BURKE, WARREN, MACKAY & SERRITELLA, P.C.

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BWM&S

FIRM PARTNER PROMOTIONS

Erica Alva

Stephen Schuster

Burke, Warren, MacKay & Serritella recently promoted Erica Alva and Stephen Schuster to partner.

Erica, a member of the Firm's Corporate, Real Estate and Healthcare groups, focuses her practice in the areas of complex business transactions, including mergers & acquisitions, equity raises, regulatory counseling, real estate investment transactions, and other commercial matters. She also has experience advising large companies, mid-market business owners and their families, and entrepreneurs on general corporate and organizational matters, internal restructuring, governance, real estate investment, succession planning, and business contracting.

"I admire and respect the people

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WEALTH & SUCCESSION PLANNING

YEAR-END ESTATE, TAX PLANNING

Greg Winters

Few people predicted that Donald Trump would win the presidency and fewer still predicted that the Republican Party would control both houses of Congress along with the White House. While 2016 did not see the enactment of a great deal of tax legislation, 2017 and 2018 could see significant changes to the tax code the likes of which we have not seen

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RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

GREENING THE DESERT

Charitable and commercial strategies converge in serving needy communities

Each spring and fall, the Firm's Religious Practice hosts a client lunch with guest speakers presenting on compelling contemporary subjects, ranging from the Syrian refugee crisis

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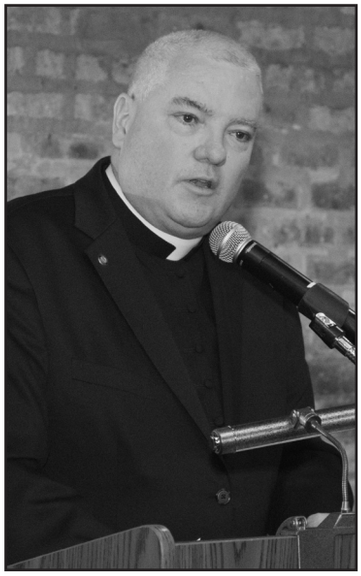

(From left) Msgr. Michael Boland, President and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago, and Leon Walker, managing partner of DL3 Realty, the developer of the Englewood Square shopping center, present at the Firm's "Greening the Desert" luncheon on December 9 at River Roast in Chicago.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NEXT ISSUE:

Illinois Limits Non-Compete Agreements Yet Again, Upcoming amendments to the IL LLC Act, and more.

Judge, Jury and … Shareholder?

When Shareholders Fight, Courts Can Take Control

Judges have the power to control companies and manage disputes such that they can override traditional shareholder agreements and corporate rules. Courts are far more reluctant to intrude upon large widely-held companies, but for the closely held firm, beware the judge bearing good intentions! Closely-held companies must recognize the risks and manage their affairs to ensure predictability and control.

Craig McCrohon

Fred Mendelsohn

Traditionally, companies are governed by statutes and by their own governing documents, such as articles of incorporation, bylaws and shareholder agreements. These laws and documents can establish a clear route for owners managing companies and anticipating procedures, should ownership disputes arise.

The problem is that in many states, including Illinois, judges ruling on ownership disputes may override traditional laws and documents. This can create uncertainty for the owners and require attorneys to anticipate judicial criticism or overriding of governance structures for entities. Similar to a divorce, when owners go to war with one another, the disputing parties fight over the custody of their prized corporate baby. As with divorce cases, judges in ownership disputes will use extraordinary discretion to decide which party is more honorable, trustworthy, and worthy of controlling the entity. Judges can also be inconsistent. Some will follow the letter of the law and an agreement — to a fault. Others, sensing inequity in the documents or procedures, will cast them aside and casually re-write the rules of engagement. Business owners may hope for a judge who will faithfully follow the rules — but prepare for one who will not.

The problem begins with the nature of ownership disputes, which tend to become he-said / she-said matters. Judges must sift through varying facts and accusations, often presented with a side order of financial and business crisis. In some states and counties, such cases are automatically routed to judges responsible for ruling on "equitable" matters such as injunctions. In such "equity" cases, judges focus on "fairness" and "efficiency," with much less regard for the niceties of legal formality.

Similar to a divorce, when owners go to war with one another, the disputing parties fight over the custody of their prized corporate baby. As with divorce cases, judges in ownership disputes will use extraordinary discretion to decide which party is more honorable, trustworthy, and worthy of controlling the entity.

Shock 1: Company Procedures Ignored

The first rude awakening for the scrupulous owner is that corporate formalities are often ignored. Details concerning shareholder or director meeting notices, waivers, quorums, and resolutions may fall victim to "the bigger picture." Procedural errors (for example, whether a company provided ten day notice, instead of twenty) are rarely fatal to an argument — to your loss or gain. Judges often ignore failure to comply with procedural deadlines, and more seriously consider the actions taken by the parties.

Shock 2: Majority May Not Be Controlling

The second surprise is that majority holders of shares may not actually control the company. Judges can rule that the majority abused its control, squeezed out the minority holders, and/or oppressed shareholder-employees. Judges can overrule corporate actions, grant minority shareholders rights to damages, or, in extreme cases, appoint a receiver to operate the company. Effectively, the closely-held firm becomes a ward of the state.

Shock 3: Buy-Sell Prices Ignored

Often closely-held firms are governed by buy-sell agreements establishing buyout prices — whether fixed or set according to a formula. However, when bickering shareholders come before a judge, at least one of the parties may be shocked to learn that the judge deems the formula or price unfair. The judge may ignore the price and set a hearing for the parties to present arguments on the company's value. So much for the pre-existing buy-sell agreement.

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JUDGE, JURY
Continued from page 2

Shock 4: In Some States, the Law Allows Judges to Do Nearly Anything

In some states (including Illinois), the law provides judges with a 10- to 12-point list of options for resolving ownership disputes and managing a company from the bench. These include cancelling or altering bylaws or articles of incorporation, removing any director or officer from office, appointing directors, mandating dividends, dissolving the company, or overruling any act of the company or its owners, directors or officers.

Shock 5: LLCs – The All or Nothing Entities

Unlike corporations, courts tend to approach limited liability companies from either of two extremes. On the one hand, they can honor and uphold the detailed and professionally drafted operating agreement as if it were sacred text. On the other hand, they can completely manufacture new rules, especially for entities using thin or poorly drafted agreements. If the limited liability company operating agreement is detailed and tailored for the situation before the court, judges often respect it. But if it's a long but ill-suited document or a short, vague skeleton, the judge will rule the day.

Craig McCrohon is a corporate and securities attorney specializing in equity offerings, venture capital and mergers and acquisitions. You may contact him at cmccrohon@burkelaw.com or 312-840-7006.

Fred Mendelsohn is a litigation attorney specializing in complex commercial litigation, shareholder disputes and fiduciary litigation. You may contact him at fmendelsohn@burkelaw.com or 312-840-7004.

CORPORATE

Liz Davis Presents At Midwest ACG Capital Connection

On October 18, Corporate Group partner Liz Davis moderated a panel entitled "The Art of Negotiation: A Conversation" at the Women's Network breakfast, as part of the 17th Annual Midwest ACG Capital Connection + Global Connections held at Navy Pier. The 2016 Midwest ACG Capital Connection brought together more than 930 middle market professionals, including investors, lenders, investment bankers and service providers from over 40 states and several countries. Liz has been involved with ACG Chicago for several years and was elected to the board of directors in 2016.

Liz Davis alongside (left) Suzanne Yoon of Versa Capital Management and (right) Sidney Dillard of Loop Capital Markets moderating a panel at the Women's Network breakfast as part of the 17th Annual ACG Capital Connection + Global Connections.

Founded in 1954, the Association for Corporate Growth's mission is to drive middle-market growth. The Chicago chapter's mission is to be the premier network of leading authorities on corporate growth and to engage its members through unparalleled opportunities for networking, deal making, personal growth, and professional development. It is comprised of 1,000 foremost authorities in their fields with 20 members of the board of directors, including Liz Davis and colleague Craig McCrohon, and more than 50 other committee members.

For more information about ACG, please contact Liz Davis at 312/843-5830 or edavis@burkelaw.com or Craig McCrohon at 312/840-7006 or cmccrohon@burkelaw.com.

Jonathan W. Michael Presents at FABTECH

For the second consecutive year the Firm's Jonathan W. Michael was a featured speaker at the annual FABTECH trade show and conference. This year's presentation, entitled "Business Succession Planning — Common Issues Facing Capital Intensive Firms and How to Navigate the Maze of Family, Shareholders and the Tax Laws," took place at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Las Vegas in November.

FABTECH is North America's largest metal forming, fabricating, welding and finishing trade show. More than 1,300 exhibiting manufacturing companies from the United States, Canada and Mexico were on hand for the show.

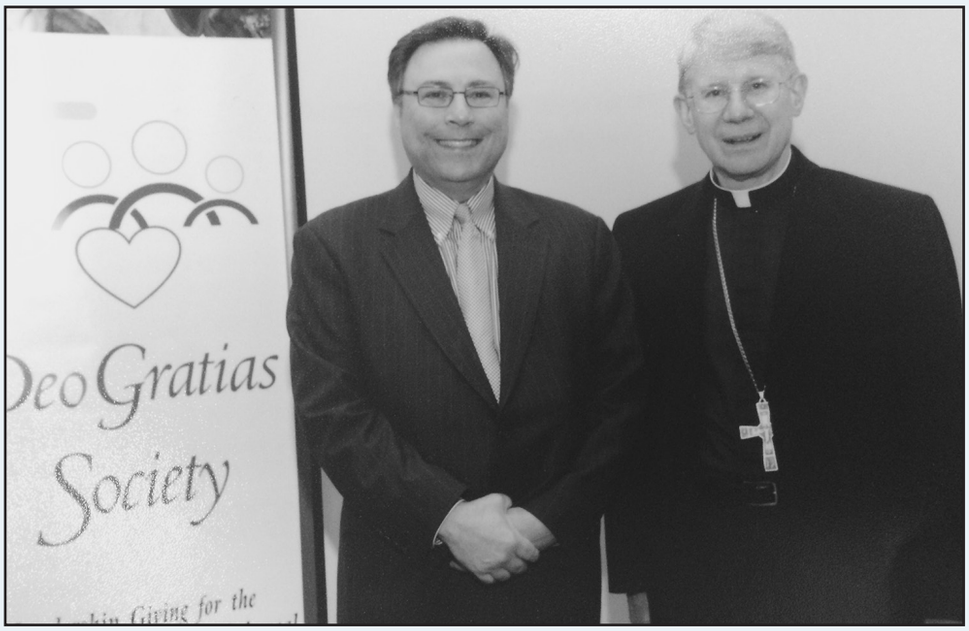
"It was a great opportunity to spend time with business owners and to learn more about their businesses and the business succession planning issues they encounter on a daily basis," said Jonathan. "Although it is only one segment of the U.S. manufacturing market, it was terrific to experience its vitality."

Spending time with business owners, Jonathan shared various business succession implementation strategies. He made clear the importance of business succession planning increases with the improving economy and how the absence of a business succession plan often leads to leadership struggles, family infighting, tax burdens and, ultimately, to the demise of the business itself.

In addition to the numerous professional educational seminars on a wide range of topics, including business succession planning, asset protection planning, and the transfer and taxation of collections and collectibles, Jonathan is scheduled to teach his "Business Succession Planning" course at The John Marshall Law School in 2017.

Jonathan W. Michael presenting on business succession planning at this year's FABTECH tradeshow and conference.

For more information on FABTECH or business succession planning, please contact Jonathan at 312/840-7049 or jmichael@burkelaw.com.



Firm Sponsorship Supports the Work of Joliet Catholic Charities

The Firm's Jim Geoly (left) with Bishop R. Daniel Conlon of the Diocese of Joliet at the recent Deo Gratias Society Mass and Reception. The Firm's sponsorship of the Joliet Deo Gratias Society and other development efforts assist in fulfilling the mission of the Church as well as the work of Joliet Catholic Charities and other ministries. The Mass was held at Blanchette Catholic Center, Xavier Chapel in Crest Hill.

Avoiding Liability Risks At Company Celebrations, Holiday Parties and Other Get-Togethers

While a good way to build camaraderie, employers must not overlook the liability risks associated with these light-hearted events. Any company party must be viewed as an extension of the work place, including ensuring that best practices are followed to avoid a wide array of potential liability.

Whether to celebrate a company's success or to spread holiday cheer, many companies throw parties for their employees throughout the year. While a good way to build camaraderie, employers must not overlook the liability risks associated with these light-hearted events.

Alex Marks

Any company party must be viewed as an extension of the work place, including ensuring that best practices are followed to avoid a wide array of potential liability. Indeed, as the Seventh Circuit stated in *Place v. Abbott Laboratories*, 215 F.3d 803 (7th Cir. 2000), "[a]t the risk of playing the Grinch … we note that office Christmas parties … seem to be fertile ground for unwanted sexual overtures that lead to Title VII complaints." Following are common issues arising during company parties, along with recommendations to avoid liability exposure:

- **Wage and Hour Claims.** Claims for overtime often arise when non-exempt employees allege that attendance at a company party pushed them over the 40-hour workweek. Employers should ensure that party invitations are carefully worded to reflect that attendance at any party is voluntary and purely social.

- **Sexual Harassment.** As stated above, harassment claims often stem from inappropriate conduct and behavior at company parties. Employers should remind employees that company policies, including any relevant handbook policies (e.g., anti-harassment, dress code, social media) apply at parties. Employers may also consider allowing invited guests, which, while raising costs, also make employees less likely to engage in offensive conduct. Finally, do not hang mistletoe or set up other situations that may encourage physical interaction.

- **Religion, Race, and National Origin Discrimination.** Title VII prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, and national origin. Discrimination claims can arise out of a company party if, for example, religious terms are used to describe the party, or too much emphasis is placed on a single holiday or religion. Employers should ensure any invitations and party decorations are either fully inclusive of all religions, or remain generic and neutral.

- **Alcohol Consumption.** An over-served employee may give rise to liability for his/her employer under various legal theories (depending on state law). Employers can reduce potential claims by handing out drink tickets, serving sufficient food, limiting the time drinks are served, and arranging, if necessary, for end of evening transportation.

- **Worker's Compensation Claims.** Last, an employee injured at a company party could claim the injury occurred during the course of their employment. Like with wage issues, discussed above, employers should emphasize that party attendance (including any role performed at the party) is voluntary and considered off-duty.

Importantly, employers should check to see if their company party is covered under any Employment Practices Liability Insurance or Comprehensive General Liability Insurance, as well as promptly investigate any complaints stemming from any alleged conduct occurring at a party.

Despite whatever best intentions a company has, and however innocuous it believes something to be, employers must take precautions, so that a night of cheer doesn't lead to headaches — at least beyond those caused by a given beverage of choice.

For more information, please contact Alex Marks at 312/840-7022 or amarks@burkelaw.com.

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since 1986.

With the end of the year fast approaching and the prospects of significant changes to the tax code on the horizon, taxpayers should consider taking steps not only to minimize their 2016 tax liability, but also to position themselves for possible changes to the tax code in 2017.

Potential Changes to Individual Income Taxes

The primary thrust of Trump's proposed tax plan is simplification. The first and most notable change would be the reduction in the number of tax brackets from 7 to 3.

Current Individual Income Tax Rates			
Taxable Income Joint/(Single)	Tax Rate	Long-Term Capital Gains Rate	Qualified Dividend Rate
$0 - $18,550 ($0 - $9,275)	10%	0%	0%
$18,551 - $75,300 ($9,276 - $37,650)	15%	0%	0%
$74,301 - $151,900 ($37,651 - $91,150)	25%	15%	15%
$151,901 - $231,450 ($91,151 - $190,150)	28%	15%	15%
$231,451 - $413,500 ($190,151 - $413,500)	33%*	15%**	15%**
$413,501 - $466,950 ($413,501 - $413,050)	35%*	15%**	15%**
Over $466,950 (over $415,050)	39.6%*	20%**	20%**

* Pursuant to the Affordable Care Act, married couples filing a joint return pay an additional 0.9% Medicare tax on any wages, other compensation, or self-employment income over $250,000. For individuals, the additional Medicare tax applies to wages, other compensation, or self-employment income over $200,000.

** Pursuant to the Affordable Care Act, married couples filing a joint return are subject to a 3.8% surtax on net investment income (interest, dividends and capital gains) if their income exceeds $250,000. For individuals, the surtax applies if an individual's income exceeds $200,000.

Trump's Tax Plan – Individual Income Tax Rates			
Taxable Income Joint/(Single)	Tax Rate	Long-Term Capital Gains Rate	Qualified Dividend Rate
$0 - $75,000 ($0 - $37,501)	12%	0%	0%
$75,001 - $225,000 ($37,500 - $112,500)	25%*	15%*	15%*
Over $225,000 (over $112,500)	33%*	20%*	20%*

* The Trump plan would eliminate the additional 0.9% Medicare tax on high income earners and the 3.8% tax on net investment income created under the Affordable Care Act.

In addition to reducing the number of tax brackets, the Trump plan proposes the following changes to the individual income tax laws:

- Elimination of the alternative minimum tax;
- Elimination of the personal exemption;
- Increase of the standard deduction ($30,000 for married couples and $15,000 for individual tax filers);
- Limit total itemized deductions to $200,000 for couples filing a joint return and $100,000 for individuals; and
- Allowance of new deductions and credits for childcare and eldercare expenses.

Consider taking steps to accelerate deductions

Each year, we discuss the possibility of accelerating certain itemized deductions. For example, individuals making state estimated tax payments can make their 4th quarter payment prior to year-end. In doing so, they are allowed a deduction for state income taxes paid on their 2016 federal income tax return.

Given the fact that the Trump plan proposes to limit itemized deductions to $200,000 for married couples filing a joint return (or $100,000 for single filers), it is all the more important that high income taxpayers consider accelerating deductions prior to year-end. In addition to making state estimated tax payments early, individuals may also consider accelerating charitable contributions.

It should be noted that while the GOP blueprint for reforming the tax code does not provide a hard cap to itemized deductions like the Trump plan, the GOP blueprint would eliminate all itemized deductions with the exception of the deductions for charitable contributions and the deduction for home mortgage interest expense. While no one is certain

what changes will be made to the tax code relative to deductions, both the Trump plan and the GOP blueprint would severely limit individual itemized deductions.

Defer the receipt of taxable income

Each year we recommend considering steps to defer receipt of taxable income. Just as we noted with respect to accelerating itemized deductions, this consideration is all the more important this year as both President-Elect Trump and the GOP blueprint have proposed a reduction in the top federal tax rates. Both the Trump Plan and the GOP blueprint call for a top federal tax rate of 33%. This compares to the current top federal tax rate of 39.6%.

While possible changes to the tax code in 2017 and beyond impact many considerations relative to 2016 income and deductions, there are still several planning options that are unaffected. For example, individuals may still consider the following:

- Maximize contributions to tax-deferred retirement account, such as Individual Retirement Accounts or a company 401(k) plan. The 401(k) contribution limit for 2016 is $18,000. In addition, individuals who will be at least 50 years of age by the end of 2016 may make an additional "catch-up" contribution of $6,000. The limit for contributions to IRA accounts for 2016 is $5,500. Individuals who will be at least 50 years of age by the end of 2016 may make an additional "catch-up" contribution to their IRA account of $1,000.

- Self-employed individuals may consider establishing a simplified employee pension (SEP) plan. By utilizing a SEP, self-employed individuals may be able to contribute up to $53,000 to a tax-deferred retirement account. Further, contributions for 2016 need not be funded until the extended due date for filing the individual's 2016 tax return.

- If you have a high deductible health plan ("HDHP"), consider fully funding a health savings account ("HSA"). For 2016, an individual with family coverage through a HDHP is allowed to contribute up to $6,750 to an HSA. If the individual is age 50 or older, they are allowed to make an additional "catch-up" contribution of $1,000 to their HSA (for individual coverage under a HDHP, the contribution limit is $3,350 along with a "catch-up" contribution of $1,000 for individuals age 50 or older).

- Review your capital gains and losses for the year. If you expect to recognize a capital gain this year, you should review your portfolio for possible capital losses that can be used to offset the gains. If you have any capital loss carryforwards, you should review your portfolio for capital gain opportunities to make use of such carryforwards. In general, net capital losses are deductible dollar-for-dollar against net capital gains. Excess losses are allowed to offset up to $3,000 ($1,500 for married individuals filing separate tax returns) of ordinary income per year. Losses over and above the limit may be carried forward indefinitely. Since both the Trump plan and the GOP blueprint call for the elimination of the 3.8% tax on net investment income, it would likely benefit individuals, from a tax perspective, to defer capital gains until 2017 or later years (however, we never recommend making decisions relative to the purchase or sale of securities based solely on tax considerations).

IRA Charitable Rollover

In 2016, Congress and President Obama made permanent the provision allowing individuals age 70½ and older the ability to distribute up to $100,000 annually from an IRA to a charitable organization. By distributing funds directly from your IRA to charity, the distribution is not included in the account owner's taxable income (and the account owner is not allowed to claim a tax deduction for the charitable contribution).

Estate & Gift Taxes

Both President-Elect Trump and the GOP blueprint call for significant changes to the current estate and gift tax laws. Specifically, both have called for the elimination of the estate and gift tax.

President-Elect Trump ran a populist campaign and it is doubtful that an elimination of the estate and gift tax would be well received by a large percentage of his supporters. While it is possible that steps may be taken to eliminate or further curb the estate and gift tax, we feel that it is more likely that the administration will focus their initial legislative efforts on other items in their platform (i.e., immigration, healthcare, income taxes and infrastructure spending). As such, we do not anticipate any immediate changes to the estate and gift tax. In turn, we are recommending that individuals continue planning for the estate and gift tax until such time as concrete steps have been taken by the administration and Congress to eliminate the tax.

For 2016, the estate and gift exemption amount is $5.45 million ($10.9 million for married couples). The exemption amount is indexed for inflation and will increase in 2017 to $5.49 million ($10.98 million for married couples). The top tax rate for estate and gift tax purposes has been set at 40%.

The generation-skipping transfer

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YEAR-END ESTATE, TAX PLANNING

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("GST") tax is still in place. Generally, the tax applies to lifetime and death-time transfers to or for the benefit of grandchildren or more remote descendants. For 2016, the rate is a flat 40%. The tax is in addition to any gift or estate tax otherwise payable. As with the gift and estate tax, each taxpayer is allowed a $5.45 million GST tax exemption for 2016.

Consider Lifetime Gifts that take Advantage of both the Gift Tax Exemption and GST Exemption

Many clients utilize a portion or all of their $5.45 million gift tax exemption ($10.9 million for a married couple) by structuring long-term GST exempt trusts benefiting multiple generations. Such trusts will remain exempt from all gift and estate tax as long as the trust remains in existence. Under Illinois law, such trusts can last in perpetuity, thereby allowing you to create a family "endowment fund" for your children, grandchildren and future descendants.

If you already have taken advantage of the current $5.45 million exemption amount or you are not in a position where it makes sense to gift a large amount, you should still continue a gifting strategy going forward.

Annual Exclusion Gifts

In 2016, you may make a gift of $14,000 to any individual and certain trusts without any gift tax consequences. Married individuals may make gifts of up to $28,000. Gifts may be made outright or in trust and may be in the form of cash, securities, real estate, artwork, jewelry or other property. Giving property that you expect will appreciate in the future is an excellent way of utilizing your annual exclusion gifts because any post-gift appreciation is no longer subject to gift or estate tax. To take advantage of your annual exclusions for 2016, gifts must be made by December 31. Gifts over $14,000 or gifts that will be "split" between spouses must be reported on a gift tax return, which must be filed in April 2017. The annual exclusion amount will remain at $14,000 in 2017, $28,000 for married couples.

Payment of Tuition and Medical Expenses

In addition to annual exclusion gifts, you may pay tuition and medical expenses for the benefit of another person without incurring any gift or generation-skipping transfer ("GST") tax or using any of your estate or GST tax exemption. These payments must be made directly to the educational institution or medical facility. There is no dollar limit for these types of payments and you are not required to file a gift tax return to report the payments.

Take Advantage of Today's Low Interest Rates

Interest rates remain at historically low levels. Low interest rates enhance the benefits of several gift and estate planning strategies. One such strategy is the "grantor retained annuity trust" or GRAT. A GRAT is an irrevocable trust to which a donor transfers property and retains the right to receive a fixed annuity for a specified term. At the expiration of the term, the property usually passes outright or in trust for the benefit of descendants or other named beneficiaries. The amount of the gift resulting from the transfer of the property to the GRAT is the present value of the remainder interest that passes to the beneficiaries at the end of the term. Under the valuation methods adopted by the IRS, the lower the interest rate at the time of the gift, the lower the present value of the remainder interest and the smaller the amount of the gift that must be reported to the IRS. Interests in closely held family businesses or marketable securities with high growth prospects are often ideal properties to transfer to a GRAT. While there has been considerable discussion about disallowing "zeroed-out" GRATs and requiring a minimum GRAT term of 10 years, Congress has not taken any action in this respect. As a result, GRATs remain a very attractive planning opportunity.

> **Example** – Individual funds a GRAT with $1 million. The GRATs term is 5 years and its assets appreciate at a rate of 6%. Assuming the applicable IRS interest rate is 1.6% (the rate in effect for November 2016) and the GRAT is "zeroed-out", the remainder value of the GRAT assets at its termination would be approximately $120,000. In other words, the GRAT structure would have allowed the individual to transfer assets valued at approximately $120,000 to his children or designated beneficiaries without incurring any gift tax obligation or utilizing any of his or her lifetime exemption amount. If the assets inside the GRAT were to appreciate at a rate of 8%, the remainder that would be available to the trust's beneficiaries would be approximately $210,000.

Low interest rates also make sales to "defective" grantor trusts more attractive. Under this strategy, a taxpayer creates a trust, typically for his or her spouse and descendants. The taxpayer then sells assets to the trust, taking back a note requiring the trust to repay the taxpayer in installments. The trust is structured so that it is ignored for income tax purposes, resulting in no income tax consequences upon the sale. The interest paid on the note is typically at the applicable federal rate in effect at the time of the sale. The lower the interest rate on the note, the greater the amount of assets that will accumulate in the trust free of estate, gift and GST taxes.

This article was prepared by Greg Winters. For more information, contact Greg at 312/840-7059 / gwinters@burkelaw.com or your estate planning attorney.

FIRM PARTNER PROMOTIONS

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I work with, both professionally and personally," says Erica. "That's what makes Burke, Warren such an ideal place to work, the combination of challenging matters and a firm culture that promotes collaboration and personal development."

Erica received both her J.D. (2009) and undergraduate degrees (2005), *cum laude*, from Northwestern University. Before studying law, Erica analyzed policy implications of proposed legislation, acted as a liaison to state representatives, and implemented policy initiates as a Dunn Fellow in the Illinois Governor's office. Erica can be contacted at 312/840-7112 or ealva@burkelaw.com.

New partner Stephen Schuster is a member of the Firm's Real Estate and Corporate groups. Steve has represented clients in transactions involving nearly every aspect of the real estate business, including acquisitions and dispositions, leasing, development, construction, municipal incentives and entitlements, joint ventures, and finance. He has worked with and on behalf of numerous Burke, Warren clients across all practice disciplines, including governmental entities, private and individual developers, operating businesses, real estate funds, institutional investors, lenders, general contractors, and family offices.

"There is no better place to practice law than Burke, Warren," says Steve. "I am thrilled and honored to be part of this team."

Steve received his J.D. from the DePaul University College of Law in 2009 and his B.A. from the University of Notre Dame in 2006. In 2016, Steve was named as an Illinois Super Lawyer by Thomson Reuters, a rating service of outstanding lawyers from more than 70 practice areas who have attained a high-degree of peer recognition and professional achievement. Steve can be contacted at 312/840-7113 or sschuster@burkelaw.com.

GREENING

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to the Chicago Innocence Project, to issues around religious displays on public property.

Our theme on December 9, 2016, was food. As the Firm's Jim Serritella stressed in his introductory remarks, while most Americans enjoy our nation's bounty, many others go hungry, some in communities that simply lack access to healthy food.

Our distinguished speakers were two individuals from different yet converging disciplines, both positively impacting urgent community needs: Msgr. Michael Boland, President and CEO of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago and Leon Walker, managing partner of DL3 Realty, the developer of the Englewood Square Shopping center, anchored by Whole Foods in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood.

Msgr. Boland detailed the daily efforts and effects of Catholic Charities as it assists families and individuals who are hungry in the City of Chicago and throughout Cook and Lake Counties. Catholic Charities' fleet of vans can be seen driving 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to achieve its mission of providing food and shelter to the impoverished. In the spirit of "teaching a man to fish," Catholic Charities collaborates with these families and individuals to form long term strategies for independence, including finding employment and housing or learning new skills to increase job prospects.

As the Firm's Jim Serritella stressed in his introductory remarks, while most Americans enjoy our nation's bounty, many others go hungry, some in communities that simply lack access to healthy food.

By providing food, clothing, shelter and counseling, Catholic Charities is bringing hope to the hopeless in the city of Chicago and its suburbs. Through their spectrum of services from 164 locations throughout Cook and Lake Counties, they annually assist more than a million persons without regard to religious, ethnic or economic background. In 2015 alone, nearly 70,000 people were served a warm meal through the Evening Supper programs.

As a Chicago south side native, Leon Walker was no stranger to the food deserts that vex many Chicago neighborhoods. For 15 years, he has served as a managing partner of DL3 Realty, a Chicago real estate investment partnership that, among other things, works with national grocery retailers to build stores in communities of high need. Englewood Square, which features a Whole Foods, Starbucks, Chipotle, Villa Shoes, and Oak Street Health, is more than bricks and mortar. It is a catalyst for revitalization.

Englewood Square is located at 63rd and Halsted at the historic site of the Englewood Mall, whose popularity and profitability were once second only to the downtown Chicago shopping district. Walker shared methods for forming partnerships and instigating the collaborations necessary to get the project financed and built. Many see the development as a turning point for the community, adding optimism, quality food options, greater economic activity, and jobs to this once underserved area.

If you would like to join the mailing list for future sponsored events, please let us know in an email to jholdsberg@burkelaw.com.

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The Elevation of Cardinal Cupich

Pictured is Chicago Archbishop Blase Cupich taking possession of his titular church immediately after his elevation to cardinal by Pope Francis at the November 19 ceremony in the Vatican. Pope Francis elevated 16 others to cardinal that day including two other Americans, Archbishop Joseph Tobin of Indianapolis and Bishop Kevin Farrell of Dallas. The elevation occurred two years after Blase Cupich became Chicago's archbishop. He becomes the seventh cardinal in Chicago history. The Firm's Jim Geoly, a guest of the Archdiocese of Chicago, attended the elevation ceremony.