

People



## Gerald B. Cope, Jr.

Chair, Appellate Practice

Miami

T: +1 305 982 5622

[gerald.cope@akerman.com](mailto:gerald.cope@akerman.com)

[vCard](#)

[Connect With Me](#)

” Gerald is brilliant. He has an incisive mind and brings a full set of intellectual capabilities to his practice.

- *Chambers USA*

A former Chief Judge of Florida’s Third District Court of Appeal and member of the court for 22 years, Gerald Cope is the chair of Akerman’s Appellate Practice. He represents clients in appellate litigation at the state and federal levels. Ranked by *Chambers USA*, peers say “He’s superb and doing great work.” He is a founding member of *Akerman Bench*, an innovative practice including former appellate and trial court judges providing the perspective of both sides of the bench. He conducts practice oral arguments for attorneys appearing in state and federal appellate courts, serves as a consultant on appeals, and provides support to trial counsel.

Mr. Cope serves as an arbitrator in cases administered by AAA and its international division, ICDR, where he has been appointed in commercial and maritime matters. He was recognized by the Business Law Section of The Florida Bar for his contributions toward the 2013 enactment of the Revised Uniform Arbitration Act in Florida. As a member of the Court of Appeal, he participated in approximately 60 appeals involving arbitrability of disputes, interpretation of arbitration clauses, proceedings to enforce or vacate awards, and comparable proceedings involving appraisal clauses in insurance contracts.

He has served as an adjunct professor teaching federal and Florida arbitration at the University of Miami School of Law. He is a member

### Areas of Experience

Appellate  
Litigation  
Akerman Bench  
Commercial Disputes  
International Litigation and Arbitration

### Education

LL.M., University of Virginia School of Law, 1992  
J.D., Florida State University College of Law, 1977, with highest honors, *Florida State University Law Review*, Editor-in-Chief; Order of the Coif  
B.A., Yale University, 1968, cum laude

### Admissions

#### Bars

Florida

#### Courts

U.S. Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit  
U.S. Court of Appeals, Eleventh Circuit  
U.S. District Court, Middle District of Florida  
U.S. District Court, Northern District of Florida  
U.S. District Court, Southern District of Florida  
U.S. Supreme Court  
U.S. Tax Court

### Related Content

Record Number of Akerman Lawyers Named to *Best Lawyers 2026 Guide*  
August 21, 2025

Akerman Sponsors Justice Arthur J. England, Jr. 50th Anniversary Celebration Event  
August 18, 2025

Akerman Lawyers Ranked in Florida by *Super Lawyers Magazine*  
July 08, 2025

of the Executive Council of the Florida Bar's Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section. Mr. Cope also serves as a special master.

### Notable Work

**Punitive Damages:** Represented client in successfully contesting order allowing punitive damages claim. *Cat Cay Yacht Club, Inc. v. Diaz*, 264 So.3d 1071 (Fla. 3d DCA 2019).

**Priority of Representative Actions:** Represented clients in obtaining stay of later-served derivative actions in favor of earlier-filed federal and out-of-state derivative cases. *Opko Health, Inc. v. Lipsius*, 279 So. 3d 787 (Fla. 3d DCA 2019).

**Post-Judgment Proceedings:** Represented client in successful defense of motion for relief from judgment in substantial injury case. *Progressive Waste Solutions of FL, Inc. v. Britt*, 271 So.3d 27 (Fla. 3d DCA 2018).

**Evidentiary Issues:** Represented leasing company client in defending trial court evidentiary rulings in substantial claim arising from industrial accident. *White v. Ring Power Corp.*, 262 So.3d 689 (Fla. 3d DCA 2018).

**Corporate Governance:** Represented corporate client in complex matter involving challenge to governance change and appraisal procedure. *Omes v. Ultra Enterprises, Inc.*, 225 So.3d 956 (Fla. 3d DCA 2017).

**Eminent Domain:** Represented client in obtaining approval of condemnation award based on development approach to valuation. *City of Sunny Isles Beach v. Cavalry Corp.*, 208 So. 3d 1247 (Fla. 3d DCA 2017).

**Pension Litigation:** Represented firefighters and police officers, who prevailed in a suit against a local law pension plan, in a case where the court found they are entitled to attorney's fees. *Parker v. Board of Trustees*, 149 So.3d 1129 (Fla. 2014).

**Special Assessments:** Represented client in persuading court to uphold judgment invalidating special assessments against Club's property. *Indian Creek Country Club v. Indian Creek Village*, 211 So. 3d 230 (Fla. 3d DCA 2017).

**Attorney-Client Privilege:** Represented client in quashing discovery order based on crime-fraud exception to attorney client privilege for lack of evidence and failure to conduct evidentiary hearing. *Trans Health Management Inc. v. Nunziata*, 159 So.3d 850 (Fla. 2d DCA 2014).

**Due Process:** Represented client in obtaining reversal of \$1.1 billion judgment entered against multiple parties without notice and opportunity to be heard. *General Electric Capital Corp., et al. v. Shattuck*, 132 So.3d 908 (Fla. 2d DCA 2014).

**Juror Misconduct:** Represented client in obtaining remand for hearing on claim of juror misconduct. *Hillsboro Management, LLC v. Pagano*, 112 So.3d 620 (Fla. 4th DCA 2013).

**Zoning:** Represented client where the court ruled enforcement of zoning code is within City's discretion. *Detournay v. City of Coral Gables*, 127 So.3d 869 (Fla. 3d DCA 2013).

**Arbitration:** Served as sole arbitrator in AAA case involving claim of substantial breach of franchise agreement.

**Arbitration:** Served as sole arbitrator in ICDR case under international collective bargaining agreement involving claim of personal injury by seaman against maritime employer.

## Published Work and Lectures

- Pincus Professional Education Webinar, Speaker, “Persuasive Appellate Brief Writing and Oral Argument 101,” June 26, 2024
- Pincus Professional Education Webinar, Speaker, “Preserving the Trial Record for Appeal in Florida Civil Cases,” August 1, 2023
- Pincus Professional Education Webinar, Speaker, “Preserving Your Record for Appeal,” January 31, 2017
- *Law360*, Author, [“Practice Arguments for Real Appeals,”](#) December 7, 2016
- *Florida Bar Journal*, Author, [“Moot Courts for Real Appeals,”](#) November 2016
- Third District Court of Appeal Fall Seminar and Reception, Moderator, “De-Mystifying Appeals to the 11th Judicial Circuit Appellate Division and the Limited Review by the Third District Court of Appeal,” September 23, 2016
- Akerman Seminar, Speaker, “Appellate Practice A to Z,” August 23, 2016
- Akerman’s Guide to Doing Business in Florida: A Legal Guide for Out-of-State and Foreign Businesses, Author, “Dispute Resolution in Florida,” 2013 and 2016
- *Daily Business Review*, Author, “Rules Proposed for Electronic Appellate Records,” June 4, 2015
- Practicing Before the Third District Court of Appeal, Speaker, “Tips for Effective Oral Argument,” February 6, 2015
- Pincus Professional Education, Moderator, “Appellate Skills and Strategies Boot Camp: Navigating State and Federal Appeals,” June 2014
- Litigation Counsel of America, 2012 Fall Conference & Induction of Fellows, Keynote Speaker, October 2012
- Courses in Arbitration at the University of Miami School of Law, Past Adjunct Professor
- *Florida Law Review*, Author, “Discretionary Review of the Decisions of Intermediate Appellate Courts: A Comparison of Florida’s System with Those of the Other States and the Federal System,” 1993

## Affiliations

- *Law360*, Appellate Editorial Board, 2025
- Florida Supreme Court Historical Society, Board of Trustees
- American Bar Association, Section of Litigation, Appellate Committee
- American Bar Association, Section of International Law, International Arbitration Committee
- Miami International Arbitration Society
- American Law Institute, Member

## Florida Bar:

- Appellate Court Rules Committee, Past Chair

- Appellate Practice and Advocacy Section, past member of Executive Council
- Business Law Section
- International Law Section, past member of Executive Council
- Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Section, Executive Council

## Honors and Distinctions

- Fellow, American Academy of Appellate Lawyers
- Arbitrator, American Arbitration Association and International Centre for Dispute Resolution
- *Best Lawyers*, 2013-2026, Listed in Florida for Appellate Practice and Bet-the-Company Litigation
- *Best Lawyers*, 2022, 2024, Listed as “Lawyer of the Year” for Bet-the-Company Litigation in Miami; 2018, 2021, 2024, Listed as “Lawyer of the Year” for Appellate Practice in Miami
- *Chambers USA*, 2013-2025, Ranked in Top Tier in Florida for Litigation: Appellate
- *Super Lawyers* Magazine, 2015-2025, Listed in Florida for Appellate
- *Benchmark Litigation*, 2022-2025, Listed in Florida as a “Litigation Star” for Appellate
- *Daily Business Review*, 2018, Recognized as a “Most Effective Lawyer” for Complex/Business Litigation
- Litigation Counsel of America, Honorary Fellow

## Related Professional Experience

- Chief Judge, Florida’s Third District Court of Appeal