

CHRISTOPHER S.W. BLAKE

PARTNER



Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP

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PRIMARY PRACTICES

Mergers & Acquisitions

Business Law

Corporate Securities

International Business

Real Estate

Christopher S.W. Blake focuses his practice on mergers and acquisitions, divestitures, recapitalizations, and financings for a wide range of industries, including food and beverage, gaming, and real estate. As co-chair of Hahn Loeser's International Practice Group and Corporate Transactions Group, Chris' practice spans domestic and international transactional matters. Chris has worked with clients in countries in Eastern Europe, Africa, Central and South America, and Southeast Asia.

Chris regularly uses his in-depth understanding of the complexities of joint ventures, distributorships and sales agreements to counsel public and private companies through determining the best approach to enter into a new market. Chris has extensive experience identifying cross-border issues and creating detailed plans for his clients.

Additionally, Chris represents foreign and domestic public and private companies as buyers and sellers of divisions, "going concern" businesses, equity stakes and discrete assets, and the financing of such purchases and sales.

On the financing side, Chris focuses on negotiating commercial lending, including senior, subordinated and mezzanine debt arrangements. Chris has represented governmental, institutional, and private lenders and borrowers in sophisticated transactions involving several traditional and nontraditional collateral.

Chris' gaming law practice focuses on regulatory compliance, licensing, ownership structures and operations of gaming establishments in seven states. He has assisted with the diligence, acquisition and financing of more than 25 gaming operations, and has helped the acquiring parties become licensed by the applicable gaming authorities in each instance. He has also interacted with charitable and for-profit gaming regulators to coordinate on-going licensing reviews and completion of suitability investigations of key owners or employees of gaming operations.

Chris also has an extensive real estate law practice. With a wealth of experience completing surveys, environmental audits and other due diligence, Chris is skilled in facilitating the negotiation of purchases, sales and leases of commercial and residential real estate and mortgages, and other liens on such properties.

Outside of the office, Chris is likely to be found traveling internationally or taste testing exotic fare (often at his spouse's urging), including a recent dinner featuring the Asian Forest Scorpion, generously doused with a spicy ponzu sauce. Chris emerged unscathed from the experience and claimed the scorpion was better than a Cambodian beetle. We will take his word on these culinary experiences.

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

- Representation of growing manufacturer of steel drums in all corporate matters, including corporate governance issues and negotiations of customer contracts and other third-party agreements; Completion of a year-long negotiation of the buyout of a 25% shareholder of this closely held company.

- Represented Chemical Bank in its capacity as lender and agent related to the issuance by a port authority of \$8 million in taxable lease bonds and \$3.6 million in taxable development revenue bonds, the proceeds of which funded a significant Northeast Ohio lakefront development project.
- Represented sports technology company in a \$2 million bridge financing raise, contemporaneous with a sophisticated corporate reorganization to allow the client to better position itself for subsequent rounds of capital raises; secured all lender and investor consents and negotiated new governing documents for company and its subsidiary.
- Represented lead lender and agent in the negotiation of its participation in an \$85 million syndicated credit facility for large banking client.
- Negotiation of purchase of substantially all assets and business of The Ridgefield's Brand Corporation by Ohio Pure Foods, Inc., a subsidiary of Country Pure Foods, in a four-month period.
- Lead counsel to Country Pure Foods in the sale of 100% of its equity to Silver Springs Citrus, Inc., a joint venture of Sapporo and Toyota Tsusho; completed tuck-in acquisition of portion juice and juice concentrate business of competitor Fruitbud Juice, LLC during same timeframe.
- Spinoff of a \$20 million real-estate leasing and development business and completion of eight related third-party sales of associated assets and real property of an ongoing family business valued at more than \$40 million.
- Divestiture through various third-party sales of multimillion-dollar sets of operating assets of an auto supplier in "wind-down" mode.
- Completion of diligence and negotiation of a 25-property real-estate portion of a complex refinancing of the publicly traded and private debt of a privately held client, totaling more than \$300 million.
- Restructuring of one of the top independent juice processors in the United States, including the financing of the acquisition of two significant competitors.
- Buyout of a shareholder of a closely held manufacturer of steel drums valued at more than \$25 million.
- Management of the economic development arms of various governmental entities in more than 12 research and development-related loan transactions with start-up companies.

BAR ADMISSIONS

- State of Ohio, 1999

EDUCATION

- Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, J.D., *summa cum laude*, 1999
- University of Missouri-Columbia, M.A., Spanish, 1994
- University of Missouri-Columbia, B.A., Spanish and B.J., Journalism, 1992

AWARDS & HONORS

- ChambersUSA, Corporate/Mergers & Acquisitions, 2025
- The Best Lawyers in America®, Corporate Law, 2021-25; Real Estate Law, 2021-25, Mergers and Acquisitions Law, 2025
- Notable Nonprofit Board Leaders, Crain's Cleveland Business, 2023
- Alliance Champion, Global Winner, Alliot Global Alliance
- Leadership Cleveland Class of 2018

- Rising Star, Ohio Super Lawyers®, 2010
- Cleveland Bridge Builders Class of 2004

PUBLICATIONS & SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Lessons Learned from COVID-19
- Developing and Retaining the Next Generation of Firm Leaders
- Strategies to Ensure a Gratifying Business Sale (Crain's Cleveland Business)
- Artificial Intelligence and Data Privacy Best Practices (Alliott Global Alliance)
- Clause and Effect: Attorney Well-Being in the World of Contracts (International Bar Association)
- Practitioner Pity Party – U.S. Corporate Transparency Act Huddle, Part 2 (Alliott Global Alliance)

MEMBERSHIPS & AFFILIATIONS

- International Bar Association, Member, 2008-present; Legal Practice Division Council Member, 2023 – present, Commerce and Distribution Committee, Co-Chair, January 2020 – 2021, Senior Vice Chair, 2018 – 2020, Vice Chair 2016-2020, Membership Chair, 2014-2016; Corporate & M&A Committee Member
- Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, Member, Business, Banking & Corporate Counsel Section
- Alliott Global Alliance, Member, North American Advisory Committee and Worldwide Advisory Committee, 2016 – present, Board Member, 2024 – present, North America Region Chair, 2024 – present
- Court of Nisi Prius, Member

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Cleveland International Film Festival, Board of Directors, President 2019-present, President-Elect, June 2018-19; Strategic Planning, Vice President, 2005-present; Strategic Planning Committee, Co-Chair 2008-present; Finance Committee, Member, 2005-present; Selections Committee, Member, 2005-present
- Cleveland Council on World Affairs, Board of Directors, 2009-present; Vice Chair of Governance, 2016-2020, Vice Chair of Development, 2013-16
- Adoption Network of Cleveland, Member; Board of Trustees, 2006-08; Special Events Committee, Co-Chair, 2008; Public Development Committee, Co-Chair, 2008
- Cleveland Bridge Builders, Member; Flagship Program, Class of 2004; Flagship Program Selection Committee 2010-present
- University of Missouri Alumni Association, Member; Cleveland Area Contact

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

- Partner, Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP, 2008-present; Associate, 1999-2008
- Spanish Teacher, St. Pius X High School, 1994-96
- Adjunct Faculty Member, Rockhurst College, 1995-96
- Adjunct Faculty Member, Johnson County Community College, 1995
- Assistant City Editor and Editorial Page Editor, Columbia Missourian, 1992