


People



Irene Bassel Frick

Office Managing Partner

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Irene Bassel Frick serves as the managing partner of Akerman's Tampa office. A trial lawyer with experience in state and federal court, arbitrations, and administrative proceedings, Irene has a multifaceted litigation practice encompassing contractual disputes, class action defense, fiduciary duty claims, business torts, non-compete litigation, construction disputes, and commercial foreclosure litigation. Her clients include employers, insurers, employee benefit plans, and third party providers; architects, engineers, and contractors; and developers, owners, lenders and financial services institutions.

In addition to her general commercial litigation experience, Irene has extensive class action experience in the context of contractual and commercial disputes as well as in the employee benefits practice area. Irene also has significant experience in employee benefits litigation in general, including ERISA litigation. Within the context of employee benefits, Irene litigates claims related to retirement income plans such as ESOP or profit sharing plans and welfare plans, such as life, health, and disability plans. Irene also assists clients in enforcing and defending non-compete disputes in the context of commercial transactions. With respect to her experience representing lenders and financial services clients, Irene has defended lender liability claims, and handled all aspects of commercial litigation including the enforcement of commercial loans and prosecution of commercial foreclosures, appointment of receivers, and bankruptcy and deficiency litigation. Within the construction context, Irene litigates defects, liens, and bonds.

Active in the community, Irene is a past president of the Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers as well as a founding member of the Pearl Society, which provides civil legal assistance to low-income and disadvantaged clients in the Tampa Bay area.

Notable Work

Class Action: Represented clients in a wide variety of putative class actions across the country with an emphasis in contractual and

Areas of Experience

Commercial Disputes
Litigation
Class Action Defense
Commercial Mortgage Foreclosures and Receiverships
Construction Litigation and Dispute Resolution
Distressed Property
Employee Benefits and Executive Compensation
Employee Benefits and ERISA Litigation
Financial Services
Fraud and Recovery
Insurance Litigation
Preference and Fraudulent Transfer Litigation
Healthcare Litigation

Education

J.D., University of Florida Levin College of Law, 1998, with honors
B.A., University of Florida, Political Science, 1995, with honors, National Merit Scholar; Phi Beta Kappa Scholar

Admissions

Bars

Florida

Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida

Related Content

112 Akerman Lawyers Across the U.S. Named to 2023 *Super Lawyers* and Rising Stars Lists
September 28, 2023

deceptive trade practices claims.

Commercial Disputes: Represented clients in a wide variety of commercial disputes including contract enforcement, and the prosecution and defense of claims of business torts. She represents corporations, shareholders, and officers and directors in shareholder disputes, with regard to claims of breach of fiduciary duty, wrongful competition, and non-competition agreements. She has litigated the appointment of receivers and prosecuted and defended claims for temporary restraining orders and preliminary injunctions.

Employee Benefits Claims: Represented clients in the denial of claims for health, life, disability, retirement, and annuity benefits. The majority of these claims arise from group policies issued to an employer and are therefore governed by ERISA. Irene regularly litigates ERISA cases in federal court and general breach of contract claims in state court. Irene also represents employers and employee benefits plans in investigations conducted by the Employee Benefits Security Administration Division of the Department of Labor (DOL). Her knowledge of the obligations of an ERISA plan and an ERISA fiduciary in employee benefits claims has assisted in the defense of DOL investigations.

Fiduciary Duty Claims: Represented employers, plan sponsors, and receivers in prosecuting claims against ERISA fiduciaries and has also defended claims brought by ERISA participants for breach of fiduciary duty. Irene also advises employers in bankruptcies or which are otherwise terminating employee benefit plans in which litigation is anticipated or results in the underfunding and/or termination of an ERISA plan.

Construction Litigation: Represented clients in prosecuting and defending claims for construction defects. Represented both design professionals and contractors as well as owners in the preparation, filing, and prosecution or defense of construction liens. She has significant experience handling disputes regarding work performed on property that is later subdivided or benefits abutting parcels. In addition, Irene represents governmental entities in the prosecution and defense of construction disputes.

Foreclosure Litigation: Represented lenders and servicers in commercial mortgage foreclosures in Florida. She has handled appointments of receiver, enforcement of assignments of rents, foreclosure of real and personal property, litigation related to tax deed sales, and quiet title actions.

Banking Litigation: Represented lenders in the defense of claims for fraud, RICO, intentional interference with advantageous business relationships, and fraudulent and deceptive trade practices related to various business or lending practices.

Related Professional Experience

- Law Clerk to the Honorable Elizabeth A. Jenkins, United States Magistrate Judge, United States District Court, Middle District of Florida

Published Work and Lectures

- American Conference Institute, 17th Annual National Forum on ERISA Litigation, Panelist, "Hypothetical Scenarios and Practical Guidance for ERISA Practitioners," November 22, 2019

Record Number of Akerman Lawyers Named to *The Best Lawyers in America* 2024 Guide
August 22, 2023

Five Akerman Lawyers Named 'Notable Managing Partners' by *Florida Trend* Magazine
July 26, 2023

- The Federal Bar Association, The Tampa Bay Chapter, Speaker, “Staying in the Game: Inclusion Without Boundaries,” June 6, 2019
- The Network of Trial Law Firms Seminar, Speaker, “Ethics: The Lawyer As a Witness,” August 2013
- IMN 3rd Annual Florida Bank & Financial Institutions Special Assets Executive Conference on Real Estate Workouts, Panel Speaker, “Pre-Foreclosure Planning,” February 2013
- The Florida Bar, Lecturer and Contributing Author, “Basic Real Property - Real Estate Litigation,” February 2013
- Akerman’s Employee Benefits Litigation Annual Meeting, Presenter, “ERISA and Social Security,” 2005

Affiliations

- Hillsborough Association for Women Lawyers, President, 2013-2014
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Pearl Society, Founding Member
- Hillsborough County Bar Association, Member
- Justice William Glenn Terrell Inn of Court, Hillsborough County, 2002-2004
- American Bar Association, Member
- Federal Bar Association, Tampa Bay Chapter, Member
- Bay Area Legal Services, Cup of Hope Board Member

Honors and Distinctions

- *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2016-2024, Listed in Florida for Commercial Litigation
- *Super Lawyers* Magazine, 2014-2023, Listed in Florida for Business Litigation
- *Florida Trend’s* Legal Elite, 2023, Listed as a “Notable Managing Partner”
- Florida Association for Women Lawyers, 2016, Recognized as a “Leader in the Law”
- *Florida Trend’s* Legal Elite, 2014-2016, 2018-2020, Listed for Commercial Litigation and Business Law; 2022, Listed for Litigation
- *Florida Trend’s* Legal Elite, 2012, Listed as an “Up & Comer”
- *Tampa Bay Business Journal*, 2010, Recognized as an “Up & Comer”