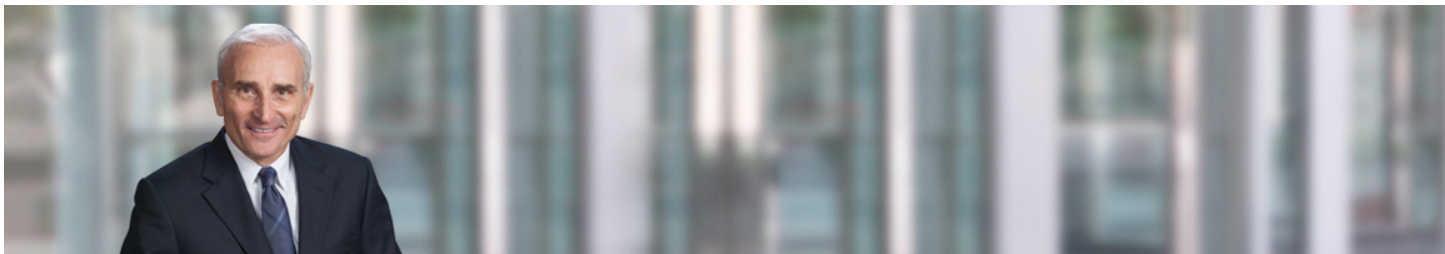


## George Kovac



Of Counsel

Miami Office

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Phone: 305-789-3383

### PRACTICE AREAS

Hospitality & Leisure

Real Estate

Construction

Commercial Lending & Asset-  
Based Financing

### OVERVIEW

George Kovac focuses his practice on business transactions involving the development, finance, leasing, management, structuring, acquisition and disposition of commercial real estate.

George has extensive experience in the legal and business issues concerning hotel, office, industrial, retail, residential, and other commercial projects throughout the United States and overseas. In addition, he has structured joint ventures and debt and equity financings.

George represents management companies, developers, investors, buyers & sellers in development, acquisition, management & leasing and services agreements. His clients include several internationally known hotel companies; owners of office buildings, shopping centers, hotels and industrial properties; real estate investor groups; lenders; casinos; and national retail chains.

George is frequently interviewed by local, national and international publications regarding real estate development issues. In connection with these transactions, George is also a regular speaker at numerous real estate industry events.

Prior to joining Stearns Weaver Miller, George was assistant general counsel for international transactions at Marriott International in Washington D.C. Previously he had been a partner with a law firm with offices in Chicago and Europe.

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## REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Principal outside counsel for U.S. gaming company in the structuring and negotiation of joint venture, development, licensing and management agreements for the largest hotel-casino project then proposed in the United Kingdom.

Negotiation of development and management agreements on behalf of developers of three hotel and residential condominium projects, as part of the inaugural hotels under a new brand to be launched in 2010 by a joint venture of a

celebrity club designer and an international hotel company.

Structured and negotiated the renovation, repositioning and reopening of a signature New Orleans convention hotel which closed after Hurricane Katrina.

Negotiation and structuring of hotel-resort-condominium development in Northern California and Mexico, to be operated under an international luxury brand.

Negotiation of development and leasehold rights with local municipality in Gulf of Mexico for destination casino resort with hotel, condominium and retail components.

Condo-hotel renovation projects, including representation of British private club developing a condo-hotel in Miami's South Beach district and a California investment fund developing a luxury condo-hotel in Coconut Grove.

Representation of non-branded independent hotel company in the acquisition, development, management and licensing of properties in the U.S. and Caribbean.

Formation of a joint venture between U.S. hotel chain and European jewelry company for the creation of new luxury hotel brand. Structured U.S. and non-U.S. investment vehicles, property holding entities, debt and equity commitments, property leases, license agreements, and management agreements.

Lead outside counsel for multi-state transaction involving sale of partnership interests and restructuring of multiple real estate joint ventures between publicly held companies; structure became the template for unwinding of the parties' remaining joint ventures.

Organized and coordinated the transition of troubled international hotel brand after its acquisition by larger company, including relations with Canadian master franchisee, disposition of unproductive properties and negotiation of master development agreements for various regions in Asia and Europe.

Negotiated master franchise agreement for expansion of upscale U.S. hotel brand into Canadian market.

Successful representation of two of the original ten riverboat gambling licensees in their approval by the Illinois Gaming Board despite competition from other applicants and opposition by local interest groups.

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## PROFESSIONAL & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Yale Alumni School Committee, Volunteer

Yale Club of Miami, Director

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## RECOGNITION

AV Rated by Martindale-Hubbell

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## PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

**Events:** Legal Issues and Other Risks

CPN Condominium Summit | January 2006

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**Publications:** Performance Data and Condo-Hotels

Florida Real Estate Journal | December 2005

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**Events:** Hotel Management Agreement Litigation

ABA Annual Meeting | | August 2002

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**Events:** Cross Border Transfer Payments

ABA International Hospitality Symposium | | January 2001

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**Events:** Focus on Representative Hospitality Markets

ABA International Hospitality Symposium | | October 1998

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**Events:** Doing Business in Eastern Europe

Georgetown University Law Center Corporate Counsel Institute | | March 1998

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**Events:** Investment in Eastern Europe

John Marshall Law School | | September 1995

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## NEWSROOM

**In the Media:** [Stearns Weaver Team Handles CocoWalk Acquisition](#)

Daily Business Review | | June 2015

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**In the Media:** [Challenge accepted: Game on for giving at U. of C.](#)

Chicago Daily Law Bulletin | | July 2014

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## EDUCATION

J.D., University of Chicago Law School, 1976

B.A., *cum laude*, Yale University, 1973

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## ADMISSIONS

Florida