HUSCH BLACKWELL

Steven P. Katkov

PARTNER

DALLAS, TX
PHONE: 214.999.6118
MINNEAPOLIS, MN*
PHONE: 612.852.2700
EMAIL: STEVE.KATKOV@HUSCHBLACKWELL.COM

OVERVIEW

A real estate attorney with a corporate background, Steve oversees real property projects with a businessperson's eye.

Steve helps clients navigate commercial real estate projects with a direct, business-minded approach. Handling transactions that include purchases, sales, leases, sale-leasebacks, and portfolio deals valued into the hundreds of millions, Steve works with developers, real estate companies, and major corporations across the country. Many of these projects involve multifamily housing, hotels, retail, and restaurants, as well as complex financing and commercial lending arrangements. Steve's practice reaches nationwide, often overseeing entire property portfolios for companies with a broad geographic footprint.

With a background that blends corporate and real estate experience, Steve brings a unique perspective to every project. Earlier in his career, he handled a range of corporate transactions and held management roles in Fortune 300 companies, giving him a solid understanding of capital markets, equity, and asset-based lending. His corporate experiences shape his approach to real estate: Steve knows that companies need certainty, speed to market, and cost control, and he sees the law as a customer service business where client needs come first.

Building and development have always been at the center of Steve's work, starting with a landscaping business he launched in seventh grade and continuing through years of hands-on experience in construction and redevelopment. A traditional "dirt lawyer" who simply loves closing real estate deals, he thrives on helping clients bring new projects to life or reimagine existing properties.

Industry

Real Estate, Development, & Construction

Services

Banking & Finance
Cannabis
Corporate Real Estate
Real Estate Investment

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Steve is known as a focused, results-oriented attorney. Clients have described him as someone who "thinks and acts like a lawyer but talks like a normal person." He excels at breaking down complex legal concepts and making them clear, a skill honed by years of presenting to industry groups and teaching real estate courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Steve's straightforward communication and practical advice help clients make informed decisions at every stage of a real estate deal.

Experience

- Represented the owners of a major manufacturing company in the development of an 85-room luxury boutique hotel designed to serve the company's customers and prospective clients visiting its manufacturing facility. Negotiated and secured a hotel property management agreement with Peachtree Hospitality Management and obtained acceptance by Marriott International to brand the property under its prestigious Tribute Portfolio flag.
- Represented the owner/operator of multifamily apartment communities in a coordinated series of transactions totaling $42,475,000 involving the acquisition and disposition of six apartment projects across tertiary markets in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin. The engagement also encompassed the negotiation and closing of $16,905,000 in new loan financing and the structuring of multiple Section 1031 like-kind exchanges.
- Represented a leading international manufacturer in a build-to-suit transaction with Ryan Companies that serves as the lynchpin new construction industrial building for redevelopment of the former Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant, whose 427-acre redevelopment is valued at $1 billion.
- Represented an AS9100c-certified contract manufacturer and precision machining company for Tier-1 commercial and military aircraft parts in the sale of the company.
- Represented developer Quadriga Ventures in a joint venture with Enclave Cos. to begin construction on a five-story, mixed-use luxury development in Minneapolis.

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Experience

- Represented States Manufacturing Company, a national leader in the design, engineering, and manufacture of custom electrical and metal products, in connection with its long-term leasing of 503,000 square feet for a new manufacturing facility at The Cubes at French Lake, industrial developer CRG's first super-bulk inventory distribution facility in Minnesota and the state's largest speculative industrial project ever developed.
- Represented the borrower in connection with a Fannie Mae DUS Mortgage Loan to be secured by a 100-unit multifamily property in Minneapolis.
- Represented Lutze Inc., a leading provider of harsh environment cable and cable assembly solutions for high-technology applications in the industrial market, in its sale to Amphenol Corporation, one of the world's largest designers, manufacturers, and marketers of electrical, electronic, and fiber optic connectors and interconnect systems, antennas, sensors and sensor-based products, and coaxial and high-speed specialty cable.
- Represented a provider of saltwater disposal well and treatment facility services in negotiating contracts with oil producers, including the establishment of dedicated pipelines, for fracking operations in the Bakken.
- Represented Radial, Inc., a leading 3PL provider for enterprise brands, in negotiations to extend the term of lease for its Brownsburg, Ind. operations.
- Represented a cannabis industry client in entering into a purchase agreement, followed by a sale/leaseback transaction for purposes of opening a dispensary, with a real estate investment firm specializing in providing growth capital for cannabis retail operators.
- Represented Avison Young, a global real estate advisor, in its long-term sublease agreement of premises in New York City to Granite Telecommunications, Inc., a leading provider of voice, data, and other related communications products and services to multi-location businesses and governmental agencies throughout the United States and Canada. The engagement included negotiation of sublease consent from the property owner, RXR Realty.

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Experience

- Represented the developer in the acquisition of three acres of undeveloped property within the City of St. Paul that had been held by the Minnesota Department of Transportation since the early 1950s.
- Obtained city council land use approval for the parcel's redevelopment into 140 market-rate apartment units. The project required parcel assembly by purchasing adjoining property and negotiation of transit-oriented land use requirements.
- Represented a financial sponsor in its platform acquisition of a meal delivery company providing meals to Medicare waiver recipients and other eligible populations.
- Represented Complete Packaging LLC, a designer and fabricator of highly engineered multi-substrate protective packaging solutions, as the seller in a transaction that involved the negotiation of a sale/leaseback of the underlying real property through a subsidiary. The buyer and ultimate tenant under the sale/leaseback lease was Specialized Packaging Group, a vertically integrated provider of protective packaging products.
- Represented one of the nation's leading real estate brokerages in a long-term office lease for its Houston headquarters.
- Represented a senior living real estate management firm in its negotiation of a senior credit facility which was used to acquire an Illinois-based nursing home.
- Represented Gravie, Inc. as tenant's counsel in lease negotiations for its new 27,000 sq. ft. headquarters facility at The Studio in Minneapolis.
- Represented Veolia North America, LLC as tenant's counsel in lease negotiations for a 29,000 sq. ft. office facility at the ASQ Building in Milwaukee.
- Represented Agiliti Health, Inc., a nationwide provider of healthcare technology management and service solutions, in its acquisition of Mobile Instrument Service and Repair, Inc., a provider of surgical equipment repair to hospitals.

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Experience

- Represented the purchaser of a commercial real estate loan and negotiated the resolution of 13 mechanics' liens and a second mortgage with subsequent foreclosure of the senior mortgage to obtain clear title for purchaser, as part of a distressed redevelopment strategy, resulting in land use entitlements to construct a 170-unit multifamily property on an abandoned site.
- Represented Industrious Realty in negotiations with an electric bike and scooter rental company for a scooter charging, storage, and maintenance facility located in Washington, DC.
- Represented the tenant in the negotiation of a Minneapolis/St. Paul-area office lease in a major downtown high-rise involving a California landlord.
- Represented the tenant in the negotiation of a Minneapolis/St. Paul-area office lease in a major suburban high-rise involving a New York landlord.
- Represented the tenant in the negotiation of a Minneapolis/St. Paul-area office/warehouse lease in a major suburban industrial complex involving a California landlord.
- Represented the tenant in the negotiation of a Des Moines-area office lease in a new development involving a major Des Moines real estate firm.
- Represented the landlord in the negotiation of a long-term Minneapolis/St. Paul-area office lease for the corporate headquarters of a large, privately held national business.
- Won a motion to dismiss all claims brought by the purchaser of certain trademarks against secured creditor with a blanket security interest. The complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Minnesota, sought a declaration that the secured creditor had no interest in various trademark applications and registrations, and an injunction barring the creditor from interfering with the purchaser's rights in the trademarks. In granting the motion, the court accepted defense's argument that the plaintiff had not stated any basis for challenging the secured creditor's interest in the trademarks under Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code, failed to allege an actual case or controversy and, in effect, sought an improper advisory opinion.

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Experience

- Represented a majority partner in a multi-state Section 1031 tax-deferred exchange of real property.
- The "build-to-suit" reverse 1031 exchange required Fannie Mae approval for a "drop-and-swap" of the relinquished property and the exchange into a multi-family portfolio of partially completed buildings, and buildings to be constructed, as the replacement property.
- Represented a wireless communications company in connection with post-IPO development site acquisition efforts across five states. This representation included overseeing acquisition and land use approvals for more than 350 cellular sites and serving on a regional management team that actively participated in the integration of business practices and operations to assist in the launching of the client's VoiceStream brand and "Get More" marketing strategy. Subsequently represented the client in connection with its acquisition by T-Mobile USA, Inc., which included being involved in the acquisition and land use approval process of roughly 500 cellular sites.
- Obtained a $5 million settlement on behalf of limited partners in litigation filed in state court in Minnesota and Texas which centered on enforcing the clients' put options against the developer of the first hotel-suite concept in the nation.
- Served on the legal team representing aggrieved condominium owners in the landmark title insurance decision involving unmarketable title of condominium units at Telemark Ski Resort, which centered on whether a "unit" was an "investment contract" under Section 5 of the Securities Act or a leasehold interest. *Allison v. Ticor Title Ins. Co.*, 979 F.2d 1187 (7th Cir. 1993).
- Represented the buyers in a series of multi-family projects in rural Wisconsin over the course of two months, with a combined value of $60 million. This representation included drafting and negotiating loan documents on behalf of the borrower, in addition to all transactional instruments.

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Experience

- Represented a national investment management company that was the sponsor member in a joint venture transaction in which 26 industrial properties were acquired in multiple states across the United States. This representation included negotiating a purchase and sale agreement for 25 of the properties (and a separate agreement for the remaining property); conducting environmental, land use, title, and survey review; preparing opinion letters required by the lender for eight of the states in which properties were acquired; and preparing for and handling the closing of each acquisition.
- Represented a U.S. company that is the leading manufacturer of test equipment for microchips in drafting and negotiating a new sales agent agreement for its foreign sales agents in East Asia.
- Represented an international firm in connection with negotiating new, long-term office leases in Chicago, Houston, and Washington, DC, involving three different market directors and three different landlords.
- Represented the purchasers in several sale-leaseback transactions involving KKR & Co., Inc. and Fleet Farm, totaling nearly $73 million.
- Represented a multi-state owner of cannabis licenses and assets in connection with an agreement to acquire, by merger, a California corporation holding a license for a cannabis dispensary in Oakland.
- Represented a Connecticut-based investment and advisory firm in its investment in a joint venture involving an opportunity zone fund transaction.
- Represented the seller of an office building and parking ramp purchased by the University of Minnesota in a deal including a 9-story office building as well as a 350-stall and half-acre surface parking lot.

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Experience

- Represented the U.S. subsidiary of global investment management company in its $110.25 million acquisition of, and $71.7 million financing in connection with, a 207,000 sq. ft., four-story, new construction, single-tenant office building located within the Lincoln Yards Development in Chicago. This representation included negotiation of acquisition and financing documents, coordination of sharia-compliant documents with con-counsel, conducting title and survey review, drafting organizational documents, and preparing for and handling the closing of both the acquisition and the loan.
- Represented Radial, Inc., a Bpost company, in its 760,000 sq. ft. industrial lease for an e-commerce fulfillment center located in metropolitan Atlanta. The representation included negotiation of more than $9 million in tenant improvements with issuance of two series of economic development revenue bonds, with a maximum principal amount of $81 million, and documenting discretionary tax incentives with an estimated value in excess of $3 million.
- Represented a single client as seller or purchaser of 17 multifamily projects in 2020. These transactions totaled $128.5 million in the rural/small town markets in which the client operates.
- Represented Binarytree.com Inc., a provider of cloud-based software migration services, in its acquisition by Quest Software Inc., a global systems management, data protection, and security software provider.
- Represented Kingland Systems, a leading provider of enterprise data software, in all aspects of a strategic partnership and minority investment with Boston-based private equity firm ABRY Partners.

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Experience

- Won summary judgment on behalf of a landlord in litigation against a restaurant tenant (and its guarantor) who stopped paying rent and abandoned the premises due to business decline following COVID-19 and government-mandated closures. In granting summary judgment, the court rejected the tenant's common law defenses of impracticability, frustration of purpose, and illegality as against public policy. Because summary judgment was granted against both the tenant and the guarantor, the client was able to apply for an award of all attorneys' fees.
- Represented Agiliti Health, Inc., a provider of medical equipment management services to the U.S. healthcare industry, in its acquisition of substantially all of the assets of Surgical Systems, Inc., an Arizona-based surgical laser equipment and services company.
- Represented Blue Lake Capital in its $80 million, acquisition of a 360-unit multifamily complex in Duluth, Georgia, on a short timeline. The representation involved reviewing and negotiating the loan documents in just over two weeks, providing the non-consolidation opinion required by the lender, and negotiating a full management agreement.
- Represented Agiliti Health, Inc., an essential service provider to the U.S. healthcare industry, in its $475 million acquisition of Northfield Medical, Inc., a nationwide repair service provider for medical devices.
- Represented Acreage Holdings, Inc., and its subsidiary High Street Capital Partners, LLC, in the $60 million sale of Acreage Florida, Inc. and related real estate to Red White and Bloom Brands, Inc., a multi-state cannabis operator. Acreage Florida is licensed to operate medical marijuana dispensaries, a processing facility, and a cultivation facility in the state of Florida.
- Represented Acreage Holdings, Inc. in a senior secured credit facility through which the U.S. cannabis firm gained $100 million in available credit.
- Represented Agiliti Health, Inc., a medical equipment management and services company, in its $230 million acquisition of Sizewise Rentals, LLC, a manufacturer and distributor of specialty patient handling equipment.

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Experience

- Represented a New York-based private equity firm in its add-on acquisition of several funeral home and cemetery businesses.
- Represented Planet 13 Holdings Inc. (OTC: PLNH) in its $91 million (CAD) acquisition of Next Green Wave Holdings Inc.
- Represented a principal of a developer, owner, and manager of affordable housing across the country in the redemption of his minority interest in the company and affiliated entities.
- Represented MCP Capital, LLC in its $66 million acquisition of a portfolio of properties in Downtown Des Moines consisting of 311 new luxury apartment units and a 317-stall parking garage. The properties include Ballyard Lofts located in the Court Avenue Entertainment District, City Square Lofts and Parking Garage located in within Historic East Village, and Eagle View Lofts and Townhomes located in the Market District. A portion of these properties include affordable housing units and required negotiation with the Iowa Economic Development Authority.
- Represented a healthcare real estate investment and management company in its acquisition of 10 skilled nursing facilities in California and a simultaneous master lease of the facilities to a long-term care advisory and services organization.
- Represented the owner/operator of senior care nursing home facilities in a complex transaction through which 20 facilities in Texas were refinanced in a deal consisting of a term loan, a delayed draw, and revolver.
- Represented a national provider of portable storage units in industrial lease negotiations for a new 70,000 sq. ft. facility in Austin, Texas.
- Represented the landlord in the long-term leasing and build-out of a nearly 160,000 sq. ft. state of the art manufacturing facility in Detroit for a leading international automobile parts supplier.

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Experience

- Represented the General Electric Pension Trust and its investment advisor, State Street Global Advisors, in negotiating and closing joint venture, development, and financing transactions with respect to the development of an approximately $58 million multi-family project to be constructed in Maple Grove, Minn. The representation included negotiating a developer's agreement and a site improvement agreement with the city and negotiating a unique agreement with a non-borrower entity that provided a partial source of the funds for certain off-site infrastructure.
- Represented a joint venture in its $23.5 million purchase of the Loews Hotel in downtown Minneapolis, featuring 251 rooms, more than 12,500 sq. ft. of flexible meeting space, a full-service restaurant, and a lobby bar.

Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in America®*
    - Real Estate Law, 2022-2027
- Minnesota North Star Lawyer, 2026
- *Minnesota Monthly*
    - Top Lawyers in Minnesota, 2023-2025

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Education

- J.D., University of Minnesota Law School
  - *Minnesota Journal of Law & Inequality*, Managing Editor
  - Research Assistant to Professor Carol Chomsky
  - Distinguished academic scholarship award
- M.S., Arizona State University
  - *summa cum laude*
  - Outstanding Graduate Achievement Award, College of Public Programs
  - Graduate Research Assistant to Professor Pat Lauderdale
  - Phi Kappa Phi
- B.A., Macalester College
  - *magna cum laude*
  - Research Assistant to Professor Jeff Nash
  - WMCN Radio, General Manager
  - Alpha Kappa Delta

Admissions

- Minnesota
- Wisconsin
- Texas
- U.S. District Court, District of Minnesota
- U.S. District Court, Eastern District of Wisconsin
- U.S. District Court, Western District of Wisconsin
- U.S. Court of Appeals, Eighth Circuit

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Community Leadership

Steve maintains an active pro bono practice. He most often represents the Minneapolis chapters of the addiction recovery group Recovery Café, as well as Pinky Swear Foundation and Spare Key, both of which are organizations dedicated to helping the families of children with serious illnesses.

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*By appointment only.

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