

February 29, 2024

Day Pitney Continues Growth Trajectory of Corporate Department with Addition of Wernick & Co. in South Florida

Day Pitney LLP announced another step in its commitment to strategic growth in South Florida by adding Steven J. Wernick and Joseph A. Ruiz of Wernick & Co. to its Miami office. Wernick and Ruiz are joining Day Pitney's Real Estate, Land Use, and Environmental practices as a Partner and Counsel, respectively, and will be joined by their staff. This news follows other recent lateral hire announcements for the firm as part of its ongoing strategic growth initiatives that have resulted in expansion across the areas of corporate, real estate, trusts and estates, energy, and healthcare in multiple geographies.

"Since Day Pitney launched in South Florida in 2016, we have grown significantly, not only in terms of number of attorneys but in key strategic areas across our corporate, litigation, and private client departments in support of our growth firm-wide," commented Manuel A. Garcia-Linares, Office Managing Partner of the Florida Offices for Day Pitney. "Adding Steve and Joe to our already robust transactional team further positions Day Pitney as a leader in the South Florida real estate market and expands our service offerings in land use and zoning to our clients."

Wernick & Co. was founded in 2019 and built its reputation in the Miami area through years of experience in land use and zoning, working on some of South Florida's most complex and creative redevelopment projects.

Daniel Diaz Leyva, chair of the firm's Florida Real Estate practice, added, "I am thrilled to welcome Steve, Joe, and their team to our firm. Their experience at the forefront of redevelopment in Miami further enhances our already deep bench of real estate, environmental, and land use attorneys across our firm. Their talent and leadership in the urbanization of the South Florida market make them an invaluable addition to the Day Pitney team."

Wernick is a seasoned land use attorney who founded Wernick & Co. in 2019. He has significant experience representing real estate developers, property owners, and other real estate industry clients as an advocate and local land use counsel. He skillfully navigates the intricacies of local government regulations and the development approval process to help clients deliver on great projects and revitalize urban core neighborhoods. Wernick's work in recent years has been most prominent with projects under development in Wynwood, Miami's emerging arts district being transformed into a 24/7 live, work, play neighborhood that has become an epicenter for global art tourism. Known for his technical prowess and artful advocacy, Wernick spearheaded both the Wynwood Neighborhood Revitalization District (NRD-1) and Wynwood Norte Neighborhood Revitalization District (NRD-2), two of the largest rezonings in Miami in the past 20 years. He is a trained urban planner credentialed by the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). Wernick earned his B.A. from Boston University, his MRP from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill, and his J.D. from the University of Florida School of Law. He is admitted to practice law in Florida.

Ruiz focuses his practice on land use and zoning, local government affairs, and navigating clients through the local and state regulatory framework. He has significant experience at the state, county, and municipal levels of government, and he served as the City of Miami Zoning Administrator // Director for the Office of Zoning before moving to private practice. Ruiz earned his B.A. from Florida State University and his J.D. from the Florida International University College of Law. Ruiz is admitted to practice law in Florida.

"We are excited to be joining Day Pitney as the firm continues its significant growth in South Florida," commented Wernick. "This move was about identifying a platform of collaboration to better service our clients' legal needs while continuing to provide personalized attention and deliver high-impact placemaking solutions."

Both Wernick and Ruiz are active members of the local Miami community. Wernick is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Miami School of Architecture, a Board Member for Friends of the Underline, Inc., and Chairman of the City of Miami Working Group for the Builders Association of South Florida. Ruiz is currently the Chairman of the Miami-Dade County Transportation Planning Organization, Citizens' Transportation Advisory Committee, a member of the Business and Government Affairs Committee and the Public Policy Subcommittee at the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce.

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