

Rene Ruiz co-founded Sports Leadership Arts and Management Academy Charter School in Miami. SLAM is located in one of the City's most impoverished neighborhoods, and services an overwhelmingly minority student population. The public charter school educates and prepares students for a myriad of careers in sports, ranging from sports medicine and media production to marketing, nutrition, entertainment, and management, unlocking seemingly unattainable opportunities within the industry for its students.

Rene serves as the Chairman of SLAM and the President and Chief Executive of the SLAM Foundation, which helps direct the school's growing list of corporate partnerships and supports the school's expansion in Miami, as well as the replication of its successful model throughout the Country.

SLAM has received immense support from global superstar Pitbull, the school's Brand Ambassador, and has garnered significant national attention through features on *The Today Show*, *Good Morning America*, *The Tonight Show*, *the Katie Couric Show*, *National Public Radio*, *The Washington Post*, *ABC Nightline*, and *CNN*.

Rene is a Shareholder at the law firm of Stearns Weaver Miller, and is a member of the firm's Board of Directors. Rene has been honing his craft as a labor and employment attorney in Miami since his admission to the Florida Bar in 2001, at the age of 23. Rene began his career at a prominent national law firm, and was mentored by John-Edward Alley, a titan in the labor law field. In 2007, Rene was first included in *The Best Lawyers in America* as an associate lawyer (one of the very few attorneys to do so in the history of the prestigious publication). The following year, he was voted into partnership at the age of 30.

Rene partners with private and public sector employers to formulate winning strategies for achieving effective labor relations and other business goals. A skilled negotiator, Rene has helped save his clients millions of dollars through collective bargaining, administering union grievances, handling arbitrations, defending unfair labor disputes before the National Labor Relations Board and the Public Employees Relations Committee, managing union certifications and elections. In addition, Rene trains employers on union avoidance and strike preparation, and has successfully navigated through actual and threatened strikes and other work stoppages. Rene also litigates wage and hour disputes, discrimination, retaliation, whistleblower and harassment cases, and matters arising under Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Rene has amassed an impressive list of international and national clients and has achieved many notable victories on their behalf. For example, Rene has successfully negotiated numerous collective bargaining agreements for his unionized clients that were ratified by the respective labor unions without a work stoppage. These labor agreements have helped save his clients costs by expanding their management rights, restructuring pensions and other future liabilities, and attaining numerous union concessions. In addition, Rene has successfully defended the broad application of the "agricultural exemption" under the Fair Labor Standards Act by winning summary judgment collective actions challenging the application of the

overtime exemption for various agricultural employees. Rene has also successfully defended numerous restaurant and retail clients throughout Florida against cases alleging barriers to disabled access.

While in law school, Rene interned with the Honorable Stephen T. Brown and the Honorable Ted E. Bandstra in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida. Rene also served on the Editorial Board of the University of Miami Law Review.

Professional and Community Involvement

- Sports Leadership Arts and Management Charter School, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Board, 2010-Present
- SLAM Foundation, Founder, President, Chief Executive, and Chairman of the Board, 2015-Present
- St. Thomas University, Athletic and Sports Administration Board, 2015-Present
- Dress for Success, Men's Advisory Board, 2015-Present
- Miami Children's Charter School, Chairman of the Board, 2006-Present
- Mercy Hospital, Board of Ambassadors, 2008-2011

Recognition

- *The Best Lawyers in America*®, 2008-2015
- *South Florida Business Journal*, "40 Under 40," selected for inclusion, 2014
- Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, "40 Under 40 Outstanding Lawyers," selected for inclusion, 2014
- *Daily Business Review*, "Rising Stars: Top 40 Under 40," selected for inclusion, 2013
- *Florida Trend's Legal Elite*, selected for inclusion, 2006-2011
- Areas USA, Labor and Employment Counsel of the Year Award, 2013-2014
- *Florida Super Lawyers Rising Star*, selected for inclusion, 2010-2015
- *Law & Politics*, "Florida Rising Star," 2009