

## In The News

# Akerman Lawyers Honored as “Most Effective Lawyers” by the *Daily Business Review*

December 6, 2013

Seven Akerman partners were selected as finalists for the *Daily Business Review*’s “Most Effective Lawyers” award, which honors lawyers in South Florida who have a track record of achieving significant victories for their clients. Among the finalists, three won the award at the *Daily Business Review*’s annual ceremony on December 6. Akerman received the highest number of finalists among the firms represented.

### **Most Effective Lawyers in Arbitration and Mediation - Winners**

Luis A. Perez, co-chair of the Latin America and the Caribbean Practice, and Luis O’Naghten, chair of the International Litigation & Arbitration Practice, won the award in the arbitration and mediation category for skillfully navigating a multi-jurisdictional International Chamber of Commerce (“ICC”) Arbitration centered around a complex breach of contract matter on behalf of a Fortune 100 defense contractor. The contract dispute, involving the embargo of military equipment by the United States against Venezuela, was valued in excess of \$155 million. Perez and O’Naghten successfully achieved dismissal of the case in its entirety.

### **Most Effective Lawyers in Bankruptcy - Winner**

Michael Goldberg, chair of the Bankruptcy and Reorganization Group, won the award in the

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### Related People

Michael I. Goldberg  
Michael C. Marsh  
Luis A. Perez

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### Related Work

Bankruptcy and  
Reorganization  
Litigation  
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bankruptcy category for his involvement in the \$1.2 billion Ponzi scheme by Scott Rothstein, the fourth largest Ponzi Scheme in U.S. history. Goldberg has represented the creditors committee throughout the nearly 4-year proceedings and was appointed to serve as liquidating trustee for the \$180 million bankruptcy estate of the defunct law firm, Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler PA. All of the firm's unsecured creditors (approximately 400) are expected to be paid in full over the next year.

### **Most Effective Lawyers in Corporate Securities - Finalists**

Brian Miller, chair of the Securities Litigation Practice, and Michael Marsh, partner with the Litigation Practice Group, were finalists in the corporate securities category for their representation of Continucare, Corp. in the defense of an action seeking to enjoin a \$300 million merger with a competitor. After extensive expedited discovery, the case was favorably settled and approved by court, obtaining certainty for Continucare to close the transaction.

Miller also was a finalist for his representation of Bluegreen Corporation and its outside directors in defense of claims of breach of fiduciary duty. Bluegreen entered into a \$320 million merger agreement with its majority stockholder, BFC Financial, and seven class actions were filed in Florida and Massachusetts state court by shareholders, owning nearly 2 million shares of stock, seeking to enjoin the merger in addition to damages. The merger between Bluegreen and BFC was consummated with shareholders ultimately receiving \$10 cash per share and over 85% of all outstanding shares voting in favor of the merger.

### **Most Effective Lawyers in Criminal - Finalist**

Richard Sharpstein, partner with the Litigation Practice Group, was a finalist in the criminal category for orchestrating a swift and decisive win on behalf of Republic Metals Corporation. A civil complaint was filed seeking to forfeit over \$20

million in funds contained in Republic Metals' operating account, with alleged connections to an international money laundering scheme run by a Peruvian drug trafficking organization. After an intensive investigation, the Akerman team, led by Sharpstein, provided evidence that Republic Metals was an innocent owner and a bona fide purchaser or seller for value, and successfully obtained dismissal of the complaint filed by the government.

### **Most Effective Lawyers in Real Estate - Finalist**

Mark Tobin, partner with the Real Estate Practice Group, was a finalist in the real estate category for serving as lead eminent domain counsel to Ft. Lauderdale Owner LLC, a Blackstone entity, in connection with one of the largest eminent domain cases in Florida between Broward County and the 388-room Hilton Hotel at the Ft. Lauderdale Airport. The County's initial offer for the property was \$43.6 million. After intensive work with the client and national experts, culminating in a 15 hour marathon mediation, the deal was settled for \$62 million plus millions of dollars in other non-monetary concessions.