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Katten Taps Karen Nelson to Lead Charlotte Office

(CHARLOTTE, N.C.) Katten announced today that commercial real estate attorney Karen Nelson is the new managing partner of the firm's Charlotte office, replacing 17-year head Daniel Huffenus, widely acknowledged as a top practitioner in the local and national real estate finance markets. Huffenus now devotes himself full time to his thriving real estate finance practice, which he has run for more than 25 years.

"Karen is an excellent attorney. Her enthusiasm for building strong professional relationships is infectious and in line with the Katten mission to ensure our clients realize their business goals," said Katten Chairman Roger P. Furey. "We look forward to Karen's oversight in Charlotte, and we thank Dan for his many years of excellence as a Katten lawyer and leader."

Recognized as a leading attorney by *North Carolina Lawyers Weekly* and the *Charlotte Business Journal*, Nelson joined Katten in 2012, having become partner at another large law firm. With emphasis on the origination and restructuring of debt secured by real estate assets, she advises on a range of commercial real estate finance matters, representing some of the country's largest commercial and investment banks, funds, insurance companies and real estate investment trusts (REITs).

Nelson advises about real estate assets of all types, including office, retail, hotel, multifamily, homebuilder, condominium and industrial properties. She frequently leads teams of other Katten partners and associates on complex deals and annually closes hundreds of millions of real estate finance loans.

At the same time, Nelson serves as mentor to other attorneys, many of them women, within Katten and in the real estate industry. She stresses the importance of fostering relationships with coworkers and clients and becoming thoroughly familiar with their business goals, something she has done very well as evidenced by her longtime clients, many of whom credit partnership with her as a reason for their success.

"Karen has an extraordinary ability to connect with people and work with them successfully. Her energy is seemingly limitless," Huffenus said. "I know she will be an effective managing partner

of our office. She is roundly respected by Katten team members here and elsewhere and throughout the local real estate community and the industry nationally.”

Under Huffenus’s leadership the Charlotte office doubled in size, growing from 25 lawyers to more than 50. He helped put the real estate finance practice on a path to local and national prominence as it has been consistently recognized as top-of-class in North Carolina and across the country. Among other achievements, Huffenus also oversaw expansion of the Charlotte office practices beyond real estate to include commercial litigation, corporate, intellectual property, structured finance and securitization, and private wealth.

A member of the North Carolina Bar and the Mecklenburg Bar, Nelson is a LEED Accredited Professional (LEED AP), a title she earned after training through the Green Building Certification Institute. She is a member of Charlotte’s Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW), which promotes business, provides educational opportunities, and shares information among women leaders in the local real estate industry.

Nelson has tutored homeless children, raised funds for children’s literacy, and provided pro bono services for Charlotte families involved with Habitat for Humanity. Additionally, she leads the Charlotte arm of Katten’s Women’s Leadership Forum (WLF), where she works with other women at the firm to develop mentoring, networking and marketing to increase internal and external visibility for women firmwide.

Katten is a full-service law firm with nearly 700 attorneys in locations across the United States and in London and Shanghai. Clients seeking sophisticated, high-value legal services turn to Katten for counsel locally, nationally and internationally. The firm’s core areas of practice include commercial finance, corporate, financial markets and funds, insolvency and restructuring, intellectual property, litigation, real estate, structured finance and securitization, transactional tax planning, and trusts and estates. Katten represents public and private companies in numerous industries, as well as a number of government and nonprofit organizations and individuals. For more information, visit katten.com.

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