

In The News

Akerman's Eleanor Vaida Gerhards Appointed to ABA Forum on Franchising Governing Committee

October 19, 2026

Eleanor Vaida Gerhards, partner in Akerman's Corporate Practice Group, has been appointed to the Governing Committee of the American Bar Association's (ABA) Forum on Franchising for a three-year term beginning in August 2027. The ABA Forum on Franchising is a national network of more than 2,700 legal professionals who focus on franchise and distribution law, offering education and resources on topics such as royalties, brand standards, and consumer laws.

Elle has long been active in the ABA Forum on Franchising. She currently serves on its Membership Committee after previously serving on the Program Committee and Women's Caucus. She co-edited the ABA's *Annual Franchise and Distribution Law Developments 2024*, as well as authored chapters in the ABA book *Exemptions and Exclusions under Federal and State Franchise Registration and Disclosure Laws* and the ABA *Franchise Deskbook Selected State Laws, Commentary and Annotations, Third Edition*. She's written multiple articles for the ABA Franchise Law Journal and ABA Forum's Franchise Lawyer newsletter and spoken at ABA Forum on Franchising Annual Meetings in Toronto (2026), Phoenix (2024) San Diego (2022), Nashville (2018) and Miami (2016).

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Eleanor Vaida Gerhards

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Elle is an International Franchise Association Certified Franchise Executive (CFE) and previously served on the IFA Legal Symposium Task Force. She currently serves on the IFA Women's Franchise Committee, having chaired the IFA Philadelphia Women's Franchise Network for more than 10 years.

Elle has more than 19 years of experience serving as outside general corporate and franchise counsel to emerging, established, regional, national and international franchise systems, helping clients launch, grow, and operate franchise brands in the United States and internationally.

Elle has been recognized by *Chambers USA* (Franchising, Nationwide) for the last four consecutive years and by *Best Lawyers* for franchising, and is recognized by *Who's Who Legal: Franchise*. She has been named a "Rising Star" by Super Lawyers, a Pennsylvania "Lawyer on the Fast Track" by *The Legal Intelligencer*, and one of the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* 40 Under 40. In 2026, 1851 Franchise named Elle one of the Top Franchise Lawyers You Should Know. Her recognition as a *Franchise Times* "Legal Eagle" for 10 consecutive years earned her induction into the Franchise Times Legal Eagles Hall of Fame.