**Arthur E. Mertes**

Arthur E. Mertes, Partner, Tucker Ellis, LLP. Art provides high-caliber counsel to privately held middle-market and emerging growth companies, public companies, financial institutions, family offices/funds, investors, C-level executives, boards of directors, family-owned businesses, and entrepreneurs in a broad range of matters and industries.

Art counsels growth-oriented companies of every size and often acts as their general counsel. He advises clients in matters involving business and capital structure, mergers and acquisitions, indemnification, private equity and venture capital, private placements and securities offerings, investor rights and preferences, commercial finance, IP commercialization, licensing and subscription agreements, intellectual property protection, customer agreements and T&Cs, joint ventures, distribution and supply, international transactions, executive employment, management equity and incentive compensation, corporate governance, and corporate contracts and agreements.

**David Solomon**

David Solomon is the chair of the Corporate & Securities Group of Levenfeld Pearlstein, LLC in Chicago, Illinois. David has extensive experience in structuring and consummating mergers and acquisition transactions and in representing banks, mezzanine lenders and private equity firms when they make investments in companies. David also represents many middle-market companies in a "general counsel" capacity by handling various business law issues.

Upon joining Levenfeld Pearlstein in 2009, David founded and currently serves as the chair of the firm's Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) practice which serves clients who are involved in various types of transactions involving ESOPs. In addition to working on ESOP transactions and advising ESOP companies, David currently serves as a member of the board of directors of the National Center for Employee Ownership (NCEO) and is an at-large member of the board of the Illinois Chapter of the ESOP Association. David has lectured frequently on ESOPs and has published articles in various publications about how ESOPs are an effective business succession strategy. David also participates in governmental lobbying efforts on behalf of ESOP companies.

**Stephen Sleigh**

Stephen Sleigh is a Managing Partner of The Peakstone Group, where he is responsible for deal origination and execution. Since co-founding Peakstone, Stephen has advised many family-owned and entrepreneur-owned businesses in a wide range of industries. Stephen has over 25 years of investment banking experience in the US and London at Lehman Brothers, Bank of America and Continental Bank.

Prior to forming Peakstone, Stephen was Head of Midwest Middle Market Investment Banking at Lehman Brothers (and subsequently Barclays Capital). Prior to that, he was Lehman Brothers' Head of Midwest Leveraged Finance providing financing for leveraged buyouts and corporate acquisitions. Stephen spent several years at Lehman Brothers in London financing leveraged buyout transactions, telecommunication and cable TV network build-outs, and corporate acquisitions.

Stephen started his career as a CPA at Price Waterhouse. He earned his MBA from Duke University School of Business and his BA from Grove City College.

**Raymond Kolak**

Ray counsels middle market business owners and their companies on their legal affairs. This might include starting a business, bringing in a partner, leasing or buying a factory, structuring a transaction to reduce federal income taxes, designing an executive incentive program, preparing product distribution agreements, or drafting a buy/sell agreement. Ray was Chair of the 400-member Corporation and Business Law Committee of the Chicago Bar Association, and Chair of its Mergers and Acquisitions Subcommittee. He was President and a member of the Board of Directors of the 300-member Midwest Business Brokers and Intermediaries Association.