

One Corporate Lawyer Proves That Knowing When to Aerate the Greens is a Good Thing for Business

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When **Alan Davis** was retained by the developer to work with the debtors, creditors and the membership of the Shadow Isle Golf Club and manage its sale to a buyer named Trump, he relied on a lifetime of knowledge about the inner workings and governance of golf courses.

Many people love golf, but few quite as much as Davis, a business lawyer who loves the business of golf courses as much as he loves the game. When Davis, partner at Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP in Woodbridge, started his career as a business lawyer, he found himself immersed in the workings of Hollywood Golf Club through Robert N. Wilentz (later a Chief Justice of the N.J. Supreme Court) then chairman of Hollywood's legal committee. Davis, who became the youngest partner at the Wilentz firm, then went on to chair the legal committee at Hollywood, and later became president of the club. Davis learned governance and what it took to make a club profitable. In subsequent years he helped reorganize Deal Country Club, then Metedeconk National Golf Club in Jackson, NJ, and recently the Shadow Isle Golf Club.

Success is in Details

"If you really want to know how to represent a golf club well, you can't just know the law. You need to know when to aerate the greens, tees and fairways and mow the fescue (a type of grass on golf courses), and all of the inside details like pro shop management, and the rules of golf, in addition to the law," notes Davis. "I love golf and being enmeshed in so many clubs has taught me that financially they are just like other business organizations, but with their own specialized problems, details and style, which you have to know."

The team members who assisted Davis with the Shadow Isle sale were real estate partner **Robert C. Schachter**, tax counsel **Allen V. Brown**, banking and finance partner **Lawrence P. Maher**, corporate partner **Marina Solo** and corporate associate **Lindsay M. Wills**.

His history of helping golf clubs improve their performance is mirrored in Davis's and his firm's deft execution of other business deals in the merger and acquisition practice area. Over the summer, Davis and his colleagues helped accountancy firm Amper Politziner & Mattia of Edison, NJ, and Goldenberg Rosenthal LLP of Philadelphia combine in one of the largest professional service firm mergers this year in the northeast. The combination of these two firms now makes Amper one of the largest accountancies behind the Big Four. The combination — one of the industry's biggest in the last four years — creates, nationally, a Top 25 firm with 84 partners, 600 total employees and annual revenues of \$113 million.

Press Releases (Cont.)

Davis's colleagues at GRSD played key roles in the very involved merger. **W. Raymond Felton**, chair of the Corporate Department and the firm's co-managing partner, along with corporate associate **Catherine S. Shimsky**, Employee Benefits chair **Thomas C. Senter** and associate **Lisa J. Clapp**, and Tax, Trusts & Estates partner, **Peter Crawford**, all contributed to the successful combination of the two firms.

Like his golf club experience, Davis has worked with Amper from very early in his career, when both the firm started by Davis and his late partner Allen Ravin, a predecessor to GRSD, and Amper were starting their growth paths. Once housed in the same building in Woodbridge, they shared a coffee pot and a lot more.

If there is another industry segment as clearly hard hit as by today's economic woes as golf clubs, it is car dealerships. From all angles, consumer credit to the questionable fates of the major manufacturers, the industry has its highs and lows. Davis has been involved with the retail automobile business in NJ for many years handling the purchase and sale of so many dealerships over the last forty years. Just as he and his golf clients have benefited from knowing when to cut the fescue, he has put his forty-three years of experience at the Bar to dealing with the nuts and bolts of buying and selling franchised automobile dealerships to the benefit of his clients.

Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP, with offices in Woodbridge and Roseland, NJ, has 110 attorneys in four departments: Litigation, Corporate, Real Estate and Tax, Trusts & Estates.

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