

Press Release

Akerman Promotes 21 Lawyers to Partnership

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Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, is pleased to announce that 21 lawyers have been promoted to partners, effective immediately. The new class of partners includes lawyers from 10 offices and eight practice groups.

“We are thrilled to celebrate our new partners and their accomplishments, and we look forward to working with them in their new roles at the firm,” said [Andrew M. Smulian](#), Akerman chairman and CEO.

The new partners are:

Vincent M. Avery, Labor and Employment, New York

Avery focuses his practice on defending employers in state and federal litigation involving all types of employment-related lawsuits, ranging from individual and class-based wage and hour litigation under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), New York Labor Law (NYLL), New York Hospitality Wage Order, and New Jersey Wage and Hour Law (NJWHL), to single and multi-plaintiff discrimination and retaliation claims asserted under various employment statutes.

Sean M. Cichowski, Litigation, Houston

Cichowski maintains a broad litigation practice

Related People

Sean M. Cichowski
John L. Dicks, II
Raye Curry Elliott
Stefi N. George
Taylor T. Haywood
Sarah J. Lis
Eleanore ('Nora') C. Martins
Lorayne Perez
Jamie B. Shyman
Andrew M. Smulian
Erin M. Swick
Shawn M. Taylor
Robert E. Weitzel

Related Work

Bankruptcy and Reorganization
Consumer Financial Services, Data and Technology (CFS+)
Corporate
Fraud and Recovery
Labor and Employment Litigation
Real Estate
Tax

Related Offices

Chicago

handling complex commercial, employment, intellectual property, product liability, construction, and personal injury cases for clients ranging from individuals and family businesses to international energy companies, manufacturers, and major automakers. He has successfully tried cases to verdict in state and federal courts, and handled domestic and international disputes in arbitration. He uses his first chair and solo trial counsel experience to give clients a comprehensive perspective of the risks, benefits, and costs of litigation to allow them to make informed business decisions on legal matters.

Dallas
Denver
Fort Lauderdale
Houston
Jacksonville
Miami
New York
Orlando
Tampa

C. Matthew Detzel, Fraud and Recovery, Orlando

Detzel focuses his practice on helping institutional clients detect, respond to, and resolve complex fraud schemes, routinely serving as advisor, investigator, and as an advocate in litigation and appeals. He also advises clients on matters of data privacy, cybersecurity, and emerging technology.

Matthew R. DiBlasi, Fraud and Recovery, New York

DiBlasi practices in the area of complex commercial litigation with a focus on investigating and litigating fraud claims. As part of his practice Matt advises clients in developing best practices to identify and investigate fraudulent conduct, and has experience litigating complex fraudulent schemes in state and federal courts around the United States.

John L. Dicks, II, Litigation, Tampa

Dicks is a litigator, experienced in contract disputes, statutory consumer claims, fraud, shareholder/membership disputes, trust litigation, commercial, and residential landlord/tenant disputes, judgment execution, assignment proceedings, and bankruptcy.

Zarra R. Elias, Labor and Employment, Tampa

Elias focuses her practice on labor and employment and commercial litigation and represents employers, businesses, and professional employer organizations in employment law cases before the federal and state

courts, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and other local, state, and federal agencies.

Raye Curry Elliott, Tax, Tampa

Elliott is a former Federal Deposit Insurance (FDIC) counsel, allowing her to work with financial institutions, national retailers and other companies in state and local tax controversy matters throughout the United States. Her experience includes refund actions, audit defense, administrative appeals and litigation, and related consulting and planning. In addition to her tax practice, Raye has experience with complex business litigation, including bankruptcy and creditors' rights, mortgage foreclosures, and defaulted loan matters.

Stefi N. George, Tax, New York

George advises clients in federal, state and local and international tax planning and controversy matters. She represents multinational corporations and local businesses within the equipment and vehicle leasing, financial services and hospitality sectors, as well individuals and families.

Ari H. Gerstin, Litigation, Miami

Gerstin concentrates his practice on complex litigation and regulatory matters and has broad experience defending class actions brought against insurance companies and other regulated entities in both state and federal courts. He also counsels clients seeking to apply for, purchase and sell cannabis cultivation, processing and dispensing licenses, and he advises investors and industry participants regarding diligence and compliance matters in the emerging field of cannabis law.

Taylor T. Haywood, Consumer Financial Services, Denver

Haywood represents a wide array of financial services companies in state and federal litigation including class actions and litigation involving homeowners' association lien priority. She regularly defends financial services providers against

individual and class claims brought pursuant to Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act (RESPA), Truth in Lending Act (TILA), Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA), and Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA).

Amy M. Leitch, Bankruptcy and Reorganization, Jacksonville

Leitch focuses her practice on a broad range of complex commercial litigation and bankruptcy matters, including debtor-creditor law, breach of contract, business torts, insurance, shareholder disputes, real estate, fraudulent transfers, landlord-tenant claims, judgment recovery, franchise disputes, product liability and warranty, and trusts and estates.

Sarah J. Lis, Labor and Employment, Fort Lauderdale

Lis represents employers in all types of employment litigation and administrative proceedings and has extensive experience handling discrimination, harassment and retaliation claims, class and collective wage and hour actions, whistleblower actions, FMLA and ADA accommodation matters, employee leave issues, and restrictive covenant enforcement and defense. Sarah also counsels employers regarding compliance with applicable federal, state, and local employment laws and assists with developing and drafting workplace policies and practices, employee handbooks and restrictive covenant agreements.

Eleanore C. Martins, Real Estate, New York

Martins concentrates her practice on New York City zoning and land use, particularly applications for discretionary approvals from the City Planning Commission (such as zoning map amendments, City map changes, zoning text amendments, and special permits), and the Board of Standards and Appeals (including variances and special permits) to maximize development potential and entitlements.

Sandra J. Millor, Litigation, Miami

Millor's practice focuses on cross-border commercial disputes and international litigation and arbitration, as well as class action matters. She has extensive experience navigating a variety of cases including claims pertaining to the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), labeling disputes, employment and real estate matters, and matters involving the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Lorayne Perez, Litigation, Miami

Perez represents clients in complex commercial litigation and appellate matters, including in the areas of business torts, breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, real estate litigation, unfair competition, fraud, and enforceability of arbitration agreements. She represents clients from diverse industries in both state and federal courts.

Jamie B. Shyman, Litigation, New York

Shyman focuses her practice on complex commercial breach of contracts matters, intellectual property disputes, media & entertainment, and real estate matters. She represents clients in both federal and state courts at both the trial and appellate divisions as well as in arbitration.

Allison M. Stocker, Litigation, Jacksonville

Stocker concentrates her practice on business and commercial litigation, representing financial institutions, public companies, privately held businesses, professionals, creditors, and other individuals in actions involving contracts, negotiable instruments, corporate governance and valuation issues, fiduciary relationships, torts, and other business-related disputes.

Erin M. Swick, Corporate, Fort Lauderdale

Swick represents private equity firms and public and private companies in a broad range of complex corporate transactions and general corporate matters. Her experience includes mergers and

acquisitions, private equity investments, joint ventures, recapitalizations, and debt and equity financings in a range of sectors. She regularly represents private equity firms and their portfolio companies in both buy and sell side transactions and ancillary corporate matters, including negotiation of commercial contracts and add-on acquisitions.

Shawn M. Taylor, Litigation, Chicago

Taylor's practice is focused on complex commercial disputes, class actions, and securities matters. His litigation experience includes representing clients in federal and state courts, government investigations, administrative agency actions, arbitration proceedings, and appeals.

Robert E. Weitzel, Litigation, Dallas

Weitzel focuses his practice on a broad range of complex commercial litigation and business disputes, including matters involving breach of contract, business torts, commercial landlord/tenant, insurance, securities, intellectual property, energy, director & officer liability, franchise, product liability, debtor-creditor, and probate law. He represents public companies, privately held businesses, professionals, creditors, and individuals as plaintiffs and defendants in federal and state court, as well as in arbitration.

Adam M. Zwecker, Real Estate, Miami

Zwecker has a diverse business background and broad experience with leasing, purchase and sale and real estate finance transactions, representing local, national and international owners and operators of commercial real estate, including many who are reshaping the South Florida skyline.

About Akerman

Akerman LLP is a top 100 U.S. law firm recognized among the most forward thinking firms in the industry by Financial Times. 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.