

Press Release

Benchmark Litigation Awards Akerman Senterfitt Highest Honors

February 1, 2013

Akerman Lawyers Representing Appellate, General Commercial, Securities and Construction Litigation Practice Areas Received Top State Recognition

Akerman Senterfitt today announced that for the second consecutive year, its Litigation Practice Group received the Florida Firm of the Year award from *Benchmark Litigation* during its inaugural nationwide awards ceremony. In addition to the “highly recommended” ranking from *Benchmark* in the Local Litigation Firms – Florida category, the practice received the same distinction in the Appellate Firms – Eleventh Circuit (Florida) category. Akerman also received the “recommended” ranking in the Local Litigation Firms – Virginia category. Individually, five Akerman litigators, representing the firm’s appellate, general commercial, securities and construction litigation practice areas received state level recognition as “litigation stars.”

Katherine Giddings, Akerman Shareholder and appellate lawyer; William Heller, chair of the firm’s Consumer Finance Litigation & Compliance Practice Group; Stephen Hurlbut, a shareholder focused on construction and government contract litigation; and James Miller, chair of Akerman’s Litigation Practice Group each were named “local litigation stars.” Additionally, Giddings and Nancy Wallace, a

Related People

William P. Heller
Stephen B. Hurlbut
Andrew M. Smulian
Nancy Mason Wallace

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shareholder and appellate lawyer, were named Eleventh Circuit (Florida) litigation stars. Accompanying her distinction in the Eleventh Circuit, Giddings was one of three appellate practitioners in Florida to be named in *Benchmark's* Top 250 Women in Litigation.

“I applaud Akerman’s litigation and appellate teams for receiving this well-deserved recognition by our clients and peers,” said Andrew Smulian, chairman and CEO of Akerman Senterfitt. “This award is a testament to the exceptional quality of our litigators and to our unwavering dedication to our clients.”

Focused exclusively on the U.S. litigation and appellate markets, the rankings and editorials of *Benchmark Litigation* are the result of annual independent research that involves extensive interviews with private practice lawyers and in-house counsel.

The Akerman Litigation Practice Group is recognized nationally by *U.S. News - Best Lawyers* in the Commercial Litigation category and as a national tier one law firm for International Arbitration. The team has vast experience in a wide range of civil and criminal litigation, including actions involving banking, securities, healthcare, insurance, real estate and construction. Akerman’s appellate lawyers – including a former Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit and former Florida Supreme Court Justice, a former Chief Judge of the First District Court of Appeal, and a former Chief Judge of the Third District Court of Appeal – have handled thousands of appellate matters, regularly appearing before federal and state appellate courts.

About Akerman Senterfitt

Akerman 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 550 lawyers and government affairs

professionals and a network of 19 offices, it is ranked among the top 100 law firms in the U.S. by *The National Law Journal NLJ 250* (2012). Akerman also is ranked among the top 100 law firms for diversity by *MultiCultural Law* magazine (2012) and recognized as the Law Firm of the Year for Diversity – South by *Benchmark Litigation* (2012). More information can be found at akerman.com or twitter.com/akerman_law.