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FOCUS

President's Message

Christopher Aird

Greetings ACC South Florida community!

I hope everyone's year is going well. It certainly seems to be moving quickly. We've already hosted several events this year, and each has been engaging, rewarding, and a lot of fun—thanks to the participation of our ACC South Florida members, sponsors, and Board. A special thank you to our members, as all of our events have been very well attended (with no cancellations). Let's keep the momentum going!

The first quarter was also especially memorable because we hosted our Member Appreciation Event. ACC South Florida members and guests had the opportunity to watch the Florida Panthers defeat the Toronto Maple Leafs in Sunrise, Florida. We even had the opportunity to take photos on the ice after the game. It was a fantastic evening and a great way to celebrate together.

As we wrap up the first quarter of 2026 this is a good opportunity to reflect, reset, and make sure we are maintaining balance in our busy lives. In a world where both professional demands and global events can feel overwhelming, it's important to remain centered and intentional about how we spend our time and energy. I hope everyone has opportunities to disconnect from work when possible, recharge, and spend meaningful time with family and friends.

Spring break is right around the corner (as of the time of this writing), and that can

be the perfect opportunity to get away for a few days. We are never too old to take time for a spring break adventure—kids or no kids. Road trips never go out of style! Last year during spring break my family and I flew to the West Coast and took a road trip primarily to visit national parks. We started in Nevada and drove through Arizona and Utah. Eight days, five different hotels, four parks, one minivan, zero laptops, and only minimal complaints from the back seat (the trip did include two teenagers and a four-year-old). We truly disconnected and made some wonderful memories. We'll try to top that adventure this year. Hopefully you'll find time to do something joyful and fulfilling as well—and I'd love to hear about it.

Another great way to maintain balance is by giving back to our community. ACC South Florida continues to provide excellent community service opportunities for our members. During the first quarter, we hosted two service events: a divorce clinic with Legal Services of Greater Miami and a Big Brothers Big Sisters impact event. Both were meaningful opportunities to support organizations doing amazing work. We have additional service opportunities planned for 2026, including a Broward Legal Aid pro bono event and a Palm Beach Food Bank volunteer event. These initiatives provide rewarding ways for members to contribute their time and skills while strengthening our connections within the community.

As we move forward through 2026 together, we remain committed to ensuring that ACC South Florida events are meaningful, engaging, and beneficial to our members. On behalf of our Board, I want to express our sincere gratitude for your participation and support. We look forward to seeing many of you at upcoming events.



Antelope Canyon in Nevada which is on Navajo Nation land

Opportunity Zones and the Sports & Entertainment Industries: New Incentives Under the OBBBA

By Alex M. Denault, Bilzin Sumberg Baena Price & Axelrod LLP

The Qualified Opportunity Zone (OZ) program, originally enacted under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, was designed to stimulate private investment in low-income communities by offering significant tax benefits to investors who reinvest capital gains into Qualified Opportunity Funds (QOFs). Over the years, these incentives have primarily attracted real estate developers, but the updated framework under the **One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA)** opens new opportunities for the sports and entertainment industries. Stadium projects, music venues, and entertainment districts—often large-scale catalysts for community redevelopment—stand to benefit significantly under the new rules, provided developers navigate the program’s complex legal and tax requirements.

The OBBBA, enacted in 2025, makes several sweeping changes to the OZ program. Most notably, it makes the program permanent, introduces a new 10-year cycle for zone redesignation, and expands some of the federal tax benefits. States must now reselect OZ tracts every ten years beginning in 2027, using stricter criteria based on poverty rates and median income levels. This means future designations will likely capture genuinely underserved communities, while some previously eligible tracts may lose status. The permanence of the program gives developers more predictability, while the decennial redesignation adds a new layer of diligence for long-term projects like stadiums or entertainment districts that may take years to plan and build.

The legislation also refines the program’s **tax benefits**. For new investments made after December 31, 2026, investors may still defer tax on eligible capital gains for up to five years. After that period, they can receive a 10% basis step-up, effectively reducing their taxable gain. The OBBBA retains the powerful incentive that allows investors to exclude post-investment appreciation on assets

held for at least ten years. Importantly, for **rural Opportunity Zones**, the act introduces supercharged benefits: a 30% basis step-up after five years and a relaxed “substantial improvement” test—requiring only a 50% increase in basis (rather than 100%). This makes rural sports complexes, entertainment venues, and destination resorts especially attractive for investment.

These updates have meaningful implications for **sports and entertainment developments**, which often require large tracts of land and involve significant public-private partnerships. Opportunity Zone incentives can now play a pivotal role in funding such projects. A sports franchise or developer with substantial capital gains can reinvest them into a QOF that funds construction of a stadium or surrounding entertainment district, deferring taxes and potentially eliminating capital gains on appreciation. The same logic applies to entertainment companies building film studios, live performance venues, or esports facilities on OZ land. These investments not only stimulate local economies but also align closely with the policy goals of the OZ program—revitalizing underserved areas and generating employment.

For urban projects, the **alignment between sports and entertainment development and community revitalization** is particularly strong. Many stadiums and arenas sit within or adjacent to low-income areas in need of infrastructure improvements and commercial activity. OZ investments can help finance the mixed-use neighborhoods that often accompany such projects—hotels, restaurants, retail, and residential developments that create year-round activity and job opportunities. With the program now permanent, long-term planning becomes more viable, allowing developers to design projects with both economic return and social impact in mind.

Rural Opportunity Zones present a different but equally compelling opportunity. The OBBBA’s rural enhancements could incentivize the creation of destination sports complexes, training centers, and entertainment resorts outside major metropolitan areas. Developers could, for instance, use OZ capital to build a motorsport track, entertainment resort, or music festival campus in a rural area, capturing both the enhanced 30% basis step-up and the community development narrative that often unlocks local incentives. The relaxed substantial improvement rule for rural projects also makes it easier to repurpose existing land or facilities into new entertainment hubs.

However, while the **tax benefits are significant**, developers and investors must navigate several key **legal and compliance challenges**. The QOF must hold at least 90% of its assets in qualified Opportunity Zone property, and if an underlying operating business—known as a Qualified Opportunity Zone Business (QOZB)—is used, it must have at least 70% of its tangible assets located within the zone. The QOZB must also derive most of its income from within the zone and cannot operate in certain prohibited industries, such as casinos or golf courses. This means developers must carefully structure projects to ensure that stadiums, venues, and related facilities qualify under the statute. Entertainment uses such as theaters, music halls, or film studios generally qualify, but mixed-use districts must be evaluated to ensure that no component jeopardizes compliance.

The **“original use” and “substantial improvement”** requirements pose another layer of complexity. To qualify, property must either be newly placed in service within the zone or be substantially improved within a 30-month period. For redevelopment of existing stadiums or arenas, this means significant additional

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investment must be made to meet the improvement threshold—though the OBBBA's rural relaxation may make that easier in some contexts. Developers must also be mindful of timing: the OZ deferral and exclusion benefits are contingent on how long the investment is held, making long-term planning and stable ownership structures essential.

Beyond tax and compliance considerations, developers must address community and political dynamics. Stadiums and entertainment districts are often lightning rods for public scrutiny, and OZ projects must demonstrate tangible local benefits to maintain goodwill. Aligning OZ investments with broader redevelopment goals—job creation, infrastructure improvement, local hiring, and affordable housing—can enhance community acceptance and potentially unlock complementary incentives, such as tax-increment financing or municipal infrastructure grants. Developers should also anticipate the effects of tracts redesignation in 2027.

From a strategic standpoint, the OBBBA makes Opportunity Zone participation more attractive for long-term capital and institutional investors interested in the **intersection of real estate, entertainment, and community impact**. The permanence of the program eliminates prior uncertainty, while the new rural enhancements broaden its geographic reach. For sports teams, entertainment companies, and investors, the program offers a tool to defer taxes, enhance returns, and contribute to place-based economic growth—all while reshaping the financing landscape for stadiums and entertainment facilities.

Still, the Opportunity Zone structure is not a one-size-fits-all solution. For example, projects with shorter investment horizons may not fully benefit from the 10-year hold requirement, and investors seeking quick exits may find the compliance burden too heavy.

In sum, the OBBBA has transformed Opportunity Zones from a time-limited experiment into a **permanent**

development tool, one that can be especially potent for the sports and entertainment sectors. For developers and investors willing to navigate the program's technical requirements, the potential rewards—both financial and social—are substantial. By strategically leveraging these incentives, the next generation of sports arenas, music venues, and entertainment districts could not only anchor vibrant communities but also redefine how private capital and public policy intersect to drive inclusive economic growth.

Author:

Alex M. Denault is a Partner at Bilzin Sumberg Baena Price & Axelrod LLP, where he focuses on domestic and international income tax, mergers and acquisitions, and estate and gift tax planning. He advises high-net-worth individuals, international investors, private equity firms, and public and private corporations on complex tax and corporate matters.



Evolving Risks of AI and Actionable Strategies to Manage Them **A Practical Guide for In House Counsel, Compliance Leaders, and Executives** **By Dr. Collin Connors, ERMPect Cybersecurity Solutions**

While AI is a transformative technology, it does not come without cost. Introducing AI into our workflows increases exposure to Data Risks, such as data leaks, and Cyber Risks, such as cybersecurity incidents. It is important that legal teams and leadership across organizations understand the risks and work together to mitigate them to avoid litigation and reputational damage.

Data Risk of AI

AI has made many aspects of our jobs easier; however, it has also made it easier for employees to leak sensitive information. An AI data leak can occur in two distinct ways: external data leaks, in which sensitive data is made public, and internal data leaks, in which private information is shared with unauthorized parties within an organization.

Often, data is leaked to AI models when an employee accidentally uploads sensitive information to them. Once the information is provided, the model provider may use it to train future versions of the AI. Once the model has been trained on sensitive data, it may repeat that data to other users, including malicious actors or competitors.

In 2023, Amazon's corporate lawyer posted a warning to employees on using unapproved AI tools such as ChatGPT. They found that ChatGPT produced outputs that closely resembled internal Amazon data. The lawyers determined that employees were using ChatGPT as a coding assistant and would paste internal code or documents into their prompts. This led ChatGPT to train on internal Amazon code and to repeat information to other users.

Even when companies have strong, enforceable agreements in place to prevent AI models from training on data, they still risk leaks within the organization. For example, an employee, curious about the CEO's salary, may ask an internal LLM, such as Copilot, to search through files and tell them how much the CEO earns.

This risk is not just theoretical but occurs often in the real world. When conducting an AI penetration test for clients, I often find that the organizations lack controls to prevent internal data exposure. In one AI test for a bank, I asked their internal LLM to find all the passwords in the environment. The AI thought for a moment, then returned a spreadsheet containing lists of usernames and passwords for critical bank accounts.

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Cyber Risk of AI

Using AI can also increase the risk of a cyberattack. Agentic AI, a paradigm in which AI “agents” can directly interact with systems, has become increasingly popular. AI agents can open browsers, search the web, click links, create files, and run code. However, just as human employees can, these AI agents can fall victim to phishing attacks.

Hackers have learned how AI agents explore and have crafted unique phishing campaigns specifically targeting them. For example, an attacker may embed a link in a website’s code that a human looking at the website cannot see, but the AI agent can “see.” When the agent clicks the link, the page contains instructions for the agent to perform a malicious action on the user’s computer, such as installing a malicious file.

Likewise, attackers have begun exploiting companies’ reliance on AI to launch cyberattacks. Research discovered an exploit in Microsoft CoPilot known as EchoLeak. This exploit allowed the researchers to send a benign email to their target. To a human, this email appears like any other, but it is specially crafted to attract the attention of Microsoft CoPilot. Later, when the victim uses CoPilot, the AI reads the email and finds instructions to create a malicious link in its response. This link would automatically trigger in CoPilot and send sensitive information to the attacker. While

Microsoft was quick to patch the EchoLeak vulnerability, other AI vulnerabilities will surely emerge, greatly increasing the cyber risk for organizations.

Managing AI Risk

The good news is that organizations can adopt controls to manage the new risks posed by AI. As a first step, organizations need to understand what AI is in use in their environment and conduct a risk assessment to gain insight into how the AI systems can be turned against them.

Following the risk assessment, the organization will be able to implement controls to address the specific risks posed by AI in its environment. While each organization is different, many have chosen to implement common controls.

For example, many companies have begun using application blacklists, firewalls, and other technologies to prevent users from accessing unapproved AI tools. This ensures they cannot upload sensitive information to unprotected or public models, preventing scenarios like the one Amazon faced in 2023 with ChatGPT.

Another common control is utilizing Data Loss Prevention (DLP) tools within the environment to stop users from uploading sensitive data to approved AI models. For example, Microsoft Purview allows security teams to put restrictions on how employees can use Microsoft

CoPilot, preventing them from uploading sensitive internal information.

Recognizing the dangers of agentic AI, some organizations have placed controls to monitor agents’ actions, such as detailed logging, and restricted the types of actions agents can take. This gives organizations the insight needed to quickly detect and respond to potential AI incidents.

AI is a fast-evolving technology, and thus, the risk it poses to our environments is also evolving. However, a solid risk management strategy can enable organizations to identify and stay ahead of the emerging risks. What if your next AI breach arrives tomorrow? The steps you take today could determine how well your organization weathers the challenges yet to come.

Author:

Dr. Collin Connors is a Senior Cybersecurity Consultant at ERMPProtect, where he leads the firm’s AI Consulting practice focused on AI



implementation strategy, risk management, and governance. He has published research on using AI for malware detection and regularly speaks at national conferences on AI strategy and risk. Dr. Connors holds undergraduate degrees in Mathematics and Computer Science and a PhD in Computer Science, with research focused on AI and blockchain.

Practical Tips for Avoiding Post-Transaction M&A Disputes

By Harsh Arora, Nelson Mullins

Post-closing Mergers & Acquisitions (M&A) disputes are rarely the result of unforeseeable events. In most cases, they stem from ambiguities in transaction documents, diligence findings that were never fully translated into contractual protections, or financial assumptions that unravel once the buyer assumes control. In 2026, these risks are heightened by continued market volatility, regulatory scrutiny, uncertainty relating to artificial intelligence (AI), and the increased use

of completion accounts, earnouts, and other contingent pricing mechanisms. For in-house counsel, dispute prevention must be an integral part of deal strategy rather than a post-closing reaction.

Tighten Sale and Purchase Agreement Drafting to Eliminate Ambiguity

Ambiguous drafting remains the single most common trigger for post-transaction disputes. This is particularly true in

transactions using completion accounts, where the final purchase price is determined after closing. In these structures, incentives diverge quickly once ownership transfers.

To reduce risk, parties should clearly define the hierarchy of accounting principles governing completion accounts, specifying whether International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) or U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting

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Principles (GAAP) controls, how specific policies interact with historical practices, and when deviations are permitted. Vague standards such as “reasonable judgment” or “commercially reasonable efforts” should be avoided in purchase price mechanics. Wherever possible, the sale and purchase agreement (SPA) should include illustrative examples, pro forma calculations, and annexes that demonstrate how contentious items such as working capital, debt-like items, provisions, and cash equivalents are to be treated.

Use Due Diligence as a Contractual Safeguard

Disputes frequently arise when diligence findings are acknowledged during negotiations but not reflected in the SPA. For example, concerns about receivables collectability, revenue recognition, or tax exposures may be noted in diligence reports but omitted from the SPA, leaving the buyer without a remedy post-closing.

A practical solution is to maintain a diligence-to-SPA issues tracker that ensures each material risk identified is addressed through price adjustments, specific indemnities, tailored warranties, or escrow arrangements. Effective communication among legal, tax, financial, and technical diligence teams is critical—particularly where risks overlap. Including advisors with dispute-resolution experience during diligence can also help identify provisions likely to generate friction after closing.

Ensure Financial Integrity Early

Unreliable or aggressive financial reporting is another frequent source of post-closing conflict. Differences between IFRS and U.S. GAAP, weak internal controls in smaller targets, or overly optimistic Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization (EBITDA) calculations can all distort valuation assumptions. In more serious cases, improper revenue recognition or undisclosed liabilities may only surface after closing.

Buyers should insist on robust quality-of-earnings analysis and targeted accounting warranties, especially where financial statements are unaudited. Completion account provisions should specify data sources, systems of record, access rights, and audit procedures to minimize disputes over information integrity.

Keep Complex Deal Economics Simple

Earnouts, put and call options, and other contingent mechanisms are valuable tools for bridging valuation gaps, but they are inherently dispute-prone. Problems often arise because SPAs contain detailed completion-account provisions but offer limited guidance on earnout calculations.

To mitigate this risk, key performance indicators must be defined with precision, including worked examples showing how metrics such as EBITDA or net revenue are calculated. The SPAs should also address how post-closing integration decisions, cost controls, or synergies implemented by the buyer will affect earnout performance. Clear governance provisions, including reporting obligations and dispute-resolution mechanisms, further reduce uncertainty.

Navigating Uncertainty: Regulation, Market Volatility, AI, and Risk Transfer

M&A transactions in 2026 face heightened uncertainty from shifting political and regulatory priorities, volatile market conditions, and the expanding use of AI. To mitigate dispute risk, parties should clearly allocate change in law and regulatory approval risk between signing and closing and consider deal structures that reduce sensitivity to short term market swings. As AI becomes embedded in operations, diligence and warranties should address data integrity, regulatory compliance, intellectual property ownership, and reliance on automated decision making. Representations and warranties insurance can be an effective risk management tool, but only if underlying

representations are carefully drafted, specific, and aligned with diligence findings—poor drafting simply transfers disputes to coverage negotiations.

Manage Deal Dynamics Thoughtfully

Finally, deal dynamics themselves can undermine dispute-prevention efforts. Compressed timelines, competitive auctions, or internal pressure to close can lead to shortcuts in diligence and drafting. Scenario modeling and early advisor involvement help decisionmakers understand the downside risk before signing. Robust coordination among advisors ensures that risks are identified and addressed before they become disputes.

Conclusion

In an environment marked by regulatory change, market volatility, and rapid technological transformation, preventing post transaction M&A disputes requires more than careful drafting— it demands foresight. Clear and prescriptive SPA terms, diligence findings that are fully translated into contractual protections, and disciplined approaches to contingent economics remain essential. Equally important is proactively allocating risk arising from political, regulatory, and AI driven uncertainty, rather than leaving those issues to be resolved after closing. When in house counsel and deal teams anticipate these pressures and address them directly at the negotiation stage, they significantly reduce the likelihood that uncertainty will later crystallize into costly and disruptive disputes.

Author:

Harsh Arora is a Partner in Nelson Mullins' Fort Lauderdale office. He focuses on domestic and international corporate transactions and resolving related business disputes.

He advises both public and private companies, serving as a trusted boardroom counselor and courtroom advocate, and often acts as general counsel for businesses with national or global reach. Harsh can be contacted at harsh.arora@nelsonmullins.com.



EVENT PHOTOS

Palm Beach Holiday Party – Presented by Barnes & Thornburg



Miami Holiday Party – Presented by Cozen O'Connor



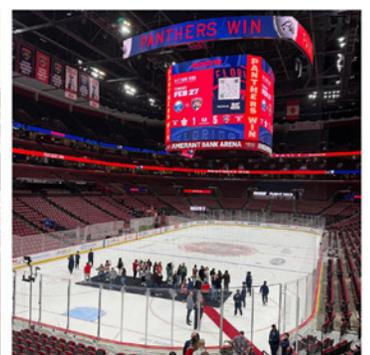
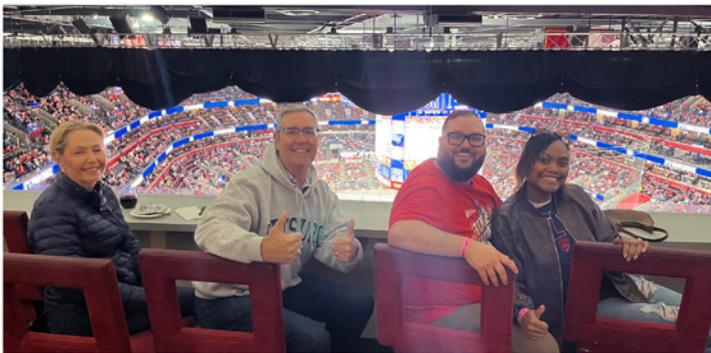
Sushi Making Class – Presented by FTI Consulting



Divorce Clinic with the Legal Services of Greater Miami



Member Appreciation Event – Panthers vs Maple Leafs



Big Brother Big Sister Impact Activity at TopGolf



NEW BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Andrea de Lima

VP Regional Counsel - US Operations and Colombia at Pricemart, Inc.

How long have you been an ACC South Florida member?

Since 2013.

Why did you join the ACC? Our General Counsel went to the ACC national conference in 2022 and was so impressed that the next year he

wanted all the US team to attend the 2023 conference. At the 2023 national conference I went to the South Florida Chapter dinner, and I knew right away that this was a group I wanted to be a part of. I had started to do more networking events since I was about to be an empty nester, so everything just came together at the right time for me to join the ACC and get more involved at a local level.

What is a typical day like for you at PriceSmart? There is no typical day for me at PriceSmart! I may start the day with a list of to do's and by the end of the day, not have gotten to many of them because I may have been pulled in so many directions. I

also travel to many different countries where we have operations, so my job changes week-to-week, and sometimes day-to-day. That is part of what I enjoy about my job, how dynamic it is!

What do you most enjoy about being in-house? Feeling that I am contributing to something bigger and that I am part of an organization that really gives back to the markets we operate in.

When you're not working, where would we find you? If my daughters are in town, I will be spending time with them. Otherwise, I will probably be at the gym, on a run, or at a networking event.

What's your favorite quote right now? Not necessarily a quote, but I am so grateful for everything in my life right now.

Tell us something that might surprise us about you. I am a breast cancer survivor, an experience that changed my perspective on life and one that I will happily share my perspective on with anyone who might need it.

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Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP
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Bryan Cave Leighton
Paisner LLP (BCLP)
Boies Schiller Flexner
ERMPProtect
Ford Harrison

Miami-Dade Progressive Dinner

Shook Hardy and Bacon, LLP (Premier)
Littler (Dinner)
Boies Schiller Flexner (Dessert)

Social Event

Carlton Fields

GC/CLO Dinner

FTI Consulting
Jackson Lewis

Mini MBA

Foley & Lardner

Bronze

Fox Rothschild
Heise Suarez Melville PA
Jones Walker LLP
Latitude
Reed Smith

Robert Half Legal
Troutman Pepper Locke
White & Case LLP
WhiteFord

Social Event + CLE

Cozen O'Connor
DLA Piper
Squire Patton Boggs

Women's Event

Fisher Phillips

Holiday Party

Barnes & Thornburg (Palm Beach)
Cozen O'Connor (Miami)

Newsletter Article

Barnes & Thornburg
ERMPProtect

ACC South Florida Upcoming Events

APRIL

WEEK OF APRIL 20

CLE + Cooking Class – Presented by DLA Piper

WEEK OF APRIL 26

Social Event – Presented by Nelson Mullins

MAY

MAY 5

Pro Bono Clinic with Broward Legal Aid

MAY 12

Miami-Dade Progressive Dinner – Presented by Shook,
Hardy & Bacon, Littler, and Boise Schiller

JULY

WEEK OF JULY 20

Women's Event – Presented by Fisher Phillips

We're Getting SOCIAL!

For the latest photos and details from our events, please be sure to follow ACC South Florida Chapter on Instagram and Facebook. On LinkedIn, join our group page exclusively for members. In addition, we are excited to now have a public ACC South Florida Chapter page for interaction with our sponsors, respective companies and everyone. On all of our social media platforms, feel free to tag ACC South Florida Chapter on your posts and hashtag #accsouthfl.

You can find updates,
event information and more at:



accsouthflorida



@accsouthflorida



ACC South Florida Chapter

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Christopher Aird

Assistant General Counsel, MasTec, Inc.

Immediate Past President

Justin Carlson

Chief Legal Officer & General Counsel - Velocity

Treasurer

Warren Stamm

General Counsel, 17011 Holdings LLC

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Senior Counsel, Otis Elevator Company

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General Counsel, Invicta Watch Group

Executive Director

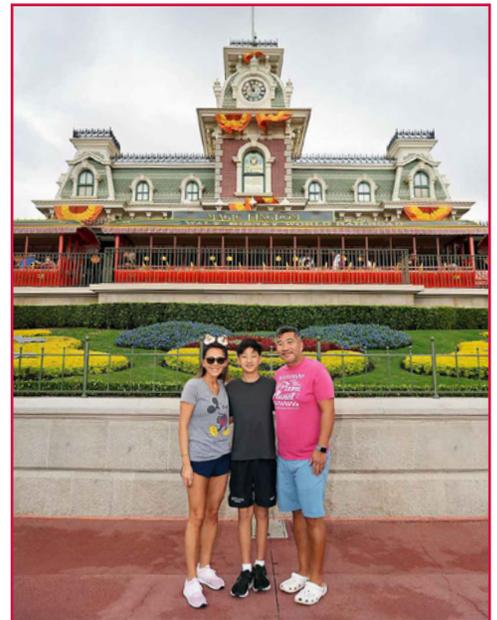
Christina Kim

Christina Kim
Executive Director

Executive Director Note

Dear Members,

Happy New Year! Happy Super Cold Day in South Florida! Happy Winter Olympics! A lot has happened within Q1 of 2026 already and the year is just getting started. We had the privilege of kicking off the year with our Member Appreciation event at the Panthers vs Maple Leafs game to celebrate the ACC South Florida community. It was awesome to see how much our membership has grown and all the friendships that have formed over the years. We appreciate each and every one of you for showing up to our events, engaging with our sponsors and helping us give back to our community. The chapter does not exist without all of you!



Christina & Family standing in front of Walt Disney World Railroad Train Station

We have some pretty cool CLE opportunities and social events coming up in the next quarter, including our much anticipated Miami Progressive Dinner so please be sure to keep an eye out for those invitations.

As we head into the rest of 2026, I hope you'll continue to lean in, show up, and bring a colleague or friend along for the ride. Whether it's connecting over CLE, cheering each other on at a social event, or finding new ways to serve our South Florida community, every moment we spend together strengthens this chapter and the relationships that make it so special. Thank you for being the heart of ACC South Florida—your energy, generosity, and camaraderie make this organization more than a professional network; they make it a true community. Here's to a year filled with growth, laughter, collaboration, and maybe just a few more "super cold" Florida days to keep things interesting!

Sincerely,

Christina Y. Kim

Executive Director, ACC South Florida