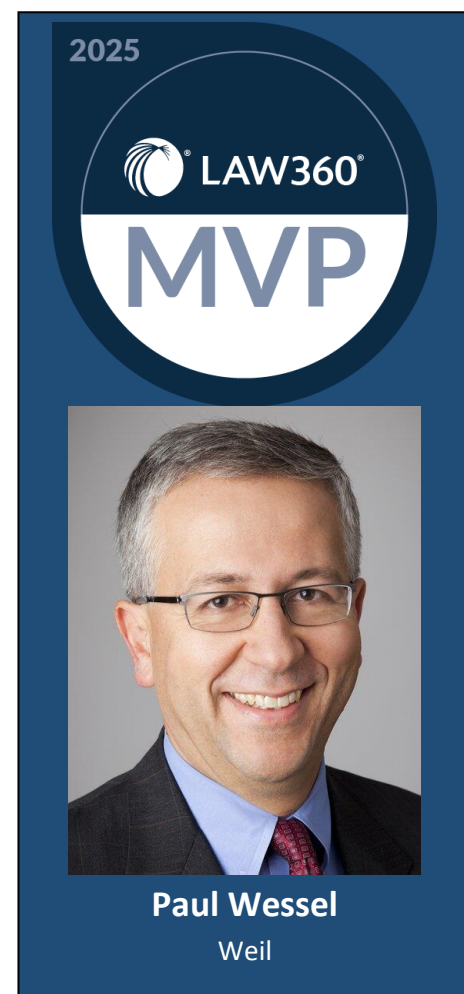
"My father was a UAW member, my uncle was a union leader, I myself used to work for the retail clerks," he said.

His biggest accomplishment:

Wessel said working on the firm's largest transactions was a major accomplishment overall, noting that his work on the Kroger-Albertsons merger would have been the largest transaction he worked on if it had closed.

"The biggest accomplishment was to have done hopefully good work for a number of high-profile clients in high-profile deals," he said. Among the deals he mentioned working on were acquisitions by The Home Depot Inc., including its purchases of SRS Distribution Inc. and GMS Inc.

Wessel added that bankruptcy issues with significant benefits considerations also rank among his major recent accomplishments, including advising Steward Healthcare on benefits issues as it exits Chapter 11.



What motivates him:

Wessel said even after 38 years in the practice, "it is still fresh," because laws evolve and business cycles change.

"Issues are presented in different ways by different people, no one day is like the last. I do love that about the practice and our firm in particular," he said.

Wessel added that the people-focused nature of the employee benefits practice at Weil also keeps him interested in the job.

"I tell our young lawyers, it's great to be an employee benefits lawyer at Weil Gotshal because we do high-level, public M&A. We do high-level private equity work, fund formation work, bankruptcy and restructuring ... a lot of it in equal measure," he said.

His advice to junior attorneys:

"You have to put in the work; there are still no shortcuts," Wessel said, adding that attorneys need to know the law and draft and write well.

On top of a foundation of hard work, he added that attorneys should focus on using knowledge in a technical practice to strategically advantage a client.

"Don't just tell me the answer. Tell me how we're going to, you know, use the best answer and create the best position for our client," Wessel said.

--As told to Kellie Mejdreich. Editing by Adam LoBelia.

Law360's MVPs are attorneys who have distinguished themselves from their peers over the past year through high-stakes litigation, record-breaking deals and complex global matters. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2025 MVP winners after reviewing nearly 900 submissions.