

In The News

Connect CRE Honors Four Akerman Partners with Real Estate Award

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Residential Development Practice Chair [Jim McNeil](#), Land Use and Development Practice Co-Chair [Joshua Rinesmith](#), Real Estate Partner [Lisa Kolieb](#), and Real Estate Partner [Janis Cheezem](#) have been selected as recipients of the 2024 “Lawyers in Real Estate Awards” by Connect CRE. The awards recognize a select group of lawyers from around the country who excel in their practices as well as in their contributions to the community.

Jim was recognized in the National category; Joshua was recognized for the New York & Tristate region; Lisa was recognized for California; and Janis was recognized for the Florida & Gulf Coast region.

Jim serves as the chair of Akerman’s National Residential Development Practice, a group of more than 25 attorneys and real estate professionals throughout the United States. He focuses his practice on representing homebuilders, developers, and private equity funds in connection with all phases development, including the acquisitions and sales of property, as well as obtaining entitlements. Jim led the Akerman representation of developer GT USA in the sale of nearly 518 acres of fully entitled land in Lake County, Florida, to Pulte Home Company and its land banker, Jen Florida 55, for \$90 million, which closed in July 2024. Two months later, he again led a team representing GT USA, this time in connection with the purchase of more than 2,300

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acres of land for \$165 million also in Lake County, Florida.

Joshua serves as co-chair of the Akerman National Land Use and Development Practice, comprised of more than 50 attorneys, planners, consultants, and other real estate professionals across the firm's 26 U.S. offices. In this role, he develops and executes on strategy to grow the practice and client service offerings on a national scale. He was selected to this position nearly two years ago and has already made a tremendous impact. Through his leadership and guidance, Akerman is positioned as a national leader in land use and zoning law, recognized by leading publications such as *Chambers USA*, *The Legal 500*, *Best Lawyers*, and *Law360*. Josh further leads the exceptionally collaborative New York-based land use and zoning team, executing on plans to strategically grow the practice and roster of high caliber clientele.

Janis represents landlords, tenants, lenders, sellers, and purchasers in complex and routine transactions. She has negotiated the leasing, sale, and purchase aspects of millions of square feet of office, retail, mixed use, and industrial properties in South Florida. Additionally, Janis provides counsel for property management issues and in workouts and restructurings of commercial real estate assets. Her clients include both the public and private parties to public-private partnerships. She led the Akerman team in the representation of Adrienne Arsht, a noted businesswoman and philanthropist, in the well-publicized \$106.9 million sale of her Miami estate, the team representing the Institute of Contemporary Arts - Miami in the widely publicized acquisition and financing of a new building, including expanded gallery space in the Miami Design District, and represented the Town of Palm Beach, Florida, in a public-private partnership with the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach, Inc., for the more than \$25 million restoration and rebuilding of the town's historic 20-acre Phipps Ocean Park.

Lisa leads the Los Angeles office's Real Estate Practice Group, comprised of nine attorneys and land use professionals. She focuses her practice on land use and real estate development matters, guiding clients through the land use entitlement process from initial site diligence to ultimate project approval, construction and operation, and advising clients on the government and regulatory aspects of real estate transactions, including environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). She represents clients in the commercial, residential, hospitality, industrial, and nonprofit sectors. Lisa previously worked in the nonprofit sector and as Deputy Press Assistant to Special Counsel to the President of the United States and also has campaign experience at the local and national levels. She was the co-chair of the Central City Association of Los Angeles' Housing, Land Use & Development Committee, which regularly leads on issues that impact real estate investment in Los Angeles.

Connect CRE is a commercial real estate news and information service provider. Its editorial team solicited nominations for the 2024 Lawyers in Real Estate Awards from real estate industry participants and conducted independent research to determine awardees.

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