

## People



## Jonathan L. Awner

Co-Chair, Corporate Practice Group

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Jonathan Awner serves as Co-Chair of Akerman's Corporate Practice Group. Ranked by *Best Lawyers in America*, *Chambers USA*, and *The Legal 500* as a preeminent corporate lawyer, Jonathan advises clients in transactions in automotive retail, aviation, distribution, hospitality, logistics, manufacturing, services, technology, and other industries. Described by a client quoted in *Chambers USA* as a "top-notch" lawyer who is "smart, hard-working and practical," Jonathan focuses on middle-market domestic mergers and acquisitions, private equity investments, public and private securities transactions, and corporate governance matters.

Jonathan counsels in mergers, acquisitions, dispositions, spin-offs, recapitalizations, joint ventures, private equity investments, and other business transactions. He has extensive experience representing strategic and financial buyers and investors, as well as corporate, individual and family sellers.

Jonathan also represents public companies in public offerings of equity and debt securities, and securities law compliance matters. He has served as lead counsel to issuers in numerous underwritten offerings, including a \$1.5 billion IPO. He also advises companies and investor groups in private placements of equity and debt securities, growth equity investments and joint ventures.

Jonathan is a trusted advisor to boards of directors, audit and special board committees, and senior executives of public companies on corporate governance issues, management succession, relations with institutional and activist investors, compensation practices for directors and officers, conflict of interest matters, and change-of-control transactions. His committee representations include leading investigations of alleged management misconduct, whistleblower complaints, stock option backdating, accounting irregularities, auditor resignations, violations of securities laws including insider trading, and responding to shareholder activists alleging poor operating performance or excessive compensation.

## Notable Work

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 Areas of Experience

M&A and Private Equity  
 Corporate  
 Automotive Retail  
 Aviation and Aerospace  
 Corporate Finance and Lending  
 Capital Markets  
 Corporate Governance  
 Distressed Transactions and Corporate Restructuring  
 Hospitality  
 Investment Management  
 Financial Services

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 Education

J.D., Boston University School of Law, 1985, cum laude  
 B.A., Swarthmore College, 1982

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 Admissions

## Bars

Florida

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 Related Content

Akerman Partner Jonathan Awner Named to *The Legal 500's* Inaugural M&A Powerlist  
 March 06, 2024

Akerman Represents South Motors/Vista Motors in its Record-Setting Sale to Morgan Auto Group  
 January 20, 2024

Six Akerman Lawyers Selected Among *Lawdragon's* 500 Leading Dealmakers in America  
 October 25, 2023

**Trivest Partners LP:** Represent Trivest Partners, the oldest private equity firm in the Southeast, in dozens of middle market acquisitions and investments in founder-owned platform and add-on companies, as well as sell-side dispositions, for more than 15 years. Recent sale transactions for Trivest include National Carwash Solutions to AEA Investors LP, a private equity firm; AM Conservation Group to Kohlberg & Company, a private equity firm; North Star Seafood to Sysco Corporation, the world's largest foodservice distributor; Take 5 Oil Change to Driven Brands, a Roark Capital Group portfolio company; Pelican Water Systems to Pentair, PLC, a global sustainable water solutions company; Oil Changers to Greenbriar Equity Group, a private equity firm; Jon-Don to Incline Equity Partners; and Big Truck Rental to Alinda Capital Partners, a private equity firm.

**AutoNation, Inc.:** Represent AutoNation, Inc., America's largest automotive retailer, in securities matters as well as acquisitions and dispositions of hundreds of auto dealerships since 1996. Recent acquisitions include more than 40 Audi, Chrysler, Ford, Honda, Hyundai, Jaguar, Land Rover, Mercedes-Benz, Porsche, Toyota and other stores and collision centers in markets coast to coast.

**HEICO Corporation:** Represent HEICO Corporation in securities matters and acquisitions of aviation and aerospace product manufacturers and distributors for more than 20 years. Recent acquisitions include Sensor Systems Inc. for a proportionate combination of cash and 575,000 shares of HEICO common stock, Aeroantenna Technology, Inc. for \$316.5 million, and Robertson Fuel Systems, LLC for \$255 million.

**XPO, Inc.:** Represent XPO, Inc., one of the largest and fastest growing providers of less-than-truckload freight transportation services, in securities and finance matters, corporate governance advice, and acquisitions.

**Family Office:** Represented billionaire H. Wayne Huizenga in connection with his investments in Republic Waste Industries, Inc. in 1995; in the Miami Dolphins, Florida Marlins, and Florida Panthers pro sports teams in the 1990's; and in Blockbuster Videos in 1987, in addition to hundreds of additional transactions for Huizenga Holdings, Inc. and affiliates.

**Republic Services, Inc.:** Represented Republic Services, Inc. in connection with its industry-transforming \$12.9 billion merger with Allied Waste Industries, Inc. in 2008.

**Sellers of Privately-Owned Businesses:** Represented dozens of family and founder-owned and other closely-held businesses in sell-side transactions for over 30 years, including sales to strategic buyers and to private equity funds. Transactions include the sales of auto and truck dealerships, a fresh produce distributor, a durable medical equipment supplier, a cleaning equipment distributor, a beauty products manufacturer, an aviation repair and maintenance operation, a home audio products manufacturer, professional sports franchises, retail store chains, technology companies, and numerous other businesses in a wide range of industries. Typical sale prices range from \$25 million to over \$500 million.

## Published Work and Lectures

- Thomson Reuters Practical Law, Co-Author, "Corporation Law: Florida", 2018 and updates to present

- National Association of Corporate Directors Florida Chapter, Speaker, “Breakfast Roundtable: Crisis Management Toolkit,” 2017
- Bloomberg BNA Corporate Practice Series, Co-Author, “The Florida Corporation: Legal Aspects of Organization and Operation,” 2013 and updates to 2019
- KPMG Audit Committee Institute, Regular Panelist for the South Florida Audit Committee Roundtable Series since 2009

## Affiliations

- The Florida Bar, Business Law Section, Member
- National Association of Dealer Counsel, Member
- Ransom Everglades School, Board of Trustees, Treasurer, and Chair of Finance and Audit Committee, 2007-2022
- Greater Miami Jewish Federation, Board of Directors, 2008-2019

## Honors and Distinctions

- *Chambers USA*, 2003-2023, Ranked in top tier in Florida (South Florida) for Corporate/M&A and Private Equity
- *The Legal 500*, 2024, M&A Powerlist Series: USA, Listed in Florida for M&A
- *The Legal 500*, 2009-2023, Recommended for Mergers, Acquisitions, and Buyouts: M&A National Middle Market
- *The Best Lawyers in America*, 2005-2024, Listed in Florida for Corporate Governance Law, Corporate Law, International Mergers and Acquisitions, Leveraged Buyouts and Private Equity Law, Mergers and Acquisitions Law, Securities / Capital Markets Law, and Securities Regulation, including Miami “Lawyer of the Year” awards for various categories 11 times
- *Super Lawyers Magazine*, 2006-2023, Listed in Florida for Mergers & Acquisitions
- *Lawdragon*, 2021-2022, 2024, Listed as a “Lawdragon 500 Leading Dealmakers in America”
- *International Financial Law Review (IFLR) 1000*, Listed as “Highly Regarded” for Private Equity and M&A
- *Who’s Who Legal*, Listed for M&A and Governance, 2019
- *South Florida Legal Guide* Top Lawyers, 2001-2019, Listed for Corporate and Business, Mergers and Acquisitions
- Florida Trend’s *Legal Elite*, 2015, 2014, and 2012, Listed for Business Law
- *Daily Business Review*, 2014, Named “Top Deal Maker of the Year: Corporate Domestic”
- *South Florida Business Journal*, 2009, Key Partners Award Winner for Corporate Finance/Mergers & Acquisitions Law
- *Daily Business Review*, 2009, Named “Top Deal Maker: Corporate”
- Martindale-Hubbell, AV Preeminent Rated