

## People



## Esther A. McKean

Partner, Bankruptcy and Reorganization

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” [Esther] is detail-oriented and brings together cases effectively on all fronts.

- *Chambers USA*

Esther McKean focuses her practice on business bankruptcy, creditor’s rights, and commercial litigation. She helps creditors and trustees in bankruptcy proceedings recover assets, obtain relief from the automatic stay, and negotiate plan provisions. Esther also represents debtors in bankruptcy proceedings and has significant experience in the restaurant, retail, hospital and healthcare and real estate sectors. She is Board Certified in Business Bankruptcy Law by The American Board of Bankruptcy Certification.

Esther also has significant commercial and foreclosure litigation experience in state court. She regularly represents local businesses in construction litigation, and lenders and servicers in foreclosure and receivership proceedings.

### Notable Work

**Committee:** Representing the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors in the Chapter 11 filing of online pharmacy The Pill Club. The Committee was active in the 363 sale process, during which the Debtor’s assets were acquired for \$32.2 million. The Committee pursued avoidance actions related to a pre-bankruptcy settlement that resulted in recoveries of \$10.3 million for the unsecured creditors trust.

**Debtors:** Represented two critical access hospitals in their chapter 11 cases.

### Areas of Experience

Bankruptcy and Reorganization  
 Bankruptcy Trustees and Court Appointed Fiduciaries  
 Buying and Selling Assets (Section 363 Sales)  
 Commercial Disputes  
 Commercial Loan Enforcement and Secured Financing Litigation  
 Chapter 11 Business Debtors  
 Preference and Fraudulent Transfer Litigation  
 Financial Services

### Education

J.D., Stetson University College of Law, 2006, cum laude, Book Awards: Non-Profits, Advanced Legal Research; Phi Delta Phi; Recipient of the Alexander L. Paskay Scholarship Award

B.A., University of Central Florida, Legal Studies, 1997, magna cum laude, Golden Key Honor Society, Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society, Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity

### Admissions

#### Bars

Florida  
 Texas

#### Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit  
 U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Middle District of Florida  
 U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Northern District of Florida  
 U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Florida  
 U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida  
 U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida  
 U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida  
 U.S. District Court, Western District of Oklahoma  
 U.S. District Court, Southern District of Texas  
 U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Texas  
 U.S. District Court, Northern District of Texas

**Debtors:** Represented four debtors that operate one of the largest physical therapy clinics in Brevard County.

**Republic Metals:** Represented Chapter 11 debtors in sale and subsequent liquidation of assets of one of the largest refiners of gold, silver, and precious metals in North America.

**Buffets LLC:** Represented the corporation and its affiliated debtors that collectively owned and operated approximately 330 restaurants across the United States in their Chapter 11 case.

**Chapter 7 Shopping Center Sale:** Represented a Chapter 7 trustee in the \$23 million sale of a shopping center and 45 acres of commercial land adjacent to the Orlando International Airport.

**Rita Restaurants, Inc.:** Represented Ritas as restructuring counsel in the Chapter 11 Cases of Rita Restaurants, Inc. (dba Don Pablo's Mexican and Hops Grill & Brewery), in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Texas.

**Zio's Italian Restaurants:** Represented Zio's as restructuring counsel in the Chapter 11 Cases of Zio's Italian Restaurants, Inc., in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Western District of Texas.

**Creditor:** Represented one of the creditors in assignment for benefit of creditors case of Butler & Hosch, P.A. and related cases pending in Orange County, Florida.

**Chapter 11 Trustee:** Represented Soneet R. Kapila, Chapter 11 Trustee of the jointly administered cases of Louis J. Pearlman, Trans Continental Airlines, Inc., and other related entities, filed in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Middle District of Florida.

**Financial Institution:** Assisted in the representation of a bank in the assignment for benefit of creditors case of America's First Home.

**Foreclosure:** Represented clients in the foreclosure of mortgages on a number of businesses, investment properties, condominium projects, builders, and residential developers.

## Related Professional Experience

- Judge Michael Williamson, U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Middle District of Florida, Externship

## Affiliations

- American Bankruptcy Institute, Member
- American Bar Foundation, Fellow
- Central Florida Bankruptcy Law Association
  - Treasurer, 2025
  - Former Secretary, 2024
  - Former President, 2019-2020
- Fred R. Wilson Memorial Law Library
- International Women's Insolvency & Restructuring Confederation (IWIRC), Member
- Orlando Science Center, Former Board of Trustees

## Honors and Distinctions

- *Chambers USA*, 2021-2024, Ranked in Florida (North and Central Florida) for Bankruptcy/Restructuring

## Related Content

Akerman Receives Turnaround Atlas Award for Health Services Restructuring of the Year  
October 01, 2024

*Chambers USA* Ranks Akerman Among the Nation's Best Law Firms in 2024  
June 06, 2024

Record Number of Akerman Lawyers Named to *The Best Lawyers in America 2024 Guide*  
August 22, 2023

- *Best Lawyers*, 2023-2025, Listed in Florida for Litigation - Bankruptcy, Bankruptcy and Creditor Debtor Rights/Insolvency and Reorganization Law
- Global M&A Network, 2024, Recipient of the Turnaround Atlas Award for “Health Services Restructuring of the Year”
- *Super Lawyers* Magazine, 2013-2016, Listed in Florida as a “Rising Star” for Bankruptcy & Creditor/Debtor