

# Attorneys Rated by Chambers and Partners

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Attorneys at Shutts & Bowen have been named top lawyers in their fields by London-based Chambers & Partners in the latest edition of "Chambers USA: America's Leading Business Lawyers." The 2007 edition recognized the firm for excellence in: banking and finance, corporate/M&A, bankruptcy/restructuring, real estate, construction, and zoning/land use.

Since this U.K. publisher of legal guides began publishing rankings in 2003, Shutts & Bowen's financial services practice has achieved the guide's highest ranking every year. Chambers & Partners described the firm's banking and finance practice as "top of the class" and its 17-member team as "highly responsive, active and five-star." In addition, Bowman Brown has been ranked number one in Florida in the banking and finance practice area since the U.S. guide's inception. This year Chambers & Partners rated Mr. Brown as a "star performer" on bank regulatory matters and indicated that he "truly belongs among the elite banking lawyers across the USA."

The attorneys included in the guide are: Bowman Brown in Miami (banking and finance), partner Kevin Cowan in Miami (real estate), John H. Dannecker in Orlando (construction), Luis de Armas in Miami (corporate/M&A), Michael J. Grindstaff in Orlando (real estate: zoning and land use), Rod Jones in Orlando (banking and finance), and George I. Platt in Fort Lauderdale (real estate: zoning and land use). In addition, Brent C. Bell is listed as an up and comer in Construction Law.

This year, the UK guide made prominent note of the firm's new Tampa office, which was established in March 2006. "With six offices spread across the state, including a recently formed Tampa office, this Florida-based firm offers clients a good geographic platform from which to operate, and over 40 dedicated real estate practitioners," the guide stated.

To determine the rankings, Chambers & Partners conducted independent research that included more than 14,000 interviews over a six-month period. Researchers interviewed business people and lawyers throughout the country to assess the attorneys' and firms' legal abilities, professional conduct, client service, commercial astuteness, diligence, commitment, and other qualities most valued by clients.

BOWMAN BROWN, has an extensive regulatory and transactional practice representing domestic, interstate and international banks, broker/dealers and insurance companies, and drafting laws and regulations addressing the development of international banking and insurance in Florida. Chambers said Mr. Brown “truly belongs among the elite banking lawyers across the USA,” citing his “cutting edge” skills and a busy workload of regulatory compliance work, Latin American-flavored financial transactions, and private banking counsel.

KEVIN D. COWAN'S experience ranges from downtown office or anchor tenant retail leases to mega yacht marina/mixed-use hotel/retail developments, commercial ground leases and related financing, and large-scale condominium developments. In addition, he represents developers and institutions. Chambers described Mr. Cowan as a “familiar face on some of the largest development projects in the state.”

LUIS A. DE ARMAS was recognized by Chambers for his experience with cross-border capital markets and mergers-and-acquisition work, both outbound and inbound. The guide described Mr. de Armas as “low-key but precise as Swiss clockwork” and noted that he earned “plaudits from all corners of the market.”

GEORGE I. PLATT is known for his considerable experience in government law and has a reputation as a leading government lawyer and a prominent lobbyist in Broward County. He counsels clients on regulatory law, government relations, land use, environmental law and related corporate issues. Describing Mr. Platt as a “turn-to lawyer for many sophisticated clients,” Chambers said he is “an outstanding and skilled strategist on the complex issues involved in corporate relations with governmental bodies.”

JOHN H. DANNECKER gained plaudits for being “forceful, yet diplomatic in working toward a resolution.” Chambers cited his experience in construction litigation, contract negotiation, and defect and delay litigation, including mold and mildew-related disputes. “You can call him up and he will give you an answer in minutes.”

MICHAEL J. GRINDSTAFF has a broad practice encompassing both transactional and land use work, “although it is in terms of zoning advice where clients see him shine brightest.” His real estate and land use practice focuses on the acquisition, zoning, permitting, development and sale of retail shopping centers, mixed-use developments, residential subdivisions, multi-family apartment complexes, and office buildings.

ROD JONES concentrates on bank regulatory matters, including de novo bank formations, conversions, mergers and acquisitions, and bank holding company formations, with a particular emphasis on community bank issues. Before joining Shutts & Bowen, he served as Director of the Division of Banking of the Florida Department of Banking and Finance (1984 to 1989), where he was responsible for licensing and supervising more than 500 state-chartered financial institutions and reviewing applications to organize more than 100 new banks. Chambers said Mr. Jones is “well-plugged into the local banking scene” and continues to “tick all the right boxes” with in-house counsel in banks as well as with peers.

BRENT C. BELL “impresses sources for always seeing both sides to complex construction issues,” the guide stated. “Skillful at handling the litigious aspects of construction matters, he is equally adept at aiding construction clients through all stages of the construction process, including drafting, administration, litigation avoidance and negotiation.” Mr. Bell, an up-and-comer, handles cases involving construction defects, lien and bond law, defective products and product liability claims. A frequent lecturer, he speaks on bond and lien laws, construction defects, project delivery systems, the anatomy of construction lawsuits, the fundamentals of construction law, and collections.