

James D. Kelly | Partner
Real Estate

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CO-CHAIR, WASHINGTON, D.C., OFFICE

James D. Kelly has more than 20 years of experience as a business attorney, and focuses his practice on structuring and negotiating complex real estate, finance, and general corporate transactions.

He has achieved a wide array of corporate and transactional objectives for his clients, providing technical legal advice as well as hands-on, practical strategy development and execution. By carefully assembling and managing the right team for each particular engagement, Jim produces the results his clients need to advance their business goals strategically and efficiently.

Prior to joining Blank Rome, Jim served as the chairman of an Am Law 200 firm where he provided leadership and strategic direction of the firm's legal practice and business objectives, and oversaw all aspects of the firm's operations.

Finance

Jim began his career in commercial and corporate lending and continues to represent borrowers and senior, mezzanine, and junior lenders in secured and unsecured credit facilities, including asset-based, cash flow, working capital, bridge, acquisition, construction, permanent, and mezzanine loan transactions. He has significant borrower-side experience in loan transactions sold into the CMBS market and in dealing with requests for waivers, loan modifications, and other servicer and special servicer matters.

Jim has recognized experience in community development lending and investment

matters through the use of conventional financing methods and, more recently, New Markets Tax Credits, and he has developed multiple national loan programs and was a principal contributor to the creation of a government-sponsored loan guarantee program that enhances private sector funding in health care construction and service delivery.

Jim provides strategic advice on deal structuring and implementation, and has managed large multijurisdiction transactions.

Real Estate

Jim regularly counsels clients in sophisticated commercial real estate matters. His practice is national in scope and encompasses most asset classes with a focus on NNN office, manufacturing, and industrial. He represents a publicly traded real estate investment trust, private equity portfolio companies, investment funds, joint ventures, energy concerns, nonprofits, labor unions, as well as government and quasi-government authorities, in all aspects of real estate transactions, including acquisition, disposition, financing, construction, development, leasing, and portfolio management.

Workouts and Restructurings

Jim focuses his practice on representing lenders, borrowers, and purchasers in debt restructurings and workouts of senior and mezzanine loans and equity investments, as well as the acquisition and disposition of distressed loans and assets of all types. He also represents commercial real property owners and tenants in lease renegotiations and restructurings and advises all types of market participants in the enforcement of creditor/debtor rights and remedies.

General Corporate Matters

Jim advises corporate and individual clients on a variety of corporate matters, including business strategy, entity formation, employment arrangements, contracts, and commercial matters generally.

Admissions

- District of Columbia
- New York

Memberships

- American Bar Association
- District of Columbia Bar Association

Education

- Assumption University, BA
- Fordham University School of Law, JD

Recognitions

- 2023–2025, Real Estate Law, Washington, D.C., listed in *Best Lawyers in America*©
- 2017–2022, listed in Capital Pro Bono Honor Roll

Professional Activities

Jim is a member of the American Bar Association's Business Law and Real Property, Probate and Trust Law Sections, and the District of Columbia Bar Association's Real Property Section. He received an Outstanding Achievement Award from the District of Columbia Bar Association in June 2009 for his work in connection with the relocation of the Bar's headquarters.

Jim also serves as co-chair of Blank Rome's Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

From 2005 to 2011, Jim served as a member of the Advisory Committee for the Community Economic Development Project of the District of Columbia Bar's Pro Bono Program. He is a regular faculty presenter to pro bono attorneys serving the needs of small businesses in the District of Columbia and helped develop the pro bono attorney training manual for small business clinics. In recognition of his commitment to pro bono service, he was named to the 2017 and 2018 Capital Pro Bono Honor Rolls.