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Greenberg Traurig team named Litigation Department of the Year

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Greenberg Traurig's powerhouse litigation team in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties has been named Litigation Department of the Year in the large-firm category by the Daily Business Review.

The contest is part of a national series of recognition programs sponsored by ALM, the Review's parent.

The mid-size firm category was won by Berger Singerman's litigation group, while Miami litigation boutique Podhurst Orseck took the small-firm category.

Greenberg's litigation department in South Florida includes 58 full time partners and 33 full time associates. The department generated 37.6 percent of the firm's revenue in South Florida in 2012, according to the firm.

Greenberg was involved in a variety of major litigation last year. The firm's lawyers are lead counsel for a group of home-builders, including Miami-based Lennar Corp., in the Chinese drywall multi-district litigation in New Orleans. The firm was the first to file suit on behalf of Lennar. The firm also represented Merrill Lynch in a class action brought in Florida's Middle District by about 100 Florida pension plans. The class action was settled.

In another case, Greenberg lawyers won a pretrial dismissal of RICO allegations for client Steven Sosa. And in another 2012 victory, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lawyers' argument in a Riviera Beach maritime law case that a floating home moored to shore and not intended for maritime commerce does not constitute a "vessel."

In the mid-size firm category, winner Berger Singerman is general counsel to the trustee supervising the clean-up from the demise of the former law firm of Ponzi schemer Scott Rothstein. Ongoing litigation has involved bringing about 165 suits against investors and others who did business with Rothstein.

In 2012 the firm also served as lead counsel in several litigation matters in federal and state courts nationally for Lender Processing Services Inc., a Jacksonville-based Fortune 500 company traded on the New York Stock Exchange. So far the firm has achieved the

dismissal of nine class actions against their client. In another class action, the Taylor Bean & Whittaker bankruptcy estate was sued by former employees seeking damages of more than \$30 million for failing to provide notice of the company's shut down. The case was successfully mediated.

Berger Singerman's litigation department has 15 partners and 12 associates, and litigation generated 40 percent of the firm's revenue in 2012, according to the firm.

Small-firm category winner Podhurst Orseck has nine partners and three associates in its litigation department.

Podhurst Orseck successfully represented plaintiffs in the huge multi-district class action bank overdraft-fee litigation stemming from bank policies to manipulate transactions on debit card-checking accounts so that customers were charged multiple improper overdraft fees. Federal actions on behalf of millions of bank customers filed around the country were consolidated in Miami federal court, where the firm is lead plaintiffs co-counsel. Settlements include agreements with Bank of America for \$410 million, \$110 million for JPMorgan Chase and Union Bank for \$35 million.

The runners-up in three categories:

- Bilzin Sumberg Baena Price & Axelrod of Miami in the large-firm category, with 13 partners and 13 associates in its litigation department.
- White & Case in the mid-size category. Its Miami office has 12 litigation partners and 19 litigation associates.
- Colson Hicks Eidson of Coral Gables in the small-firm category. The firm has 12 litigation partners and five associates.

Five firms were also honored for their work in four specialty areas. They are:

- Product liability/mass torts: Shook, Hardy & Bacon, which has 52 litigation attorneys in Florida.
- Real estate: Kluger Kaplan Silverman Katzen & Levine, a 28-attorney firm specializing in litigation.
- Insurance: Ver Ploeg & Lumpkin, a 23-lawyer firm with offices in Miami and Orlando.
- Labor and employment: Akerman Senterfitt, with nine offices in Florida (winner), and Jackson Lewis, a national firm with offices in Miami and Orlando (runner-up).

The firms will be profiled in an April 17 special report and honored that day at a dinner event at the Four Seasons Hotel in Miami.

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