

Press Release

Akerman Continues Expansion of New York Office with Three Real Estate Partners

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Firm Broadens Strengths in Commercial Real Estate Leasing, Financings, Economic Development Transactions

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, has further expanded the firm's national Real Estate Practice Group with the addition of three senior real estate partners in New York. Yariv Ben-Ari, Andrew Berman and [Lisa Lim](#) collectively enhance the firm's capabilities in complex real estate transactions, with particular strengths in commercial leasing, financings, economic development and incentives.

Ben-Ari has extensive experience in American-Israeli real estate transactions, expanding Akerman's services for international investors in lending and development projects, as well as the hospitality sector. Before joining Akerman, Berman served as a professor of law and the founding director of the Center for Real Estate Studies at New York Law School. Lim arrives with decades of experience as real estate counsel to various New York government agencies, including Empire State Development, the state's chief economic development agency.

"Yariv, Andrew and Lisa bring significant experience in real estate investment, financing and economic development transactions to our New York office,"

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said Richard Bezold, chair of Akerman's Real Estate Practice Group. "Our new lawyers will be a tremendous asset for clients seeking capital sources and new investment opportunities throughout the U.S. and internationally."

Yariv Ben-Ari

Ben-Ari represents investment and commercial banks, and other lending institutions, as well as owners, operators and developers in real estate financing matters and other real estate transactions. He regularly assists foreign developers and investors in inbound real estate deals across the United States as well as U.S. clients seeking outbound investments. Ben-Ari uses his knowledge of American and Israeli business cultures and legal systems to assist Israeli businesses and enterprises in the United States and Israel. He is member of the board of directors of the America-Israel Friendship League, a founding member of New York City's "Strength Through Diversity" Young Professionals Leadership Program, and a member of the AIPAC Real Estate Division.

Andrew Berman

Berman has more than 25 years of experience practicing real estate law. He represents clients in all aspects of commercial real estate transactions, with an emphasis in commercial leasing and complex financing transactions, including multi-state mortgages, mezzanine loans, preferred equity, and other non-traditional financings, as well as the purchase and sale of office buildings, shopping centers and hotels. Berman previously served as a professor of law at New York Law School for nearly 12 years and is the founding director of New York Law School's Center for Real Estate Studies and Institute for In-House Counsel. He has also served as an expert witness and consultant in major real estate litigation, and regularly lectures and publishes on real estate leasing and finance issues. Berman is a fellow of the American College of Mortgage Attorneys and a past member of the Urban Land Institute's Council on Responsible Property Investing.

Lisa S. Lim

Lim focuses her practice in real estate finance, economic development and affordable housing. She strengthens the firm's national Real Estate and Economic Development & Incentives Practices with significant experience in public-private collaborations among various asset classes. Lim most recently served as senior counsel for Empire State Development, New York State's chief economic development agency. Her previous roles include assistant counsel for the New York State Housing Finance Agency; in-house counsel for real estate and economic development at the New York City Housing Authority; and assistant attorney general for New York State's Office of the Attorney General. Lim has served as lead counsel on a number of 80/20 projects and other prominent developments that have helped revitalize and develop various parts of New York City. Her most recent major transactions include Cornell Tech on Roosevelt Island, the Harlem Children's Zone Promise Academy I in Harlem and the New York Genome/University of Buffalo Genomics Center joint venture. Lim is a member of the Real Estate Committee of the Asian American Bar Association of New York, and serves as co-chair of the Fordham Law School Minority Mentorship Program.

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).

The Akerman Real Estate Practice Group offers comprehensive and fully integrated project counsel

services to clients across the United States and in Latin America. With substantial industry experience and prominent local presence, Akerman represents clients in complex real estate transactions and financings, development and redevelopment projects, public private initiatives and litigation. Recognized as a national tier one law firm for Real Estate Law by *U.S. News - Best Lawyers*, the group advises investors, developers, builders, lenders, retailers, owners and corporate end users, often in high profile matters.

More information can be found at akerman.com or twitter.com/akerman_law.