

# Real Estate Finance Trio Joins Blank Rome in Chicago

Blank Rome LLP is pleased to announce that Partner Joel V. Sestito, Of Counsel Rachel E. Mather, and Associate Olivia S. Ortiz have joined the firm's nationally recognized Real Estate group in Chicago. Real estate finance pros, Joel, Rachel, and Olivia represent lenders in real estate and commercial loan transactions. The team joins from Akerman.

The team's arrival follows several notable hires in the firm's Chicago office, including partners Eric Tower, Rikke Dierssen-Morice, and Bill Katris who joined earlier this year. And last month Blank Rome expanded to Dallas with the addition of seven attorneys, including Real Estate partner Justin Mapes.

"We are thrilled to welcome Joel, Rachel, and Olivia to the firm," said Grant S. Palmer, Blank Rome's Chair and Managing Partner. "We have a strong national practice in complex real estate financing and the addition of this talented team enhances our capabilities. With decades of experience and exceptional insight into the real estate and financial markets, Joel and the team will be assets to our financial institution clients, especially national, regional, and community banks, as they engage in commercial loan transactions."

Joel represents lenders at 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. He advises clients regarding secured and unsecured, single lender and syndicated loans, revolving lines of credit, mezzanine loans, A/B loans, loan on loan financings, and securitized loans. Joel also has experience with loan transactions that involve EB-5 financing, new markets tax credits, historic tax

credits, low-income housing tax credits, and ground lease financing. He also counsels clients in the acquisition, disposition, and development of multifamily, retail, office, industrial, and other real estate assets.

Rachel and Olivia focus their practices on representing financial institutions and other lenders in syndicated and single-bank real estate and construction financing transactions. Rachel also represents private equity and other strategic buyers in acquisition financing transactions and in representing borrowers and lenders in negotiating and documenting a variety of other secured and unsecured commercial lending transactions, including asset-based and cash-flow facilities, mezzanine debt facilities, international financing facilities, and asset securitizations.

“With strong roots in Chicago and sophisticated national practices, Joel, Rachel, and Olivia will be excellent additions to our growing office and to our local finance team,” said Kenneth Ottaviano, Partner and Chair of the firm’s Chicago office. “Joel has represented lenders in a variety of multimillion dollar commercial loan transactions spanning senior housing, multifamily, single-family rental, and industrial construction—deals that are essential to the Chicago economy and beyond. The group’s experience will be invaluable to our growing office and the firm and I look forward to collaborating with them.”

“Blank Rome’s Real Estate practice is well-known and highly regarded,” Sestito said. “The group has developed a leading reputation in real estate finance, known for being efficient and effective with a collaborative team-based approach. I look forward to growing my practice and broadening the work we do for clients on the firm’s national real estate platform.”

Joel earned his LL.M at Georgetown University Law Center, his J.D. at the University of Illinois Chicago School of Law, and his B.A at the University of Richmond.

Rachel earned her J.D. from Marquette University Law School, magna cum laude, and her B.A. from the University of Wisconsin – Madison.

Olivia earned her J.D. from the University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law, and her B.S. from Arizona State University.

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