

## Rising Star: Kramer Levin's Josh Winefsky

By Caleb Drickey

*Law360 (June 23, 2021, 3:02 PM EDT)* -- Josh Winefsky of Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP has negotiated huge casino, hospitality and retail space transactions while also guiding clients through the high-stakes world of New York City luxury condominium development, netting him a spot among the real estate attorneys under age 40 honored by Law360 as Rising Stars.

### **THE BIGGEST DEAL HE WORKED ON RECENTLY:**

Winefsky pointed to his representation of Vici Properties during its pursuit and 2019 acquisition of the Harrah's New Orleans Hotel and Casino as his greatest professional challenge of recent years. That transaction, which was just one part of Vici's \$1.8 billion purchase of three Harrah's casinos, required almost a year of negotiations.

"That was an incredibly complicated transaction, because a portion of the property was owned by the city of New Orleans. We had to renegotiate a ground lease with the city that allowed us "to bring in a partner" to operate the casino, he said. "This involved a triparty negotiation with a government agency. It was incredibly challenging, but ultimately, we were able to get the deal done for our client."

Over a year after the deal closed, Winefsky's relief at the transaction's success was apparent. "I don't know if I'll do one as complicated as that one in the near future," he said.

### **HIS PROUDEST MOMENT AS AN ATTORNEY:**

Winefsky says his elevation to partner was the culmination of a profound commitment to his mentors and teammates at Kramer Levin and the greatest honor of his still-growing career.

"I joined Kramer Levin out of law school," he says. "I was a summer associate here between my second and third years of law school. I rose through the ranks here. The people who are now my partners are really the people who trained me and who taught me everything



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 2021

**Josh Winefsky**  
 Kramer Levin

Age: 37  
 Home base: New York  
 Position: Partner  
 Law school: Hofstra University  
 First job after law school:  
 Associate at Kramer Levin

about being a real estate attorney. To be recognized by my now partners is something that was incredibly meaningful to me."

**OTHER NOTABLE DEALS HE'S WORKED ON:**

Winefsky believes that most real estate attorneys in New York are bound to one of two lanes: negotiating huge transactions or guiding developers through the condominium development process. Winefsky does both, and has contributed to some of the city's most attention-grabbing condo projects.

Among his clients are the developers of the two tallest residential towers in the Western Hemisphere, Central Park Tower and 432 Park Ave. He seemed unfazed by the public scrutiny and hullabaloo that accompanies such expensive apartment projects, and credited his ability to navigate the complications of condo transactions to his decadelong stewardship of 432 Park, which began at the project's earliest stages.

"I've been working on 432 Park Ave. since well before it was a hole in the ground, when I was a second-year associate. I've sort of grown up with it in my professional life."

**HOW HE THINKS THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY WILL CHANGE IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS:**

Winefsky indicated that the greatest questions regarding the post-pandemic market for commercial office space remain unresolved. A year of quarantine and remote work have forced many companies and employees to reimagine the nature of the workplace, and he believes that real estate attorneys will need to help craft the new commercial space landscape.

"We're clearly at an inflection point," he said. "I think that it'll be incumbent upon everybody to be as creative as possible in how we use the space that's here, and how we build space for future uses. Going forward, it'll be truly fascinating to see how the need for space gets modified coming out of COVID."

Whatever the future holds, Winefsky maintains his unwavering belief that offices, and the teams that are shaped within them, can never be replaced as the beating heart of professional life.

"As I sit here in my office, after not having been here for a very long time, I can say that it's great to be here. It's great to sit in an office and get work done, to see my colleagues and collaborate with them and have conversations with them in person. It's so meaningful, and it'll never go away."

— As told to Caleb Drickey

*Law360's Rising Stars are attorneys under 40 whose legal accomplishments belie their age. A team of Law360 editors selected the 2021 Rising Stars winners after reviewing more than 1,400 submissions. Attorneys had to be under 40 as of April 30, 2021, to be eligible for this year's award. This interview has been edited and condensed.*