

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE LITIGATION DEPARTMENTS - MIDSIZE LAW FIRMS

J. ALBERT DIAZ

LITIGATION DEPARTMENT OF THE YEAR
Berger Singerman

Berger Singerman consistently handles matters typically reserved for much larger law firms. Its dispute resolution team serves a diverse client base with a Florida focus

and international scope and frequently handles disputes exceeding \$1 billion in controversy, differentiating Berger Singerman from other firms of its size and even larger.

Serving as a trusted referral source for other lawyers is a major component of Berger Singerman's business and practice. The firm often serves as co-counsel on Florida matters for out-of-state firms, and a no-poach policy assures referring firms that the clients will return as a client after the referrals, mostly from out-of-state firms.

On the litigation front, the firm's 30 litigation attorneys excelled in 2017 at defeating a wide variety of claims.

In a case with the most recognizable names, U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams dismissed a copyright infringement lawsuit filed against firm clients Prince, Spike Lee and Warner Bros. Records over the soundtrack for the 1996 film "Girl 6" after James Brandon claimed rights to the music and lyrics.

The firm represented Airbnb in obtaining an injunction to bar enforcement of Miami's ban on short-term house rentals in areas zoned residential. The decision also barred the city from requiring public speakers at City Commission meetings to give their names and addresses. The decision is on appeal.

The firm also won an appeal in the Fourth District Court of Appeal to require an unwilling Southwest Ranches to supply water to an immigration jail planned across the town line in neighboring Pembroke Pines. An appeal is pending before the Florida Supreme Court.

In another appeal, the Third District Court of Appeal ruled for the firm's client, developer R. Donahue Peebles, and reversed a \$724,138 damages award in a long-running commission fraud claim filed in 2006 by real estate broker Dora Puig.

In a related case, U.S. Chief Bankruptcy Judge Laurel Isicoff issued a directed verdict for Peebles on a trustee's claim of fraudulent transfers seeking \$1.3 million in damages in a dispute over a marketing limited liability company controlled by Peebles.

The firm also defeated an attempt to recover \$2.7 million in insurance payouts for the 2000 crash of a Piper Chieftain in Canada. The law firm has represented Piper Aircraft Corp. since it filed for bankruptcy protection in 1991.