

Press Release

Akerman Opens Chicago Office with Eight Lawyers, Expands National Presence

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Law Firm Adds Commercial and Intellectual Property Litigators to Meet Growing Client Demand

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, today announced that it has opened an office in Chicago, the firm's 20th location in the United States. The office opens with a team of eight lawyers who complement the firm's core strengths and expand the firm's national capabilities in commercial litigation and IP litigation.

The Chicago team enhances Akerman's deep bench of lawyers handling a range of financial litigation matters for clients, including issues involving securities law, fund formation, hedge funds, investment management, and insurance. The team also will broaden the firm's work across the U.S. and internationally in all areas of intellectual property law, including patent and trade secret litigation, patent prosecution and counseling within the pharmaceutical and life sciences sectors; entertainment, fashion and sports industries; as well as the consumer electronic, microprocessor and semiconductor sectors.

"As our clients' businesses evolve and expand to meet the changing needs of the market, so does Akerman," said [Andrew Smulian](#), Akerman Chairman and CEO. "Growth in key metropolitan

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areas like Chicago, New York, Miami, and Washington, D.C., is part of our continuous client-driven strategy. We see essential value in assembling this talented group of lawyers in Chicago to meet the growing needs of our clients and to augment the work of our trial and transactions team across the Americas.”

The new Chicago team of lawyers, previously with Ulmer & Berne LLP, includes Scott Meyers and Michael Switzer. Meyers will serve as Akerman’s Chicago office managing partner. He concentrates his complex commercial litigation practice in the financial services and securities sectors, with a particular emphasis on hedge funds, investment advisors, and money managers. He has litigated a wide variety of cases around the country, including securities fraud, unfair competition, trade secret, and patent infringement suits. Meyers also is a frequent speaker on securities and hedge fund topics and is sought after for his opinion by financial media, including *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Forbes*, *Barron’s*, *BusinessWeek*, and the *Washington Post*.

Switzer will serve as co-chair of Akerman’s Intellectual Property Practice Group, along with Akerman Partner Mark Passler, who is based in the firm’s West Palm Beach office. Switzer focuses his legal practice on intellectual property counseling, licensing and litigation, with particular emphasis on medical devices and consumer electronics. He is a former patent examiner at the U.S. Patent & Trademark Office and also served as the first in-house U.S. patent counsel for Hitachi, Ltd., in Tokyo, Japan.

“We are pleased to join Akerman during this period of great success and expansion for the firm,” Meyers said. “Akerman’s vast reach provides the right platform for our clients as they seek additional growth opportunities. In line with our clients’ evolving needs, the Chicago office will include a

multidisciplinary team of lawyers supported by the infrastructure of a national law firm.”

Also joining Akerman’s Chicago office from Ulmer & Berne LLP as partners are:

Mark Anderson – With a background in mechanical and design engineering, Anderson focuses his practice on intellectual property counseling, prosecution, and litigation for clients in the mechanical arts, electro-mechanical arts, and electrical arts.

Stacy Baim – Baim has a diverse IP practice, representing clients within the technology sector in complex litigation and transactional matters involving patents, trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets and unfair competition.

Brian Bianco – Bianco focuses his practice on IP litigation, representing clients in matters before federal district courts throughout the U.S. He also counsels clients in the development and protection of IP.

Litigators Peter Hawkins and Alissa Misun Pohlman will join the office as associates, collectively bringing experience in general corporate and intellectual property matters, including international patent and trademark issues, and all aspects of discovery.

Additionally, Akerman Partner Karen Kondell, who focuses on real estate transactions within the multifamily and hospitality space, will serve as a co-resident in the firm’s Chicago and Miami offices.

The new office opening follows Akerman’s third consecutive year of growth. The firm’s lawyer headcount grew by more than 6 percent in 2013 to more than 600 lawyers and government affairs professionals with a presence in such markets as New York; Miami; Dallas; Denver; and Washington, D.C., among other major U.S. cities.

The Chicago space is located at the Hyatt Center on 71 S. Wacker Drive, a 48-story office tower in the city's premier central business district. To accommodate the anticipated growth of the office, Akerman will occupy the 46th floor, which includes 33,371 square feet of space.

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 (2013). Akerman also is ranked among the top 50 law firms for diversity in *The American Lawyer's* Diversity Scorecard (2013). More information can be found at akerman.com or twitter.com/akerman_law.