

Michael W. Ward

Cleveland
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Overview

Michael is a transactional lawyer and deal maker. His practice is focused on commercial real estate, financing and corporate matters, including, without limitation, real estate joint venture work, sale/leasebacks, traditional and mezzanine financing, fund formation matters, acquisitions, dispositions, leasing, and real estate development in various asset classes (i.e., Office, Retail, Multi-Family and Industrial).

Michael acts as general outside counsel to a number of clients, including, real estate owners and developers.

Michael advises and counsels clients on a wide variety of legal issues in commercial real estate transactions and corporate matters, including mergers and acquisitions, real estate acquisitions, dispositions, leasing, construction, and financing. Michael also frequently handles real estate transactions in healthcare, including for medical office, dental offices, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities and assisted living facilities. His unique approach to client matters emanates from Michael's adherence to practical solutions from a business perspective. What's best for the client is at the heart of what's best for the deal.

Michael possesses a rare combination of a wide breadth of transactional expertise and a passion for knowing his clients deeply and understanding their unique business needs. Michael's approach emanates from his adherence to practical legal solutions and keeping a business perspective to the matters at hand. Michael draws upon his experience as an investor/business owner and from his various roles working as in-house counsel at both private and publicly traded companies, working at AmLaw 100 and 200 firms, and negotiating and documenting transactions for some of the world's largest companies, and handling a wide variety of alternative financing matters.

When Michael isn't spending time helping clients solve their business issues, you will find him spending time with his wife, Erica, and his two sons, Aiden and Asher. Michael enjoys live music, skiing, playing golf, engaging in cross-fit training, and watching football and basketball. Michael is also actively involved with the Jewish Federation of Cleveland and sits a number of boards and committees associated therewith.

**Matter completed prior to joining Benesch.*

Representative Matters

- Represented Cotton Patch Finance, Inc. in its sale to Local Favorite Acquisitions, Inc.
- Represented a real estate investor in the sale of a multifamily residential property.
- Represented Blackstone in connection with its acquisition of a portfolio of 228 mortgage loans from Atlantic Union Bank for approximately $2 billion.
- Representation of National NYSE REIT in connection with the programmatic disposition of over $400MM in shopping center assets and various joint venture divestitures.
- Representation of National Multi-Family Developer in connection with the finance of a $100MM plus student housing development project in PA.
- Representation of Real Estate Developer in connection with the acquisition of a vacant hotel for $14MM and associated acquisition and construction loan for the development of a $100MM plus redevelopment project.
- Representation of Publicly Traded National Banking Association in connection with over $500MM in origination loans across retail, multi-family and industrial sectors, which included multiple construction loans.
- Representation of Real Estate Fund in the CMBS Loan Assumption for a portfolio of TX retail properties.

Credentials

EDUCATION

- Chicago-Kent College of Law, 2012, J.D., *magna cum laude*, Certificate in Business Law
  - Order of the Coif
- Ohio University, 2009, B.A. in Business Administration and Marketing, *cum laude*

BAR & COURT ADMISSIONS

- Ohio
- Illinois

Memberships

- Member, American Bar Association
- Member, Illinois State Bar Association
- Member, Chicago Bar Association
- Urban Land Institute
- Member, International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)
- Jewish Federation of Cleveland
  - Campaigner
  - YLD BGS – Sub-committee Member
  - Ben Gurion Society Member
- 2022 Mandel Leadership Symposium Graduate
- Past: Board Member and the Secretary, Chicago Mortgage Attorneys Association
- Past: B'nai B'rith Sports Lodge - Chicago Chapter
- Past: ProVisors – Chicago 10 Chapter – Board Member

Awards & Recognition

- Listed, *The Best Lawyers in America®,* Real Estate Law (2025-2027); Corporate Law (2027)
- Listed, *The Best Lawyers in America®*: Ones to Watch, Real Estate Law, 2024
- Listed, Illinois Super Lawyers – Rising Stars, 2021-2025

News & Insights

- 126 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2027 Best Lawyers® Rankings
  August 20, 2026 | Press Releases
- Benesch Represents Altamont Capital Partners in Sale of Cotton Patch Café
  July 2, 2026 | Press Releases

- 16 Benesch Attorneys Selected to 2026 Illinois Super Lawyers and Rising Stars Lists
  January 27, 2026 | Press Releases
- 129 Benesch Attorneys Recognized in 2026 Best Lawyers® Rankings
  August 21, 2025 | Press Releases
- 17 Benesch Attorneys Selected to 2025 Illinois Super Lawyers and Rising Stars Lists
  January 23, 2025 | Press Releases
- 16 Benesch Attorneys Selected to 2024 Illinois Super Lawyers and Rising Stars Lists
  January 25, 2024 | Press Releases
- Fast-Growing Benesch Adds Real Estate Associate in Chicago
  October 30, 2023 | Press Releases
- Best Lawyers in America® Rankings 2024
  August 17, 2023 | Press Releases
- Benesch's new Cleveland Partners mentioned in Crain’s Cleveland People on the Move
  January 30, 2023 | Media Mentions
- Benesch Names 20 New Partners for 2023
  January 2, 2023 | Press Releases