



Susan F. Balaschak Joins Akerman Senterfitt

Firm Continues to Expand Bankruptcy Practice in New York Office

NEW YORK — February 18, 2009 — Akerman Senterfitt today announced the continued expansion of its New York office and bankruptcy practice as Susan F. Balaschak joins the firm as a Shareholder in the New York office. Ms. Balaschak has broadly-based experience in bankruptcies, corporate restructurings and reorganizations, with over 15 years of experience in this area. Ms. Balaschak joins Keith N. Costa, formerly with the U.S. Department of Justice, who recently joined Akerman's Bankruptcy and Creditor's Rights practice as a shareholder in New York.

"Susan will provide meaningful depth to our already experienced and growing bankruptcy team in New York and will be an invaluable resource to our clients, particularly in this distressed economy," said Jules Cohen, Chair of Akerman's Bankruptcy and Creditor's Rights practice group.

Ms. Balaschak brings an extensive background in all aspects of creditors' rights, turnarounds and workouts. She has served as counsel to numerous official and unofficial committees and has extensive experience in corporate reorganizations, unsecured and secured transaction and bankruptcy related litigation. Ms. Balaschak has analyzed, litigated and settled in excess of \$1 billion in claims and well over 500 adversary proceedings. Ms. Balaschak earned her law degree from Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law where she was a member of Cardozo Law Review. She has been admitted to bar in New York and Texas. Ms. Balaschak joins Akerman from Traub Bonacquist & Fox LLP. Prior to rejoining Traub, Bonacquist & Fox LLP, where she had spent over 13 years, Ms. Balaschak served as a partner for two years at Dreier LLP. She previously served as a law clerk to the Hon. Prudence Carter Beatty, U.S. Bankruptcy Judge for the Southern District of New York.

She has organized and represented numerous out-of-court committees and represented a wide array of clients in all aspects of Chapter 11 bankruptcy cases. She is admitted to practice before, among others, the U.S. Supreme Court, U.S. District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, and the Northern District of Texas. In 2007 and 2008 Ms. Balaschak was honored by her peers by being elected to New York's list of *Super Lawyer's* a publication of Law and Politics.

Ms. Balaschak will be joining an august group of Akerman bankruptcy attorneys, most notably, Michael Goldberg, internationally recognized for his experience with Ponzi schemes, many of whom have been highly sought after in recent months by clients as well as the news media for their guidance on issues such as financial fraud and creditors' rights.

Akerman's Bankruptcy & Creditors' Rights practice group represents creditors, creditors' committees, lenders, bankruptcy trustees and other parties in all aspects of bankruptcy law, debtor/creditor relations, and insolvency problems throughout the United States. The group handles complex cases, under state and/or federal law in all types of commercial and residential development mortgage foreclosures and receiverships, in addition to serving as receivers in many SEC cases. Akerman's clients include leading national banks, as well as a variety of CMBS special servicers, private equity lenders and other financial institutions;

About Akerman Senterfitt

Akerman is ranked among the top 100 law firms in the United States by *The National Law Journal NLJ 250 (2008)* in number of lawyers and is one of the largest firms in Florida. The firm serves clients in major business centers throughout the United States, including Miami, New York, Washington D.C. and Los Angeles. For additional information, please visit the firm's Web site at www.akerman.com.

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