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Press Release

Akerman Honored Among Most Innovative Lawyers by *Financial Times*

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Firm Commended for Establishing First Law Firm R&D Council and Community Impact Giving Model for Foster Youth

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Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, has been recognized by the *Financial Times* 2015 North America Innovative Lawyers report as one of the nation's most innovative law firms, with distinction in the business of law and social responsibility categories.

Akerman was recognized among nine firms as forward-thinking in the business of law category for establishing the Akerman R&D Council, the legal industry's first R&D co-venture with clients. Unlike other forms of client interaction, the Akerman R&D Council provides clients a seat at the table, giving them greater access and influence in the strategy and direction of Akerman's business. This structure allows Akerman to see its services through the client's eyes, further anticipate and fulfill their needs, and design new ways to deliver an exceptional client experience. The Akerman R&D Council helps clients stay ahead of rapid changes in the market by serving as a catalyst for breakthrough thinking that can enhance the firm's role in uncovering creative solutions to their complex business challenges.

Akerman also was ranked among the top eight innovative law firms in the social responsibility - projects category for creating an unprecedented law firm partnership with the National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association during the launch of the Akerman Give Back campaign. Designed to achieve maximum community impact, the Akerman Give Back campaign is a highly-focused initiative that harnesses the power of lawyers and other professionals firm-wide by converging pro bono legal service, volunteer community service, and charitable donations to advance one common goal. Community Impact Teams in each of the firm's offices comprised of both lawyers and other professionals design and drive fundraising efforts, volunteer pledge drives, and other activities unique to their market. This hybrid-giving model lends the opportunity for Akerman to serve the community hand-in-hand with clients and other civic leaders.

Recently, Akerman made a historic $1 million pledge to CASA, the largest donation the organization has ever received from a law firm. Since the firm's relationship with CASA began in 2014, more than 1,200 Akerman employees across the United States have participated in the firm's Give Back campaign in support of CASA's mission to advocate for abused, abandoned, and neglected children, with hundreds pledging more than 22,000 volunteer and pro bono hours to the organization.

The Akerman R&D Council and the firm's community impact giving model are recent markers within Akerman's continuum of innovation. This year, the firm introduced Akerman Bench, a mock oral argument product featuring one of the largest teams of former appellate judges assembled in-house by an *Am Law 100* law firm. The firm most recently premiered a technology-based product innovation.

The annual Innovative Lawyers report was developed by the *Financial Times* in partnership

with RSG Consulting. Each year the team conducts an investigation on the challenges that businesses face and how lawyers have innovated to help their clients solve them. Firms are selected following extensive independent research and direct client feedback.

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 American Lawyer* (2015). Akerman also is ranked among the top 50 law firms for diversity in *The American Lawyer*'s Diversity Scorecard (2015).