



Who's Who at Hinckley Allen: Jack Steele

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Jack is a seasoned corporate lawyer with over 30 years of experience. He is known for navigating clients through complex transactions, and is consistently recognized as a leader in the mergers and acquisitions field. In addition, Jack's expertise covers the areas of venture capital financing, private equity, technology transactions, corporate governance and capital markets.

How did you get involved in, or what led you to practicing, Corporate & Business law?

I've always been attracted to business, law, and technology, so while pursuing my education, applying to business school and law school after college was a natural fit. I wanted to cast a wide net and see where I landed. Ultimately, I landed in law school and began working in the tech space, first as a paralegal at a local tech law firm and then as an associate after law school. Over the years, I've been fortunate enough to follow my passion for business, law, and technology by developing a practice focused on mergers and acquisitions, venture capital financing, private equity, and technology transactions.

What unique skill, perspective, or philosophy do you think you bring to your work?

I bring BigLaw experience to the agility of a mid-size firm, which makes a difference for growing companies who don't want to spend all their money on lawyers. Second, I have seen the tech industry ebb and flow from major IPOs to the dot-com bubble and the recession, and have learned invaluable lessons during these cycles which I can bring to my clients. Third, I'm a straight shooter. When my clients call with out-of-the-box thinking, I'm not afraid to give them honest counsel, even if it's not what they want to hear. My clients appreciate that candor.

Given the challenges working in Corporate & Business law, what makes it all worth it to

you?

I love my job for a number of different reasons. First, I have the privilege of steering clients through significant business milestones, whether that be an IPO, an acquisition, or a financing. For many clients, these deals are rare, but with 30 years of experience, I have probably been there before. Serving my clients during their time of greatest need can be stressful, but it is also very rewarding. Having been around the block before, I usually have a good feel for how things are likely to play out, and use that knowledge to proactively help my clients plan their next steps. I take great pride in helping my clients navigate those crucial moments in their businesses to enable them to reach their goals.

Second, the technology industry is very dynamic, so as the businesses of my clients adapt and change, I need to do the same. Being in a position where one can continue to learn and grow is stimulating and fun.

Third, I enjoy working with emerging growth companies and entrepreneurs because they are optimists. In order to take the risks necessary to succeed as an entrepreneur, you have to believe in the potential of your ideas. It's energizing to be involved in this ecosystem.

Who was the biggest influence in your career (mentor/teacher/relative) and why?

I am grateful for the time I've spent in my career working with lots of really smart and hardworking attorneys, particularly as I began my career at Testa Hurwitz and Goodwin Procter, all of whom helped me to develop as a lawyer and a person. However, two people in particular have been the biggest influences in my life and career.

The greatest influence in my life is undoubtedly my wife. She has always been a strong advocate for embracing change and doing work that satisfies one's personal passions. Case in point: As a young attorney in the early 1990s, I was interested in doing pro-bono work, but struggled to identify how I could really make a difference as a corporate transactional attorney. My most valuable skill set was in helping people buy and sell businesses. I knew the fall of the Berlin Wall had created a flurry of business activity in Central and Eastern Europe, so I sought out opportunities to use my skills to help those people become free. I took a leave of absence from my job, and moved to Prague for a position with the Czech government as a Foreign Legal Advisor with the Ministry of Privatization of the Czech Republic. In this role, I negotiated the sale of Czech state-owned businesses to international buyers. The opportunity took me halfway around the world, introduced me to a wealth of new experiences, and enabled me to apply my legal expertise to make a difference.

The greatest influence in my legal career is my former colleague John Egan, the longtime co-chair of Goodwin's tech practice. I spent a lot of time working with and learning from John. In fact, I worked on my first deal as an attorney for John, and we continued to work together for many, many years. John is highly intelligent, technically excellent, and always has a deep understanding of his client's business. We worked hard together, but always had more than our share of laughs along the way.

What are the some trends in your industry right now?

The technology industry changes so quickly that trends can be here today, and gone tomorrow. It doesn't take a tech expert to see that things like big data and artificial intelligence are completely disrupting the way businesses operate, and the way we live our lives.

The most important ongoing factors continuing to impact my work are the visibility and draw of the startup lifestyle, and the abundance of private capital available for entrepreneurs and emerging growth companies. With shows like "Shark Tank" and "Silicon Valley" showcasing the startup lifestyle, and the fact that lean startups are requiring less capital to start and grow a business, there continues to be a proliferation of entrepreneurship all across the country. In the 21st century, the tech industry is the land of opportunity.

How are you involved in the community? What makes you passionate about this cause/organization?

In 2011, my family and I started a soccer program for kids with intellectual and physical disabilities in the North Shore area called [North Shore Rovers](#). Since then, it has grown into a passion project for my whole family. My wife, my kids, and I have all played soccer. Over the years, I've witnessed the sport's power to bring people together, from my time playing in college and during my time doing pro-bono work in the Czech Republic, to my time now with the Rovers. It all started when my oldest son volunteered with the Special Olympics while he was in middle school, and from there it has been a family endeavor to start and operate our program every step of the way.

Having been pretty involved with youth soccer over the years, I know a lot about the local administrative side of things, such as who runs which organizations, how to secure fields, and who the local high school coaches are. My wife and kids have their own local soccer network too, which helped us get the program up and running. My daughter even knows

sign language, which helps with our nonverbal players. In our program, we match every player with a high school volunteer for the entire season. Over time, we've grown from just 12 players when we first started to now more than 100 players and 125 volunteers coming from communities throughout the North Shore area of Boston.

Coaching soccer has always been fun for me, but the Rovers are about so much more than the game itself. I'm elated to watch our players learn and grow – and to watch our high school volunteers show up early on Sunday mornings week after week to make a difference in someone else's life. It has been a truly rewarding experience to get to spend this time trying to help others, and a truly inspiring experience to see all the high school kids out there trying to do the same thing. As I often tell our high school volunteers, "No man stands as tall as he who stoops to help a child."

Who's Who at Hinckley Allen is an interview series that highlights each attorney's life experience and skills. Read more interviews [here](#) to discover how our attorneys are valued business partners who positively impact their clients businesses, and help to achieve their goals.

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