

# Akerman Expands Real Estate Group with Addition of Four Lawyers in Denver

## *News*

Akerman LLP announced the the addition of partners Allison Nelson and Lori Albert and associates William Garehime and Kelly Adams from Fennemore Craig to the firm's Real Estate Practice Group.

---

# Austin Jury Finds Danish Woman Was Defrauded in \$1.35M Condo Sale

## *News*

A Travis County jury has returned a verdict against Chicago Title of Texas, LLC and other real estate-related businesses, finding they defrauded a young Danish woman of all proceeds from the sale of her \$1.35 million condominium at the exclusive Residences at W Austin, according to a post on the website of Androvett Legal Media & Marketing

---

# Texas Supreme Court Rules Pipeline Can Take Land by Eminent Domain

## *News*

Typically, the power of eminent domain is granted to governmental entities rather than private institutions. Under Texas law, however, a common carrier has the right and power of eminent domain, according to Snell & Wilmer L.L.P.

---

# Trump Pays \$25 Million to Settle Trump University Litigation

## *News*

Politico reports that Trump University transferred the funds Tuesday night, providing enough money pay back about half of the funds paid by students for the seminars.

---

# License or Lease? The Contractual Limits of the

# Sharing Economy

## *Insight*

In an article posted on Commercial Property Executive's website, Elizabeth Levin of Manatt, Phelps & Phillips explores the implications of contracts and lease agreements pertaining to co-working and short term rental arrangements.

---

## A Settlement Agreement That's Too Vague Doesn't Settle Much At All

## *Insight*

Stacey Lantagne, writing in her ContractsProf Blog, uses a recent Florida case to illustrate the importance of specificity when drafting contracts.

---

## 5 Points: Arbitration Clauses in Real Estate Contracts

## *Insight*

While consumers may not have many choices when signing agreements that contain arbitration clauses, commercial parties often negotiate every last term of their agreements, according to a post on Shutts & Bowen LLP's website.

---

# Two New Cases: Fractional Royalty, Fraction of Royalty, or Mineral Interest?

## *Insight*

Two new opinions, one from the San Antonio Court of Appeals and one from the El Paso Court of Appeals, again tackle the task of construing mineral and royalty conveyances and reservations, reports John McFarland in his Oil and Gas Lawyer Blog.

---

# Bankruptcy Trustee Dismisses Case After Expert Fails On Cross Examination

## *News*

The trustee for a bankrupt company decided to drop his lawsuit after watching his expert witness cross examined by an attorney from Ahmad, Zavitsanos, Anaipakos, Alavi & Mensing P.C.(AZA), clearing AZA's clients of claims that they received fraudulently transferred company assets, the firm reports in a news release.

---

# Small-Firm Office Leasing Reality Check

## *Insight*

While base rent and escalations seem like an obvious starting point, due to sky-high demand and flush competition, prospective tenants better serve their interests by focusing on other points, writes Laura Drossman of Drossman Law in San Francisco.

---

# Illinois Governor Appoints Quarles & Brady Partner to READ Board

## *News*

Everett Ward, partner at the Chicago office of Quarles & Brady, has been appointed by Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner to serve as a public member of the Real Estate Administration and Disciplinary Board.

---

# Judge Fines Foreclosure Law Firm \$1.8 Million for Bogus

# Billings

## **News**

A Denver judge has fined one of the city's prolific foreclosure attorneys \$1.8 million for billing thousands of consumers facing the loss of their homes for title-insurance policies that did not exist, reports *The Denver Post*.

---

# Court Finds That Text Message Can Form Binding Contract

## **Insight**

A Massachusetts court ruled that a string of text messages can constitute a writing under the Statute of Frauds sufficient to bind the parties to sell certain property, writes Matthew DeVries on Burr & Forman LLP's Best Practices Construction Law.

---

# Enforceability of Electronic Agreements in Real Estate Transactions

## **Insight**

It is becoming common for more and more transactions to be created, negotiated, finalized and executed electronically,

according to an alert from Arnall Golden Gregory LLP. From a real estate perspective, virtually all documents other than those that are being recorded are exchanged electronically.

---

## **Tucson Lawyer Pleads Guilty In \$33M Fraud Case**

### **News**

the charges involve a procedure in which defendants took out \$33.6 million in loans against multi-million dollar homes and then forged documents to fool more lenders into believing the homes were debt-free.

---

## **Beck Redden's Pfeiffer Leads Charge to Overturn Fifth Circuit Decision**

### **News**

When Beck Redden partner and appellate specialist Connie Pfeiffer led the charge to overturn a Fifth Circuit decision, the path to victory was nearly certain to be long and arduous, the firm said in a release.

---

# On the Nature of Being Mistaken in Contract

## **Article**

Successful cases of contract reformation based on unilateral mistake are exceedingly rare – so endeavor not to be mistaken, cautions Glenn West of Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP in the firm's *Global Private Equity Watch*.

---

# Former Reading Int'l GC Joins Akerman Los Angeles Office

## **News**

Veteran real estate lawyer William "Bill" Ellis has joined Akerman LLP's Los Angeles office as a partner in the Real Estate Practice Group.

---

# Donald Trump Settled a Real Estate Lawsuit, and a Criminal Case Was Closed

## **News**

A lawsuit claimed that Trump SoHo condo-hotel tower was developed with the undisclosed involvement of convicted felons and financing from questionable sources in Russia and



Kazakhstan, the report states, *The New York Times* reports.

---

# Morgan Stanley to Pay \$3.2B Penalty in Securities Deal

## **NEWS**

Morgan Stanley will pay a \$2.6 billion penalty to resolve claims related to Morgan Stanley's marketing, sale and issuance of residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS), the Justice Department reported Thursday.