

Press Release

Akerman Continues Strategic Expansion of Chicago Office with Real Estate, Intellectual Property Partners

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Akerman LLP, a top 100 U.S. law firm serving clients across the Americas, is pleased to announce the continued expansion of its Chicago office with the strategic additions of [Joel Sestito](#) and Kevin Shortsle. Sestito is part of the Real Estate Finance Practice within the Real Estate Practice Group, bringing robust experience representing lenders, entities, and individuals in sophisticated real estate and commercial loan transactions. Shortsle joins the firm's Intellectual Property Practice Group with strong credentials advising high-profile pharmaceutical brands in the intellectual property (IP) aspects of drug treatments for serious health conditions, including prostate cancer, depression, and heartburn.

“We continue to expand our office in Chicago by attracting talented lawyers whose practices address the evolving needs of our clients,” said [Meg George](#), Chicago Office Managing Partner. “Joel adds breadth to the firm’s experience representing clients in all stages of the commercial lending process, including workouts, and disposition of troubled assets. Kevin possesses a unique understanding of the inner workings of renowned drugs that have revolutionized the healthcare and pharmaceuticals industries.”

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Akerman's Chicago office, founded in 2014, has grown to more than 50 lawyers. The expansion led Akerman to more than double the size of its Chicago office space while strengthening the firm's deep bench in commercial litigation, IP, financial services, real estate, and other client-driven sectors.

Akerman's Real Estate Finance Practice and Intellectual Property Practice Group have each experienced significant national growth. In the last year, the real estate finance team expanded with notable hires in New York, Jacksonville, and Atlanta, including Alan Cohen, who currently serves as the firm's Real Estate Finance Practice Chair. Akerman's Intellectual Property Practice Group has led a similar, strategic growth. Four partners have joined in Tampa, Chicago, and Austin, expanding the firm's IP skillset in highly technical disciplines, such as advanced software, artificial intelligence, mechanical devices, automotive products, and computer equipment.

Joel Sestito: Partner, Real Estate

Sestito focuses his practice on the representation of financial institutions in connection with real estate and commercial loan transactions. He represents lenders during all stages of the loan process, including the negotiation and documentation of new loan transactions, the workout and disposition of troubled loan assets, and the exercise of various creditor's remedies. Sestito represents clients with respect to secured and unsecured, single lender and syndicated loans, revolving lines of credit, mezzanine loans, A/B loans, loan on loan financings, and securitized loans. In addition, Sestito has extensive experience with loan transactions that involve EB-5 financings, new markets tax credits, historic tax credits, low income housing tax credits, and ground lease financings.

Kevin Shortsle: Partner, Intellectual Property

Shortsle focuses his litigation practice on pharmaceutical, chemical, and medical device technologies, with additional focus on broader IP

litigation, patent prosecution, and counseling. He helps clients navigate all aspects of patent litigation, from pre-filing investigations through trial and appeal. His recent representations have involved treatments for prostate cancer, Eligard®; heartburn, Pepcid Complete®; benign prostatic hyperplasia, Rapaflo® (silodosin); depression, Pristiq® (desvenlafaxine); acne, Differin® (adapalene); actinic keratosis, Solaraze® (diclofenac); and knee, hip, and spine surgical implants and instrumentation.

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.

Akerman's Real Estate Practice Group offers comprehensive and fully integrated project counsel services to clients across the United States and Latin America. With substantial industry experience and local market insights, the firm represents clients in complex real estate transactions and financings, development and redevelopment projects, public-private initiatives and litigation. Recognized as a national tier one law firm for real estate law by U.S. News - Best Lawyers, the group advises investors, developers, builders, lenders, retailers, owners and corporate end users, often in high profile matters.

From pharmaceuticals and medical devices, to computer software and technology, to fashion and music, Akerman's Intellectual Property Practice Group serves clients in all aspects of intellectual property counseling, litigation, licensing, transactions, and due diligence. Our team includes

lawyers and patent agents with advanced technical degrees and business experience in disciplines such as electrical engineering, computer science, chemistry, and molecular biology. Our scientific and business backgrounds, coupled with experience gained from past service in the United States Patent & Trademark office, enable us to provide practical strategies for protecting intellectual property value.