

In The News

Akerman Partner Michael Goldberg Praised as Compassionate Arbiter in Rapid Payout for Surfside Condo Victims

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In a *New York Times* article titled, “Lawsuits Over Tragedies Can Drag On. Not in the Florida Condo Collapse,” partner Michael I. Goldberg in Fort Lauderdale was recognized for his extraordinary labors as court-appointed receiver in the deadly beachfront condominium tower collapse in Surfside. A little over a year after the Champlain Towers South fell, the Surfside condo survivors and victims’ families will soon be compensated for their losses, based on a \$1 billion settlement that came from the developers, engineering consultants, and security companies whose errors may have caused the disaster, as well as their insurers.

Goldberg, Akerman’s fraud and recovery practice chair, is responsible for guiding compensation to the victims and homeowners of Surfside. He has served as a sounding board for survivors and victims, as the go-between for dozens of lawyers in mounting lawsuits, as the “eyes and ears” of Miami-Dade Circuit Judge Michael Hanzman, and as *de facto* property manager of the two-acre remains of the building. He also helped shepherd the \$120 million sale of the oceanfront land, contributing to the eventual settlement.

According to *The New York Times*, the story of the Surfside case and the team of people alongside Goldberg who brought it swiftly and sensitively to its

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close could serve as a model for how the justice system treats and compensates victims in the future. A so-called case of “personalized justice” where each victim’s special circumstance was heavily weighed to calculate the individual damages and appropriate award for their family, those involved in the case said it was handled with great compassion and understanding, and a focus on the victims rather than the money.

Goldberg told *The New York Times*, “When I’m 85, sitting in a nursing home, and nobody wants to listen to me, this is certainly the case that I’m going to tell them about. This is the mantel on a lot of our careers, including the judge’s.”

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