

Press Release

Akerman Expands Texas Presence with Team of Corporate Lawyers

April 4, 2018

Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, further expanded its presence in Texas with corporate partners [Todd Reed](#), [Bentley Harris](#) and associate [Amy Simmons](#) in Austin, Texas. They complement Akerman's core strengths in M&A and corporate governance across dynamic client sectors, including financial services, real estate, restaurant and retail. A veteran corporate lawyer and advisor to private and public companies, Reed also will serve as Akerman's Austin office managing partner.

"Todd and Bentley further our capabilities in Texas, a market of strategic relevance to our clients nationally," said [Jonathan Awner](#), co-chair of the Corporate Practice Group. "Together, their extensive transactional experience makes them a valuable addition to our national team dedicated to client needs in diverse sectors, with an emphasis on financial services and real estate."

Todd Reed

Reed represents private and public companies in a broad range of corporate and commercial transactions including mergers and acquisitions, private offerings of debt and equity securities, the negotiation of credit facilities, the structuring of complex joint ventures and the negotiation and structuring of intellectual property licenses. He represents clients in diverse industries including

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telecommunications, software, healthcare services, electrical power generation, banking and financial services, restaurants and entertainment, manufacturing, wholesale/retail sales, consumer packaged goods, and real estate development and management.

In addition, Reed advises clients on the financing, acquisition, disposition, development, management and leasing of real estate. He has significant experience with hotels, restaurants, multifamily and office properties and has served as lead counsel on projects as diverse as site selection, acquisition and development for a nuclear power plant project and the development of the first inland surf park in North America.

Bentley Harris

Harris focuses on assisting companies in formation, governance and general corporate law as well as the selection, protection and enforcement of intellectual property assets. She also helps companies with labor and employment issues including the negotiation of employment agreements, independent contractor agreements and non-disclosure agreements, as well as compliance with state and federal employment laws.

In addition, she has litigated patent infringement and trademark infringement cases in both the Eastern and Western Districts of Texas and environmental cases involving violations of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) in the Southern District of Texas. She has also played an instrumental role in the drafting of arbitration briefs, appellate briefs and petitions for writ of certiorari for submission to the American Arbitration Association, the Federal Circuit and the U.S. Supreme Court.

Simmons also brings experience in complex corporate transactions and governance matters in diverse client sectors.

With the team's arrival, Akerman's headcount has more than doubled in Texas in less than two years to 60 lawyers and business professionals in Austin, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. Recent additions include Dallas partners Eduardo "Eddy" Espinosa and Michael Napoli, who joined the Fraud and Recovery Practice Group. The Dallas office also recently welcomed a team of five international trade lawyers and business professionals, led by partners Michelle Schulz and Elsa Manzanares.

About Akerman

Akerman LLP is a top 100 U.S. law firm recognized by *Financial Times* as among the most forward thinking firms in the industry. Its more than 650 lawyers and business professionals collaborate with the world's most successful enterprises and entrepreneurs to navigate change, seize opportunities, and overcome barriers to innovation and growth. Akerman is known for its results in middle market M&A and complex disputes, and for helping clients achieve their most important business objectives in the financial services, real estate, and other dynamic sectors across the United States and Latin America.

The Akerman Corporate Practice Group advises public and private companies, including private equity funds, on M&A, capital markets transactions, financings, and other transactional matters, with a strong focus on the middle market. Akerman is top-ranked nationally for mergers, acquisitions and buyouts: middle market by *The Legal 500* and is recognized as a leading U.S. law firm by *U.S. News - Best Lawyers* for corporate, M&A, private equity, securities/capital markets, securities regulation and banking and finance law, and is listed in *PitchBook* league tables as among the most active law firms in the United States for M&A deals.