Michael L. Sherlock

Associate

Private Wealth

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Michael L. Sherlock is a trusted advisor to his clients, maintaining a robust transactional practice that enables him to effectively solve a broad array of corporate challenges. His goal is to identify, prioritize and solve the critically important issues facing a deal or project while simultaneously driving the transaction to a swift conclusion.

Applying practical and efficient solutions to complex business issues

Michael is a corporate attorney whose practice encompasses corporate and family office structuring, mergers and acquisitions, and venture and private investments and divestitures. He represents a variety of clients including family offices and high-net-worth individuals, family businesses and private equity-backed companies in their corporate transactions. Michael also serves as outside general counsel for his clients, advising on startup and formation matters, employee incentive and co-investment plans, recapitalizations, buyouts and other general corporate matters.

Michael is also adept at supporting family-owned business owners navigating succession planning strategies, helping them achieve their bespoke goals, including legacy preservation and wealth transfer. He recently co-authored a series for business owners who find themselves in the midst of the Great Wealth Transfer.

Michael serves on Katten's Associates Committee, Katten's Family Office Committee, and is a leader on the Katten Corporate Transparency Act Task Force.

Prior to joining Katten, Michael worked at a boutique corporate law firm in Chicago, primarily focusing on middle-market mergers and acquisitions. In his role as deal counsel, Michael managed external and internal teams to execute time-sensitive acquisitions and divestitures. His clients included middle-market businesses and their owners, private equity-backed companies, entrepreneurs and family offices.

Representative Experience

Mergers and Acquisitions

Practices

- Corporate
- Mergers and Acquisitions
- Private Wealth

Industries

- Family Offices
- Private Client Services

Education

- JD, Boston University School of Law
- BS, Clemson University, Economics, *summa cum laude*

Bar Admissions

- Illinois

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- Lead counsel to sellers and buyers in multiple secondary sales of portfolios of private equity investments.
- Lead counsel representing multinational business in strategic acquisition of industrial company.
- Represented domestic and international business in potential sale transaction to private equity-backed purchaser.
- Lead counsel representing private equity-backed Veterinary Support Organizations in add-on strategy.
- Advised majority owner in sale of car dealerships and post-closing distributions.
- Advised vertically integrated cannabis company in its sale to a publicly traded MSO.*
- Advised custom-labeling business in its sale to private equity-backed purchaser.*
- Represented independent marketing innovation company in sale to private equity firm, which sale established digital marketing platform.*
- Advised ophthalmic instruments business in sale to private equity-backed purchaser.*
- Advised majority owner in sale of private label oral care business to internationally headquartered, publicly traded pharmaceutical company.*

Family Office

- Advise high-net-worth individual on structure for family office management company and investment vehicles.
- Advise family business owners on succession planning and governance issues.
- Ongoing advice to family offices regarding private equity co-investments, private equity fund investments, venture capital investments, and general corporate matters.
- Structured annual investment program for international family offices.
- Designed, drafted, and implemented two-tier equity incentive plan for investment professionals of international family office.
- Represented family office in corporate separation of former executive, including amending limited partnership agreements, establishing phantom profits interests, and redeeming executive from certain co-investments.

- Established Illinois family office.
- Represented Florida-based family office in its structuring, venture capital and other private investments, and day-to-day corporate management.*

General Corporate

- Advise operating business on re-domestication to Delaware and implementation of governance controls.
- Represented ultra-high-net-worth individual and related investment vehicles in corporate restructuring of commercial real estate assets and related structuring of control and liquidity rights.
- Advise on Corporate Transparency Act analysis and compliance.
- Represented high-net-worth individual in buyout of partner in custom electrical connector business.
- Represented high-net-worth individual in buyout of equity partners in golf course and hospitality management business.
- Represented investment group in Series A Preferred Stock investment in medical laser startup.
- Represented investment group in recapitalization.
- Advised venture capital arm of trading firm on various VC investments.*

*Experience prior to Katten

Recognitions

Recognized or listed in the following:

- *Super Lawyers Rising Stars*
  - Illinois, 2021–2026

News

- Katten Attorneys Named to 2026 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 21, 2026)
- Katten Attorneys Selected for 2025 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 31, 2025)
- Katten Attorneys Named to 2024 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 25, 2024)
- Katten Attorneys Selected to 2023 Illinois Super Lawyers, Rising Stars Lists (January 24, 2023)

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Publications

- Three Wealth Transfer Strategies Every Business Owner Needs To Know (March 25, 2025)
- Top Three Legal Considerations for Family Business Owners Preparing for a Sale (March 11, 2026)
- Preparing a Family Business for a Sale: Implementing the Private Equity Playbook (February 25, 2026)
- Preparing for a Third-Party Sale of a Family Business: Key Business Considerations for Owners (February 11, 2026)
- Four Strategies for Family Business Succession Planning (January 28, 2026)
- 2025 – 2026 Planning Priorities (November 19, 2025)
- The One Big Beautiful Bill Act: Key Year-End Tax Changes for Private Wealth Clients (November 19, 2025)
- Select Updates Impacting Family Business Owners (November 19, 2025)
- Planning Considerations for the Rest of 2025 and Into 2026 (November 19, 2025)
- Select Federal Caselaw Updates (November 19, 2025)
- State of the States (November 19, 2025)
- Relevant International Updates (November 19, 2025)
- US Treasury Issues Interim Final Rule That Removes the Requirement for US Companies and US Persons To Report Beneficial Ownership Information to FinCEN Under the Corporate Transparency Act (March 25, 2025)
- US Treasury Announces That the Corporate Transparency Act Will Not Be Enforced Against Domestic Companies, Their Beneficial Owners or US Citizens (March 6, 2025)
- CTA Is Pausing Fines, Penalties and Enforcement Actions Regarding Filing of Beneficial Ownership Information Reports (March 3, 2025)
- CTA Reporting Requirements Reinstated and Beneficial Ownership Reports Due March 21, 2025 for Most Reporting Companies (February 20, 2025)
- *ESG Guidepost* | Issue 21 (January 2025)

- Corporate Transparency Act Reporting Remains Voluntary (January 24, 2025)
- Update: Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Reinstates Nationwide Injunction on CTA Reporting Requirements – CTA Enforcement Halted Once Again (December 27, 2024)
- *ESG Guidepost* | Issue 20 (December 2024)
- 2024 Year-End Estate Planning Advisory (November 26, 2024)
- *ESG Guidepost* | Issue 18 (September 2024)
- Corporate Transparency Act: January 1, 2025 Filing Deadline and Recent Developments (September 17, 2024)
- *ESG Guidepost* | Issue 13 (April 2024)
- Corporate Transparency Act Found Unconstitutional (for Specific Plaintiffs) (March 4, 2024)
- 2023 Year-End Estate Planning Advisory (November 20, 2023)
- Action Required: Corporate Transparency Act Reporting Is Here (November 8, 2023)
- 2022 Year-End Estate Planning Advisory (November 17, 2022)

Presentations and Events

- Family Business Through a Legal Lens (April 21, 2026) | *Speaker* | *Acquisition Playbook: Building a New Portfolio After the Exit*
- 2025 Private Wealth Seminar – Chicago (October 30, 2025) | *Presenter* | *What I Know Now That I Wish I Knew Then — Adventures in Single Family Office Startups*
  Presenter | *Arc of Estate and Business Planning for Family Business Owners*
- 2024 Private Wealth and Fiduciary Seminar Chicago (October 30, 2024) | *Presenter* | *Tactical Tips for Corporate Transparency Act Compliance*
- STEP Chicago (October 23, 2024) | *Presenter* | *Tactical Tips for Corporate Transparency Act Compliance*
- Katten and Wells Fargo UHNW Partnership (February 6, 2024) | *Presenter* | *Understanding the Corporate Transparency Act*
- Katten and Northern Trust Partnership (December 19, 2023) | *Presenter* | *Corporate Transparency Act: Policies and Procedures*
- Annual Katten Private Wealth & Fiduciary Seminar (October 11, 2023) | *Presenter* | *Exploring the Family Office Regulatory*

Landscape
Presenter | *Understanding the Corporate Transparency Act*

- Annual Katten Private Wealth and Fiduciary Seminar (September 22, 2022) | *Presenter* | *How to Develop or Expand a Family Office*