



[Sandra Y. Kellman](#)

Partner

CO-CHAIR, HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE

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Sandi Kellman concentrates her practice on all aspects of commercial real estate development and finance, with particular focus in the hospitality sector on acquisition, disposition, development, management and financing of hotels and mixed use projects, representing owners and brands in single property and complex multi-state portfolio transactions. Under Sandi's leadership as Global Co-Chair of the Hospitality and Leisure practice, the group has been recognized by *Law360* as "Hospitality Group of the Year" in 2016, 2018 and 2019.

Sandi works on projects throughout the United States and abroad, including projects in the Caribbean and Middle East.

Sandi has been a member of DLA Piper's firmwide Policy Committee and she was a founding chair of DLA Piper's Global Real Estate Summit.

EXPERIENCE

- Mansueto Office and Lodging Capital in the acquisition and financing of The Waldorf Astoria Hotel Chicago
- Blackstone Real Estate Group and its affiliates in the acquisition, financing and disposition of more than 100 portfolio and single-asset hotels in 30-plus states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, as well as Jamaica and Brazil, including negotiation of hotel management agreements
- Real estate investor and Treasure Island owner Phil Ruffin in the US\$825 million acquisition of MGM Resorts International's Circus Circus hotel and casino property on the Las Vegas Strip
- Oravel Stays Singapore Pte. Ltd. a/k/a OYO in its formation of a joint venture with Highgate, an industry-leading investor and manager of hospitality assets; subsequent acquisition of the Hooters Casino Hotel Las Vegas through that same joint venture vehicle; and negotiation of a management agreement with Highgate

RELATED SERVICES

- Real Estate
- Corporate
- Finance
- Projects, Energy and Infrastructure
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Real Estate Development and Planning
- Real Estate Finance

RELATED SECTORS

- Hospitality and Leisure
- Energy and Natural Resources
- Real Estate

- The Wm. Wrigley Company, a subsidiary of Mars, Incorporated, in the strategic positioning and disposition of the iconic Wrigley Building in Chicago, along with several other real estate assets
- Several hotel developers in the development of major mixed use projects in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia, Oman and Dubai
- RNLN Real Estate Advisors, LP in the sale of the Clevelander South Beach Hotel and Essex House, two iconic hotels in the historic Miami Beach Art Deco District and a related bar facility at Miami Marlins Park
- Navy Pier Chicago in the comprehensive redevelopment of this historic site for its 100th anniversary, including a ground lease to construct and operate a new hotel on site
- Blackstone in its acquisition and financing of three hotels and a parking garage in downtown Salt Lake City. The transaction involved franchise agreements with Courtyard by Marriott; Fairfield by Marriott; and Hyatt House; a joint venture; financing; a number of management agreements (including hotel, leasing and parking); liquor licenses; and lease agreements
- A major hotel REIT in the acquisition, historic qualification, entitlements and vertical subdivision of a landmark hotel on Chicago's Michigan Avenue
- A major national developer in structuring ownership and management issues relating to a 90+ story mixed use tower
- A private equity group in hotel management agreement negotiations with Starwood Hotels for a two-hotel new construction development in Boston
- The purchaser of a city block in historic downtown Charleston, South Carolina, with hotel, restaurant, office and retail components, including acquisition, financing and negotiation of hotel and restaurant management agreements
- The developer of a major luxury mixed use project in downtown Chicago in analyzing and negotiating hotel management agreement proposals

CREDENTIALS

Admissions

- Illinois

Recognitions

Sandi is ranked by *Chambers USA* in the category of Leisure & Hospitality. *Chambers USA* has repeatedly recognized Sandi for her "dynamic practice." Praised as "a fabulous lawyer," she is "practical, pragmatic and effective," and clients have recognized her as a lawyer who "works towards achieving our goal." The directory identified Sandi as "a key figure in the practice [who] receives high praise from clients." One commentator noted she "is extraordinarily experienced and she will get the deal done. If I need someone with creative solutions on complex matters she is terrific." "She represents owners, financiers and brands with equal ease and this breadth of knowledge distinguishes her practice." Clients have recognized this extent and stated, "[s]he's very personable and has so much experience on both sides—she brings this 360 degree perspective on how to go forward. She's responsive and smart—she can see the forest through the trees."

The Legal 500 United States has also recommended Sandi. She has been named an Illinois Super Lawyer in Real Estate, as the result of research projects conducted jointly by Law & Politics and Chicago magazines. Sandi has also been selected as one of Real Estate Forum's Women of Influence, and the Leading Lawyer Network has named her among the Top 50 Women Real Estate-Related Lawyers in Illinois.

Sandi was recognized by *Who's Who Legal 2020* in the category of Hospitality. Sandi is noted as being "held in high esteem for her impressive hospitality practice, where she excels in related real estate development and portfolio management."

Sandi was recognized in the 27th edition of *The Best Lawyers in America* for 2021 and by *Leading Lawyers* as a Leading Lawyer for 2021.

Education

- J.D., Northwestern University School of Law

cum laude

Note and Comment Editor, *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*

- B.A., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
with high honors

Memberships

- Member of the *Law360* 2021 Hospitality Editorial Board
- Member, "The Hotel of Tomorrow Project," *Think Tank*
- Sandi is a member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants

INSIGHTS

Sandi writes and speaks frequently on real estate development topics. She is on the planning committee and regularly speaks at the ALIS Hotel Investment Conference, and was on the planning committee and a guest speaker at the 2001 and 2000 UCLA Hotel Industry Investment Conferences. For several years, she has been a guest speaker and panel moderator at the NYU Hotel Conference and the Lodging Conference in Phoenix. Sandi is a guest lecturer at the University of Texas Austin McCombs School of Business.

Publications

Approaches to developing and implementing a survival strategy for hotel owners facing COVID-19

9 November 2020

Developing a successful strategy will require significant up-front analysis, communication and cooperation among key stakeholders.

Hotels and hospitals may find new partnerships to solve for bed capacity issues and vacancies

25 March 2020

The impacts of COVID-19 upon the hospitality sector as well as hospital systems and the healthcare industry have been sudden and dramatic.

DLA Piper to provide tax relief input to Congress from businesses impacted by coronavirus

9 March 2020

Of particular concern is the travel and tourism sector, but the Committee staff is open to considering the impact on other economic sectors.

- Approaches to developing and implementing a survival strategy for hotel owners facing COVID-19, 9 November 2020
- Hotels and hospitals may find new partnerships to solve for bed capacity issues and vacancies, 25 March 2020
- DLA Piper to provide tax relief input to Congress from businesses impacted by coronavirus, 9 March 2020
- Hospitality market insights: key trends and 2019 forecasts from this year's ALIS conference, 12 Feb 2019

Events

- Panelist, "Management Agreement Fundamentals for the Franchise Lawyer, and Vice Versa," Georgetown Hotel and Lodging Summit, (2020)
- Panelist, "Hotel management agreements – what's important for each party," Caribbean Hotel & Resort Investment Summit, Miami, FL, (2016)
- Panelist, "Mixed-Use Development – Best Practices and Success Stories," Americas Lodging Investment Summit (2016)
- Panelist, "When and How Do You Select the Right Development Team?," Americas Lodging Investment Summit (2015)
- Moderator, "The Transactions Outlook – Both An Improving Economy And Improving Hotel Performance, Plus More Active Capital Markets: Does This Mean The Transaction Volume Is Also 'Going Up'? What Is The Outlook For 2014 And What Can We Expect?," Americas Lodging Investment Summit (2014)
- Panelist, "Loan to Own: Navigating Hotel NPL's – Moving from a Shunned Strategy to an Active One," NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference (2012)
- Moderator, "The Transactions Outlook – What Is Trading, Where Are The Deals, How Are They Getting Done? Will 2012 Be A Buyers Or Sellers' Market?," Americas Lodging Investment Summit (2012)

NEWS

DLA Piper partners and firm COO named to *Law360* 2021 Editorial Advisory Boards

10 May 2021

DLA Piper is pleased to announce that 11 of its lawyers, as well as firm COO Bob Bratt, have been named to *Law360's* 2021 Editorial Advisory Boards.

DLA Piper advises Phil Ruffin in closure of US\$825 million acquisition of Circus Circus

24 December 2019

DLA Piper represented real estate investor and Treasure Island owner Phil Ruffin in the recent closure of a US\$825 million acquisition of MGM Resorts International's Circus Circus hotel and casino property located on the Las Vegas Strip.

DLA Piper advises Harbert Growth Partners in its investment in WhyHotel

12 December 2019

DLA Piper is pleased to announce that the firm represented Harbert Growth Partners as lead investor in the US\$20 million Series B financing of WhyHotel.

DLA Piper advises Phil Ruffin in US\$825 million acquisition of Circus Circus from MGM

16 October 2019

DLA Piper represented real estate investor and Treasure Island owner Phil Ruffin in the US\$825 million acquisition of MGM Resorts International's Circus Circus hotel and casino property located on the Las Vegas Strip.

MEDIA MENTIONS

- Quoted, "Law360's 2021 Hospitality Editorial Advisory Board," *Law360*, April 5, 2021

- Quoted, "Hospitality Trends And Cases To Watch In 2021," *Law360*, January 3, 2020
- "'New Normal' Is Elusive For Hotels Amid Pandemic, Attys Say," *Law360*, September 10, 2020
- "The hotel industry is close to the cliff's edge ," *San Antonio Express-News*, September 9, 2020
- "Hotels In Pandemic Freefall Struggle To Avoid Default," *Law360*, June 12, 2020
- "Someone Says They Caught Coronavirus at Your Hotel: Now What?," *Skift*, May 21, 2020
- "Hotels Adopt New Cleaning Rules During COVID-19 Crisis," *Law360*, May 5, 2020
- "Law360's 2020 Hospitality Editorial Advisory Board," *Law360*, April 6, 2020
- "Why secondary and tertiary hotel markets are pulling ahead," *Hotel Management*, April 2017