



SpencerFane®

James A. (Jim) Ullman

Of Counsel

Contact

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Overview

Jim Ullman counsels franchisors and franchisees in a wide variety of transactions and franchise-specific processes, drawing on more than 35 years of industry experience and a common sense approach to law designed to maximize opportunities and drive value. His diverse clientele comprises everything from startups to national and multinational corporations to major financial institutions, including private equity and venture capital groups.

With extensive experience serving as in-house counsel, including to an international transportation company, and special counsel to multiple law firms, Jim confidently navigates all federal and state franchise laws and franchise-related mergers and acquisitions while nurturing clear, communicative client relationships.

In his work with startups, Jim serves as a dedicated business advisor, quickly and cost-efficiently guiding new franchises with insight gained from franchising companies across diverse industries, including quick service and fine dining restaurants, bakeries, cosmetics and beauty supply stores, electronics, hotels and casinos, daycare facilities, med spas, yoga studios, senior living facilities, medical and dental practices, and vision apparel retailers.

In his representation of franchisees, Jim's multifaceted experience allows him to review, analyze, and negotiate franchise agreements from a uniquely client-centric perspective, whether acquiring single or multiple units. He thoroughly explains obligations, commitments, and document terms with an attention to detail that helps clients understand the process.

In addition, Jim complements his comprehensive franchise practice with intellectual property legal services. He aids in the branding and protection of products and services, including trademark clearance and prosecution at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, maintenance and policing of trademarks, and other brand protection activities. He also guides clients through copyright protection and frequently reviews operational manuals to ensure an accurate reflection of licensed businesses. Notably, he has maintained several multinational trademark portfolios and works with foreign counsel in nearly every jurisdiction around the world.

Education

- State University of New York at Buffalo School of Law, 1971 (J.D.)
- University of Michigan, 1968 (B.A.)

Bar Admissions

- Arizona
- U.S. Patent and Trademark Office

Community Involvement

- Citizenship Counts, Board Member, 2008–present
- Arizona State Board of Education, President, 1995
- Arizona State Community College Board, Maricopa County Representative, 1991–1997; Chair, 1995

Distinctions

- *Best Lawyers in America*, Franchise Law, 1995–2025
- *Southwest Super Lawyers*, Franchise/Dealership Law, 2007–2020
 - Top 50 Arizona Attorneys, 2012–2014
 - Arizona's only Franchise Law Super Lawyer, 2017
- *Martindale–Hubbell*, AV Preeminent
- *Arizona Business Magazine*, Top Lawyers, 2014–2015
- *Latin Lawyer Magazine*, M&A Latin American Deal of the Year, 2008
- *Phoenix Business Journal*, Best of the Bar, Franchising & Licensing, 2005
- National Association of State Boards of Education, Distinguished Service Award, 1996

Presentations and Publications

- "New Arizona Law Releases Chokehold on Franchise Employment Status Dilemma," *The National Law Review*, May 2017
- "Is Your Dispute, Subject to Arbitration Under Your Franchise Agreement, Going to be Litigated in Court?" *The National Law Review*, March 2017
- "Look Before You Leap – Top 10 Pitfalls for an Upstart Franchisor," International Franchise Association Law Conference, Washington, D.C., May 2014
- "Restaurant Law," American Law Institute / American Bar Association, Washington, D.C., 2002

Related Experience

- Orchestrated a franchise law component for one of the largest fast-food restaurant chains in the world, which was recognized as "Latin American Deal of the Year."
- Implemented one of the nation's earliest charter school laws as president of the Arizona State Board of Education.