

## Press Release

# Akerman Continues Chicago Expansion with Five Lawyers; Bolsters National Litigation Practice

August 20, 2014

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, today announced that five litigators, including prominent trial lawyers Douglas Albritton, Martin Tully and Dara Tarkowski, as well as Lauren Cooper and [Julian Dayal](#), have joined the firm's rapidly growing Chicago office. Bringing its headcount to 24 lawyers, Akerman has tripled the size of the Chicago team since opening the office just six months ago. Albritton, Tully and Tarkowski join the firm as partners in the Litigation Practice Group, along with staff attorney Cooper and associate Dayal.

"It is our great pleasure to welcome these distinguished litigators to the Chicago office," said [Scott Meyers](#), Chicago Office Managing Partner. "Akerman has a long history of representing clients through their most critical litigation matters. We remain focused on building an exceptional team of lawyers in Chicago who not only mirror Akerman's core strengths, but share our entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to the Akerman Client Experience."

"The reputation of our new colleagues represents another significant step in the growth of Akerman's Chicago office as well as our litigation and arbitration teams," said [Lawrence Rochefort](#), chair of Akerman's Litigation Practice Group. "Doug, Martin and Dara are exceptional trial lawyers with high-level experience handling matters for clients across a

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### Related People

Julian Dayal  
Scott A. Meyers  
Lawrence P. Rochefort

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### Related Offices

Chicago

wide range of industries. The depth of their talent, leading multiple aspects of business disputes, sends a resounding message about the capabilities of our litigation team in the Chicago market, throughout the United States and across the Americas.”

### **Douglas Albritton**

Albritton has nearly 20 years of commercial litigation and arbitration experience representing both plaintiffs and defendants throughout the U.S. in trial and appellate matters. He represents investors, software companies, private equity and venture capital firms (and their portfolio companies), and a diverse range of other businesses in disputes ranging from the common to the esoteric. A unique portion of his practice focuses on the prosecution and defense of trade secrets and restrictive covenant cases, including employee non-competes, similar covenants with new and former equity-interest holders from the purchase and sale of companies, and related agreements arising from consulting and other business relationships. Albritton also focuses his practice on complex business disputes arising out of commercial transactions and investor relationships, where he often represents plaintiffs, including LLC disputes, shareholder oppression claims, real estate litigation, and the defense of class action, securities and derivative lawsuits, as well as emergency matters requiring expedited proceedings.

Earlier in his career, Albritton served for two terms as assistant legal counsel to the Illinois House Democrats and the Speaker of the House. He is the former chair of the American Bar Association’s Tort Trial & Insurance Practice Section Business Litigation Committee.

### **Martin Tully**

Tully is a veteran trial lawyer with more than two decades of experience representing domestic and multinational companies in complex commercial litigation matters. His areas of concentration include contract disputes, business torts, antitrust claims,

actions for emergency and injunctive relief, trade secrets, restrictive covenants, energy law, toxic torts and class action defense. His proficiency as a trial and appellate advocate spans multiple state and federal courts across the country. He is also experienced in the alternative dispute resolution context, having achieved favorable awards and results for clients in both arbitration and mediation proceedings under the rules of the American Arbitration Association, JAMS Resolution Centers, and court-mandated dispute resolution programs. A past national practice chair of Electronic Discovery & Information Governance, Tully also played a central role in developing necessary process and procedures for litigation matters of all sizes regarding the identification, preservation and analysis of electronically stored information, as well as its use as evidence. As an adjunct to his commercial litigation practice, Tully continues to focus on keeping clients ahead of the curve in both litigation and regulatory matters, developing law, technology and best practices related to e-discovery and digital evidence.

Tully is an active member of the Sedona Conference<sup>®</sup> Working Group 1, the Seventh Circuit E-Discovery Pilot Program Committee, and the Trial Practice/Courtroom Technology sub-committee of the American Bar Association's Technology for the Litigator Committee. He also serves as Mayor and former Trustee for the Village of Downers Grove, Ill.; Board Member of DePaul University College of Law Center for Public Interest Law, and on the University of Illinois-Chicago Campus Alumni Advisory Board. Tully was previously featured in *The National Law Journal's* Defense Verdicts of the Year for his role in the high-profile case, Research Systems Corp. v. IPSOS S.A.

### **Dara Tarkowski**

Tarkowski focuses her practice on complex litigation and consumer finance law, representing clients in the debt buying and debt collection industry in multiple regulatory and litigation areas. This

includes the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act; the Fair Credit Reporting Act; the Telephone Consumer Protection Act; state unfair and deceptive trade practices laws; the enforcement of class action waivers contained in consumer arbitration agreements and cardholder agreements; state consumer protection laws; state licensing requirements, and state bank regulatory advocacy. Tarkowski also counsels her debt collection and debt buying clients with respect to their policies and procedures, implementing best practices and responding to consumer complaints with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Tarkowski also counsels clients with respect to records retention and document management practices in order to successfully navigate state and federal requirements pertaining to the preservation and production of electronically stored information. She has been named by Illinois' *Super Lawyers* as a Rising Star in the category of Creditors' Rights.

#### **Lauren Cooper, Julian Dayal**

Cooper brings experience in the debt buyer and debt collection industry, particularly in issues involving compliance with the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act and Fair Credit Reporting Act, as well as various other federal and state regulations. Dayal is a business litigator who focuses on consumer class action defense, commercial arbitration law and white collar and government investigations.

Akerman established its Chicago office on Feb. 3 with eight lawyers, which has become one of the firm's fastest-growing offices along with its New York, Miami and Washington, D.C., locations. These new lawyers follow the July additions of Chicago-based partners, litigator Christine Bautista, healthcare lawyer Carolyn Metnick and bankruptcy lawyer Michael Molinaro.

#### **About Akerman LLP**

Akerman LLP is a leading transactions and trial law firm known for its core strengths in middle market M&A, within the financial services and real estate

industries, and for a diverse Latin America practice. With more than 600 lawyers and government affairs professionals and a network of 20 offices, it is ranked among the top 100 law firms in the United States by *The National Law Journal NLJ* 350 (2014). Akerman also is ranked among the top 50 law firms for diversity in *The American Lawyer's* Diversity Scorecard (2014).

Akerman's Litigation Practice Group is recognized nationally by *U.S. News - Best Lawyers* in the Commercial Litigation category. The firm's team has vast experience in a wide range of civil and criminal litigation, including actions involving banking, securities, healthcare, insurance, real estate and construction.

More information can be found at [akerman.com](http://akerman.com) or [twitter.com/akerman\\_law](https://twitter.com/akerman_law).