

Press Release

Akerman Expands South Florida Presence with Addition of Three Partners

August 5, 2014

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, has welcomed three partners who further enhance the firm's core strengths in middle market M&A, real estate transactions, and complex commercial and insurance litigation. The new lawyers include corporate lawyer David Gellen in the Boca Raton office, real estate lawyer Michelle Gonzalez in Miami and litigator Stacey Ibarra in West Palm Beach. Ibarra also expands the firm's capabilities in white collar crime and government investigations, with experience in healthcare, insurance, mortgage and bank fraud.

Gellen joins the Corporate Practice Group after serving as senior vice president and general counsel of a leading Internet-based social networking and technology company. He represents public and private companies and entrepreneurs in a wide array of corporate transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, equity and debt transactions, corporate restructurings, private equity and venture capital transactions, technology/e-commerce transactions, and joint venture and strategic licensing arrangements. Gellen also provides clients with general corporate counseling, intellectual property protection and pre-litigation resolution of business disputes.

A member of the Real Estate Practice Group, Gonzalez represents investors, developers, owners,

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operators and financial institutions in various commercial real estate transactions, including the acquisition, development, financing, leasing, sales and management of office buildings, apartment complexes, hotels, shopping centers, warehouses and mixed-use properties. She regularly represents lenders in connection with the origination of commercial real estate construction and permanent loans, as well as affordable housing loans, and in restructurings and workouts for distressed loans.

Joining Akerman's Litigation Practice Group, Ibarra focuses on the investigation and litigation of insurance and healthcare fraud as well as complex commercial litigation in federal and state court. A former assistant state attorney and an assistant statewide prosecutor under the Office of the Attorney General, Ibarra also brings in-depth experience in business and employment litigation, toxic torts, and white collar criminal and government investigations, including cases involving money laundering, racketeering, as well as bank and mortgage fraud. She is a recipient of the Attorney General's Distinguished Service Award, and has been an instructor for the Florida Department of Law Enforcement involving the use of racketeering laws to combat organized crime.

Akerman most recently welcomed three partners in Chicago, including litigator Christine Bautista, healthcare lawyer Carolyn Metnick and bankruptcy lawyer Michael Molinaro. Their practices intersect with the financial services and healthcare industries, particularly in financial and securities litigation, as well as regulatory compliance, government investigations and white-collar defense.

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).

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