

Lippes Mathias Begins 2026 With Strategic Addition of Three Attorneys in West Palm Beach



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Lippes Mathias LLP is starting 2026 by strengthening its West Palm Beach office through the addition of [Michael R. Bakst](#) and [Rilyn A. Carnahan](#) as partners, and [Spencer R. Sater](#) as an associate. This move also includes the addition of two legal assistants and two paralegals to the firm's Florida operations.

While the West Palm Beach office provides full-service legal counsel, it is particularly well-equipped in the areas of [real estate law](#), [employment law](#), [tax controversy](#), [corporate law](#), and [litigation](#). The arrival of Bakst and Carnahan, who previously practiced with Greenspoon Marder LLP, represents an infusion of expertise in [financial restructuring & insolvency](#), while Sater, who formerly practiced at Akerman LLP (an AM100 law firm), brings experience in [business & commercial litigation](#).

Lippes Mathias has been operating in West Palm Beach since November 2024, following its [merger with Ward Damon, PL.](#), which at the time brought 13 attorneys and 16 staff members to Lippes Mathias. These recent additions bring the firm's West Palm Beach attorney count to 19.

"Our growth in West Palm Beach and across the state of Florida remains a primary focus as we respond to the

increasing needs of our clients in these markets,” [Kevin J. Cross](#), Lippes Mathias’ managing partner and chairman, said. “By adding attorneys with deep roots and sought-after experience in South Florida, we are reinforcing our commitment to being a high-level resource in the regions where our clients require the most sophisticated assistance.”

Michael R. Bakst, a member of the financial reorganization, restructuring & insolvency practice team, represents creditors, bankruptcy trustees, receivers, and litigants in complex bankruptcy matters and commercial litigation. A panel United States Bankruptcy Trustee for the Southern District of Florida, Bakst has more than three decades of experience and has been recognized by The Best Lawyers in America© from 2010 through 2026. He earned his J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law in 1990.

Rilyn A. Carnahan also joins the financial reorganization, restructuring & insolvency practice team, where she represents trustees, creditors, and creditors’ committees in Chapter 7, 11, and 13 bankruptcy matters, as well as reorganizations, restructurings, and receiverships. Carnahan is currently the treasurer of the Bankruptcy Bar Association of the Southern District of Florida and earned her J.D., magna cum laude, from the University of Miami in 2002.

Spencer R. Sater joins the business & commercial litigation practice team, focusing on disputes between entities and individuals involving contract matters, professional liability, and white-collar investigations. Sater, who previously practiced at an Am Law 100 firm, earned his J.D. from the University of Florida Levin College of Law in 2021 and was named to The Best Lawyers in America: Ones to Watch© for 2026.

[Kenneth M. Rehns](#) and [Cathleen D. Ward](#) who were recently named co-office leaders of Lippes Mathias’ West Palm Beach office, expressed their excitement to work alongside all three new attorneys joining the office, as well as their general enthusiasm regarding the sustained growth of the office over the last 18 months, which has included the additions of attorneys [Drew D. Berman](#) (business & commercial litigation), [Robert B. Rowe](#) (tax controversy), and [Samuel Tavakoli](#) (private equity), among a number of professional staff members.

About Lippes Mathias LLP

Lippes Mathias is a full-service law firm with 230 attorneys serving clients regionally, nationally, and internationally. With offices in Buffalo, Clarence, Albany, Long Island, New York, Rochester, Syracuse, and Saratoga Springs, N.Y.; Greater Toronto Area; Chicago, Ill.; Jacksonville, Tampa Bay, and West Palm Beach, Fla.; Cleveland, Ohio; San Antonio, Texas; Oklahoma City, Okla.; and Washington, D.C., the firm represents publicly and privately owned companies, private equity and venture capital firms, independent sponsors, family offices, real estate developers, financial institutions, municipalities, governmental entities, and individuals.

Ranked No. 204 on The National Law Journal’s NLJ 500 list of the largest law firms in the United States by attorney headcount, Lippes Mathias is proud to be recognized year after year by The Best Lawyers in America®, U.S. News – Best Lawyers®, Super Lawyers, and Chambers USA. For more information, visit www.lippes.com.

Related Team



Michael R. Bakst
Partner



Drew D. Berman
Associate



Rilyn A. Carnahan
Partner



Kevin J. Cross
Managing Partner |
Chairman | Executive
Committee



Kenneth M. Rehns
Partner | Office Co-
Leader, West Palm
Beach



Robert B. Rowe
Senior Associate



Spencer R. Sater
Associate



Samuel Tavakoli
Associate



Cathleen D. Ward
Partner | Office Co-
Leader, West Palm
Beach

New York: Albany, Buffalo, Clarence, Long Island, New York City, Rochester, Saratoga Springs, Syracuse // Florida: Jacksonville, Tampa Bay, West Palm Beach
Illinois: Chicago // Ohio: Cleveland // Oklahoma: Oklahoma City // Ontario: Greater Toronto Area // Texas: San Antonio // Washington, D.C.

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