

Press Release

Akerman Continues Expansion of New York Office with Team of Nationally Recognized Copyright and Entertainment Lawyers

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Firm Enhances Capabilities Across the Spectrum of Intellectual Property

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, further expanded its New York office with the addition of lawyers Ross Charap and Matthew Finkelstein. As partners in the Intellectual Property Practice Group, they bolster Akerman's national bench of lawyers experienced in all aspects of intellectual property law, and enhance the firm's capabilities in transactional, licensing and copyright matters.

Charap and Finkelstein concentrate their practice on copyright and entertainment matters, with a principal focus on all aspects of the music business. They counsel recording artists, songwriters (including five members of the Songwriters' Hall of Fame) and music publishing companies on copyright and other intellectual property issues, as well as television production companies, digital music service providers and companies that produce live events. Together they have represented clients in transactions for the sale and purchase of music assets valued at more than \$350 million. Notable among these many transactions are the acquisition of the North American rights to six early

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Beatles hits, including “She Loves You” and “I Saw Her Standing There”; the sale of Count Basie’s iconic song catalog; and the acquisition of copyrights and royalty streams in a catalog of tens of thousands of songs written and performed by John Denver, Sheryl Crow, The Byrds, Creed, Evanescence, Leon Russell, Rascal Flatts, Billy Strayhorn and Bob Marley, among many others.

A core component of their practice is their extensive work in the complex area of copyright terminations and recaptures. In such matters, their clients include Leroy Anderson (composer of “Sleigh Ride”), Mitchell Parish (co-writer of “Stardust” and “Moonlight Serenade”), Hank Ballard (writer of “The Twist”), Ben E. King (co-writer of “Stand by Me”), and Maurice Williams (writer of “Stay”), among many others.

“Ross and Matt are among an elite group of lawyers with an intimate understanding of both music publishing and performing rights licensing, and they bring valuable experience in the complex area of copyright terminations and recaptures of copyrighted works,” said Mark Passler, co-chair of the Intellectual Property Practice Group. “Our clients will greatly benefit from this experience and their comprehensive knowledge of copyright and entertainment law.”

Charap also represents playwrights, screenwriters, novelists, designers, visual artists and other creators. During the first 25 years of his career, he served as in house counsel to the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), and he counsels clients around the world on performing rights issues involving the U.S. performing rights organizations, ASCAP, Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI) and the Society of European Stage Authors and Composers (SESAC). Charap is recognized by *Super Lawyers* as one of the top lawyers in intellectual property law, entertainment & sports law, and business litigation. He is a former member of the board of directors of the American Intellectual

Property Law Association, a past chair of that Association's Copyright Law Committee and of the Broadcasting, Sound Recordings, and Performing Artists Committee of the American Bar Association's Intellectual Property Section. He also served as an officer and trustee of the Copyright Society of the USA.

Finkelstein, in addition to his work in the entertainment industry, advises clients on technology transactions, with a core focus on technology procurement transactions involving cloud services. He drafts and negotiates the agreements for these transactions. Finkelstein has represented Fortune 100 companies and leading research and higher education institutions in this area. His extensive understanding of the entertainment and technology industries was gained, in part, from prior career experiences at record companies, in live concert production, and at technology companies involved in the secure distribution of digital media. Finkelstein is recognized by *Super Lawyers* as a "Rising Star" in New York for intellectual property law.

Akerman has welcomed 14 intellectual property lawyers in the last 12 months, and nearly doubled the size of the team to 36 lawyers and patent professionals located in Colorado, Florida, Illinois, New York and Washington, D.C. Charap and Finkelstein will work closely with partners Richard Gilly, Mark Lafayette, Ira Sacks and Darren Traub in New York, as well as other professionals in New York and across the firm's national platform who represent Fortune 500 companies, entertainers, authors, music publishers, entrepreneurs and new technology ventures.

Akerman was recently reported by *The American Lawyer* as the top law firm in the United States for lateral partner hires, with the largest percentage increase of total partnership during the 2014 fiscal year. The Intellectual Property Practice Group contributed to the firm's gains last year with notable

additions, including Washington, D.C., partner [Stephen Glazier](#) and Chicago partners Michael Switzer, the firm's Intellectual Property Practice Group Co-Chair, and Mark Anderson, Stacy Baim and [Brian Bianco](#).

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).

Akerman's Intellectual Property Practice Group serves clients worldwide in all areas of intellectual property law, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets and the Internet. Ranked nationally by *U.S. News – Best Lawyers* in Litigation – Intellectual Property, Akerman lawyers handle complex and high-profile cases spanning a range of industries, including sports and entertainment, fashion and retail, consumer electronics and technology, pharmaceutical and medical devices, and financial services, among others.

Akerman delivers important developments in IP law for in-house trademark and copyright counsel, brand managers, entrepreneurs and creators on the [*Marks, Works & Secrets Blog*](#).