

Press Release

Akerman Continues Dallas Expansion; Grows Insurance Litigation, Real Estate Strengths

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Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, continued its Dallas growth with real estate partners Mark McElree and Kacy Whitehead, and insurance litigation partner Elliot Strader. Their collective experience bolsters Akerman's national strengths in the financial services, oil and gas, real estate and other client sectors. With their arrival, the office has welcomed nine partners since January, growing to more than 30 lawyers and integrated business professionals.

"Our new additions in Dallas reaffirm our commitment to advance the interests of our clients in Texas and nationwide," said Charles Townsend, Dallas office managing partner. "Elliot, Kacy and Mark have been involved in transformative transactions and precedent-setting disputes. We are confident they will provide immediate contributions to clients in the region while further enhancing our core capabilities throughout the United States."

Mark McElree

McElree focuses his practice on real estate, real estate finance and oil and gas transactions. His clients include real estate developers, private equity funds, REITS, national and multi-national corporations and other owners of and investors in real estate, as well as, money center banks, insurance companies and other financial

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Eduardo S. Espinosa
Mark C. McElree
Michael D. Napoli
Matt Schroeder
Elliot Strader

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institutions. In the energy sector, he represents owners, producers, pipeline owners and operators and lenders in a wide array oil, gas and other natural resource transactions. McElree's broad-based real estate development and lending expertise includes representing clients on complex development projects and associated joint venture agreements, acquisitions and dispositions, sale-leasebacks, syndicated credit facilities and structurally challenging lending transactions. He also has diverse experience working with clients in the leasing, operation and management of office, industrial, residential, retail, hotel and multi-use projects. Prior to practicing law, McElree was a tax accountant with Arthur Andersen & Co.

Kacy Whitehead

Whitehead's practice includes a wide variety of real estate transactions with an emphasis on development, acquisition and disposition, debt and equity financing, and leasing of office, multi-family, retail, hospitality, industrial, and senior living projects. Her clients include pension fund advisors, REITs, private equity funds, developers and individuals. In addition to her extensive law firm experience, Whitehead previously served as general counsel for a Dallas-based, independent hotel and management company where she handled all transactional matters and litigation management for the company.

Elliot Strader

Strader focuses on complex, high-stake litigation matters, including insurance coverage and bad faith, personal injury defense, complex business disputes, oil and gas and government contracts. He has successfully represented clients in jury and bench trials, in addition to obtaining numerous summary judgments. Prior to joining Akerman, Strader was a partner at a large Texas-based firm and worked as in-house counsel for a privately held company, managing a diverse portfolio of litigation.

Akerman's headcount has more than doubled in Texas in less than two years to 69 lawyers and business professionals in Austin, Dallas, Houston and San Antonio. Recent additions include Dallas partners Eduardo "Eddy" Espinosa and Michael Napoli and consumer financial services partner Lori Nugent, who also joins as co-chair of Akerman's Privacy, Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies Team. The Dallas office also recently welcomed insurance litigator Matthew Schroeder and a team of five international trade lawyers and business professionals led by Michelle Schulz and Elsa Manzanares.

About Akerman LLP

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 700 lawyers and business professionals collaborate with the world's most successful enterprises and entrepreneurs to navigate change, seize opportunities, and help drive 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.