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AMERICA'S BEST BANKS

America's Best And Worst Banks 2015

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Forbes ranked the 100 largest publicly traded banks and thrifts on nine measures of financial health: return on average equity; net interest margin; nonperforming loans (NPLs) as a percentage of loans; nonperforming assets as percentage of assets; reserves as a percentage of NPLs; two capital ratios (Tier 1 and risk-based); leverage ratio and one-year sales growth. All of the data, outside of sales growth, was provided by Charlottesville, Va., financial data firm SNL Financial. Forbes compiled the ranking of the best and worst banks based on an average of the individual ranks of each metric.

The top U.S. bank this year is New York-based Signature Bank. The full-service commercial bank started in 2001 and has grown to \$26 billion in assets with 27 private client offices throughout the New York-metro area. "There is a lot of runway in the New York metro area for us to grow," says CEO Joe DePaolo in extolling the NYC market. There are \$1.4 trillion in deposits in New York banks, almost three times the next biggest metro of Philadelphia.

Signature focuses primarily on the needs of privately owned businesses with at least \$20 million in revenue. But DePaolo says the bank will also target a law firm with \$2 million in billings because it has a \$35 million escrow account. "This is where we thrive because that client gets lost with the big institution," he says. Signature's attention to law firms helped it get named Best Business Bank by the New York Law Journal this year in their annual reader survey.

Signature has racked up an impressive financial performance. It has posted 20 straight quarters of record earnings. Return on average equity of 13.8% over the last 12 months ranks fifth among the 100 largest banks. The bank also ranks in the top five for nonperforming assets as a percent of total assets (0.1%), nonperforming loans (NPLs) as a percent of total loans (0.15%) and reserves as a percent of NPLs (634%). While many banks are struggling to increase revenue, Signature posted growth of 21% over the past year. **F**



SIGNATURE BANK

#1 Signature Bank

Headquarters: New York, N.Y.
Assets: \$26 billion
Price/Book value: 2.5
NPLs*/Loans: 0.1%
Reserves/NPLs: 634%

Rank	Company	Total assets (\$bil)	Return on avg equity	NPLs/total loans	Reserves/NPLs*	Tier 1 ratio	Leverage ratio
1	Signature Bank	\$26	13.8%	0.1%	634%	15.5%	9.5%
2	Bank of Hawaii	15	15.5	0.6	285	15.3	7.2
3	BankUnited	18	10.6	0.3	269	17.2	11.2
4	SVB Financial Group	36	11.4	0.1	1,000+	14.0	8.2
5	State Street	275	10.0	0.0	1,000+	14.2	6.4
6	First Republic Bank	47	11.1	0.1	389	13.8	9.5
7	Prosperity Bancshares	21	9.6	0.5	174	13.2	7.4
8	Cullen/Frost Bankers	27	10.2	0.7	129	13.9	8.3
9	Commerce Bancshares	23	11.7	0.5	282	13.8	9.4
10	BancFirst	6	10.8	0.5	221	13.5	8.9

*If capital ratios were not reported at the holding co. level, the unitary banking subsidiaries ratios were used. *NPLs: Nonperforming loans include loans 90+ days past due and nonaccrual loans. Source: SNL Financial*