



CHRISTOPHER S.W. BLAKE

PARTNER



Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP
200 Public Square, Suite 2800
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

p 216.274.2552 **f** 216.241.2554
e cswblake@hahnlaw.com

hahnlaw.com

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 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.



CHRISTOPHER S.W. BLAKE

PARTNER

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.

Publications & Speaking Engagements

- Quoted, "The Age of Supply Chain Disruption," *Global Insight*, International Bar Association, April 2022.
- Panelist, "Lessons Learned from COVID-19," International Bar Association Showcase, October 2021.
- Moderator, "The Future of International Sales: Smart Contracts, Blockchain and Cryptocurrencies," International Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference, Rome, Italy, October 2018.
- Moderator, "International Sales Contracts: Boot Camp in the Outback," IBA Annual Conference, Sydney, Australia, October, 2017.
- Contributor to course materials for "Seminar on International Sales for Cuban Lawyers," IBA/National Organization of Collective Firms seminar, Havana, Cuba, February 2016 and May 2017.
- Moderator and Panelist, "Hot topics in the International Sales, Franchising and Product Law Section," IBA Annual Conference, Vienna, Austria, October 2015.
- Panelist, "Targeting the Asian Market: Setting Up or Taking Over a Sales and Distribution Network in Asia," IBA Annual Conference, Tokyo, Japan, October 2014.
- Moderator, "Hot Topics in the International Sales, Franchising and Product Law Section," IBA Annual Conference, Tokyo, Japan, October 2014.
- Panelist, "Hot Topics in International Sales, Franchising and Product Law & Advertising," IBA Annual Conference, Dublin, Ireland, October 2012.
- Panelist, "Getting the Most for Your Money in an International Acquisition," IBA Annual Conference, Dubai, UAE, November 2011.

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.

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.



CHRISTOPHER S.W. BLAKE

PARTNER

Memberships & Affiliations

- International Bar Association, Co-Chair (January 2020 – president), Senior Vice Chair (2018 – 2020) Vice Chair (2016-2020), Membership Chair (2014-2016); Member, Corporate & M&A Committee.
- Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association, Member, Business, Banking & Corporate Counsel Section.
- Alliot Global Alliance, Member, North American Advisory Committee and Worldwide Advisory Committee, 2016 - current.
- Court of Nisi Prius, Member.

Awards & Distinctions

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, Corporate Law 2021-22; Real Estate Law, 2021-22.
- Leadership Cleveland Class of 2018.
- Rising Star, *Ohio Super Lawyers*®, 2010.
- Cleveland Bridge Builders Class of 2004.

Languages

- Spanish (Fluent).

Community Involvement

- Cleveland International Film Festival, Board of Directors, President, June 2019-present; President-Elect, June 2018-June 2019; 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-current.
- University of Missouri Alumni Association, Member; Cleveland Area Contact.