

Akerman Adds Land Use Lawyer Jack George and Team in Chicago

Akerman LLP has added a team of real estate, land use and zoning partners headed by veteran lawyer John “Jack” George in the firm’s Chicago office, according to a release.

A former assistant attorney general and assistant corporation counsel for the City of Chicago, Jack George joins from Schuyler, Roche & Crisham P.C., where he served as president and a member of its board of directors. Akerman also added Kathleen “Kate” Duncan and Chris Leach from Schuyler and Meg George from Neal & Leroy LLC.

In the release, the firm said:

The distinguished team has handled some of the largest and most complex zoning projects in the Chicagoland area, including the redevelopment of the landmark Old Chicago Post Office and the premier Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, as well as the development of the \$1 billion Wolf Point project along the Chicago River. Together, the four partners bolster Akerman’s core strength in the commercial real estate sector and they arrive at a time when the firm plans to more than double the size of its office in the region. Since its 2014 opening in Chicago, the office has grown nearly seven-times larger to more than 50 lawyers.

“Jack has been instrumental in shaping the Chicago skyline and he is one of the most highly respected land use and zoning lawyers in the market,” said Richard Bezold, chair of Akerman’s Real Estate Practice Group, which is ranked sixth by Law360 among the largest teams of real estate lawyers in the United States. “Jack, Kate, Chris and Meg are skilled at cutting through the regulatory thicket of land development

and their ability to secure vital property deals for U.S. and multinational clients is unparalleled. They will be a tremendous resource for our clients in what continues to be a dynamic commercial real estate market.”

Jack George

Jack George brings more than 40 years of experience to his real estate, land use and zoning practice. He is a valued leader among his peers and clients because he develops relationships built on trust and a deep knowledge of real estate law. He has been instrumental in shaping the Chicago skyline, and has worked on notable development projects that have included complex elements such as zoning map amendments, planned development applications and condemnation matters. Jack George is a former assistant attorney general and assistant corporation counsel for the City of Chicago. He knows how to navigate clients through city and state laws, and has handled a broad range of litigation in state and federal courts, as well as proceedings before administrative tribunals and arbitrations.

Jack George has received high rankings by prominent legal guides for his unmatched knowledge of land use and zoning laws, and he is a leader across professional and community organizations, including his role as board member and general counsel of Little City Foundation; past president of the Celtic Lawyers Association; and advisory board member of Xavier University.

Meg George

Meg George has experience with real estate and municipal law matters including the acquisition, sale and development of real estate, land use and zoning, licensing, permitting, subdivision and other real estate matters. She has long represented the interest of numerous owners of shopping centers, convenience stores, hospitals, hotels, residential, commercial and mixed use buildings, office complexes, open

space/conservation areas, schools, and libraries in the City of Chicago and suburban villages. Active in the community, George is a LEED accredited professional, whose dedication to building green communities led her to assist in drafting Chicago's sustainability matrix for the city's Sustainability Task Force.

Kate Duncan

For more than a decade, Kate Duncan has concentrated her practice in zoning, land use and real estate law on behalf of developers, institutions and homeowners. She brings to her clients the added benefit of close and trusted working relationships with city officials and staff, as well as an in-depth understanding of how the city interprets land use and zoning codes. Duncan has successfully represented clients obtaining planned developments, zoning amendments, special uses, variations, subdivisions, vacations, dedications and various municipal licenses.

In addition to private practice, Duncan is the former chair of the Illinois State Bar Association's Alternative Dispute Resolution Section Council and serves as commissioner of the zoning board of Appeals for the Village of Barrington, Ill.

Chris Leach

Chris Leach has more than 20 years of experience representing property owners, developers, and business owners in zoning and land use matters, as well as real estate, liquor and business licensing. He has represented clients before municipal plan commissions, planning departments, zoning board of appeals, zoning committees, and community groups and organizations. He also has successfully represented clients in obtaining approvals of planned developments, zoning changes, special uses, variations, subdivisions, vacations and dedications.

