

People



William D. Ellis

Partner, Real Estate

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As a former general counsel for a leading real estate developer, owner, and operator and decades of market experience, Bill Ellis provides his clients with a comprehensive real estate perspective. He represents private equity funds, global financial institutions, investment banks, REITs, other investment funds, and private developers in real estate transactions, including workouts/restructurings, leasing, acquisitions, dispositions, financing, joint ventures, and development across the United States.

Bill has experience across asset classes with an emphasis on distressed property, the hospitality sector, and industrial and commercial properties, and specialized expertise in cell tower, leasing and movie theaters.

Bill began his career as a corporate and securities lawyer. Most recently, he served as General Counsel and Corporate Secretary of Reading International, Inc. (NASDAQ: RDI), the successor to the famous Reading Railroad and now developer, owner, and operator of retail and commercial real estate in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, including entertainment-themed retail centers, cinemas, and live theater assets.

Notable Work

Complex Mortgage Financing: Represented international bank in the \$400 million financing of the acquisition of Hollywood Park Race Track, the future home of the Los Angeles Rams, together with the \$1 billion-plus construction loan for the stadium.

Hospitality: Represented international bank in workout, restructuring, foreclosure, and bankruptcy of a dozen high-end resorts in the United States and the Caribbean.

Acquisition and Development: Represented numerous investors in the acquisition, development, repositioning, and disposition of raw land, shopping centers, hotels, multifamily properties, and office buildings around the United States.

Areas of Experience

Real Estate
Distressed Property
Hospitality
Real Estate Acquisitions and Sales
Real Estate Financing
Commercial Leasing and Development
Lease Restructuring and Workouts
Construction
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
Project Finance and Development

Education

J.D., University of Michigan Law School, 1982
B.A., Occidental College, Political Science and Government, 1979

Admissions

Bars

California

Related Content

Akerman Partner William Ellis Selected as a Top 100 Lawyer by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*
April 21, 2025

The Legal 500 Ranks Akerman Among Top National Firms
June 14, 2024

Connect CRE Honors Four Akerman Partners with Lawyers in Real Estate Award
December 12, 2023

Construction and Acquisition: Represented money center banks, investment banks, and alternative lender in construction and acquisition loans in Texas, Hawaii, New York, Arizona, California, and across the United States, together with workouts of same.

International Investors: Represented offshore investors from Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, United Kingdom, Chile, and Switzerland in numerous real estate developments, joint ventures, financings, and acquisitions of a variety of real estate projects.

Leasing: Represented landlords and tenants in leasing of millions of square feet of office and retail space across the United States.

Development: Represented developers in all phases of development of industrial projects, hotels, shopping centers, and office buildings.

Financial Institution: Represented alternative investment division of money center bank in acquisition, restructuring, and partial disposition of over one hundred boutique hotels, apartment buildings, shopping centers, and office buildings across the United States.

Related Professional Experience

- General Counsel and Corporate Secretary for Reading International, Inc.

Honors and Distinctions

- *Best Lawyers*, 2014-2015, 2020-2025, Listed in California for Real Estate Law
- *Los Angeles Business Journal*, 2025, Named as One of the Top 100 Lawyers for Los Angeles
- *Connect CRE*, 2023 Lawyer in Real Estate Award Winner, California
- *California Law Business Magazine*, “Dealmaker of the Week”
- *Super Lawyers Magazine*, 2013-2014, Named Southern California Super Lawyer
- *The Legal 500*, 2018, 2024 Recommended for Real Estate - Real Estate

Published Work and Lectures

- USC Gould School of Law, 2019 Real Estate Law and Business Forum, Speaker, “Recession Redux? Revisiting Real Estate Workout and SPE Bankruptcies,” April 11, 2019