Steve R. Akers, an attorney with 36 years of experience in estate planning and probate law matters, is the recipient of the 2013 Recipient of Distinguished Probate Attorney Lifetime Achievement Award.

Steve is a managing director at Bessemer Trust, where he directs the family estate and legacy planning practice and is Senior Fiduciary Counsel, Southwest Region. He was previously a partner with Ernst & Young, LLP (1995-2001) and with Jenkens & Gilchrist, PC (1977-1995).

Over the years, Steve has lectured on a variety of estate planning, estate administration, and family business planning topics at national meetings of a wide variety of organizations including meetings of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel; American Bar Association Real Property, Trust & Estate Law Section Annual CLE Meetings; U.S.C. Tax Institute; the University of Miami Philip E. Heckerling Institute on Estate Planning; the Annual Notre Dame Tax and Estate Planning Institute; the Southern Federal Tax Conference in Atlanta, Georgia; the NYU Tax Institute; the Annual AICPA Advanced Estate Planning Conference; the ALI-CLE Annual Seminar on Estate Planning for the Family Business Owner (co-chair of this annual national seminar since its inception); the ALI-CLE Annual Seminar on Estate Planning for Large Estates (co-chair; held in San Francisco and New York), and national conferences for Internal Revenue Service estate and gift tax agents. He has also spoken to a variety of other groups, including bar groups and estate planning councils in a number of different states. He is a co-author of A Planning Guide to Buy-Sell Agreements and Estate Planning After the Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2010.

Akers is a past chair of the American Bar Association Section of Real Property, Trust and Estate Law and previously served as the chair of various committees, as a Supervisory Council member, and in various officer positions of the Section. An article that he wrote for the Section's bimonthly magazine (Probate & Property) was selected as the Best Overall Article-Probate and Trust in 2003 and an article that he co-authored was selected as the Best Practical Use Article-Probate and Trust in 2006.

He is a fellow of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel and is currently a member of the Executive Committee, a Regent, the Chair of the Business Planning Committee, and a member of the Communications Committee and previously served on the Long Range Planning Committee. He has previously served as Editor of the ACTEC Law Journal, and has spoken at various ACTEC meetings.

A past chair of the Texas State Bar Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Section and of the Dallas Bar Association Probate, Trusts, and Estates Section, he has also served as a member of the Board of Governors of the Dallas Estate Planning Council. He is a fellow of the Texas Bar Foundation. He has previously served as a member of the National Conference of Lawyers and Corporate Fiduciaries (sponsored by the American Bar Association and the American Bankers Association).

Mr. Akers has received the Distinguished Accredited Estate Planner Award from the National Association of Estate Planning Councils and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Dallas Bar Association Probate, Trusts & Estates Section.

Steve is a member of the Advisory Committee to the University of Miami Philip E. Heckerling Institute on Estate Planning (held annually in Orlando), and he has spoken at that Institute on various occasions. Mr. Akers also serves as a member of the ALI-CLE Estate Planning Advisory Panel. He has previously served as the Chairman of the Baylor Health Care System Foundation Professional Advisors Council. He is also a member of the Advisory Council of the Communities Foundation of Texas.

Mr. Akers received his B.S. degree in Chemical Engineering from Oklahoma State University (1974) and his J.D. degree from the University of Texas School of Law (1977).