

TOP ECHELON TIMES

Celebrating Black History Month – Recognizing Our Own

Monday

Leaders continue to strive toward greater equality and opportunity for everyone.

Tuesday

A Leader is:

A Strong Performer – who has a significant record of success and accomplishments and can create a high performance environment for self and others.

Wednesday

A Leader is:

An Enabler – who ensures strong organizational performance by understanding and supporting the needs of others and by creating the conditions for the team to be successful.

Thursday

A Leader is:

Inspiring – articulates the vision, instills pride, aligns the organization and creates synergy.

Friday

A Motivator – a charismatic leader who unleashes the potential of the organization by causing people to reach.

A Visionary – who thinks strategically, promotes innovation and leads change.

Top ECHELON Value – Leadership

We are all leaders.

Act as strong performers who are visionary, inspiring, enabling and motivating. Contribute both inside the firm and in our communities through pro bono and volunteer efforts.

February is Black History month – a time to commemorate the achievements of many whose qualities, courage and diligence made and continue to help shape our world. The celebration of Black History began in 1926 through the efforts of educator, author and historian Carter G. Woodson, who promoted Negro History Week the 2nd week of February. Because of the many historical events that occurred in February, the recognition and celebration was expanded to include the entire month.

Calendar: http://web.utk.edu/~omsa/Black_Studies_Calendar_2008.pdf

This week, we will focus on some of the African-American leaders at Alston & Bird and take a look at their contributions to the firm and community. We'll highlight the careers of Bernard Taylor, Karol Mason, Linda Sims, Chris Ford and Angela Payne James – each of whom started their career at the firm, have been and continue to be leaders in various areas of our organization and serve as mentors and role

Quote of the Day

“I had no idea that history was being made. I was just tired of giving up.”

Rosa Parks

models to our employees. Our firm is highly regarded for the fact that we have nine “home-grown” minority partners. We have been told it is not often the case that a firm will have that many minority partners who have developed (or grown up) through the ranks from summer associate or 1st-years within their firm. While we may not be the first to boast this number, we are proud to be a leader in this area.

Prioritize Today's Activities

Share information on what's happening today in your department.

Group Discussion

Share how our ability to grow and improve can be enhanced by what we learn from those who accomplish great things.

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Diversity is a core value of the firm, and A&B is committed to providing an environment where everyone can succeed and maximize their full potential. Each of us can be a leader – a strong performer - who makes a difference with behaviors that contribute to this effort. Today we will highlight Karol V. Mason, one of our own strong performers.

Karol is a partner in the Real Estate Finance and Investment group in both the Atlanta and Raleigh offices. She received her J.D. from the University of Michigan

Law School where she was note editor for the University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform. She received her B.A. from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and today serves as the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees for her alma mater.

Karol joined the firm in 1983 and became a partner in 1989. She began her career at the firm as a summer associate and is a significant leader at Alston & Bird. She is the most recent chair of the firm’s management committee, the Partners Committee. She is one of the 115 A&B lawyers on the *Best Lawyers in America 2008* list. Karol is on Senator Barack

Obama’s National Finance Committee and is a Co-Chair of Georgia Women for Obama.

Karol was the first Black woman partner in Atlanta. We are not talking about just the first at our firm, but the first in one of the large law firms in the Atlanta area. This fact gains even more significance when you note that the first Black woman lawyer, Charlotte A. Ray, graduated from law school in 1872, 111 years prior to Atlanta having a Black woman partner. Karol has served and

continues to serve as a mentor, role model and agent for change for our lawyers and staff, as well as the students and faculty at UNC at Chapel Hill.

Quote of the Day

“Without the diversity of life experiences, we would fall short in finding creative and effective solutions to legal problems confronting our clients.”

Karol Mason

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Group Discussion

Share some of your role models and how they made a difference to you.

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Continuing our look at some of the Black leaders at Alston & Bird, today we will focus on Bernard Taylor, Sr., a/k/a “BT”. Bernard is a senior partner in the Atlanta office and serves as the Practice Group Leader of the Products Liability group. He received his J.D. degree from Vanderbilt University School of Law where he was the recipient of the Bennett Douglass-Bell Memorial Prize in Legal Ethics. He received his B.A. from Wayne State University. He began his career at the firm as a summer associate in 1981. He became a partner in 1989.

Prior to BT’s career as an accomplished trial lawyer, he was a police officer for the Detroit Police Department from 1970 to 1979.

With 25 years of legal experience, Bernard has led litigation teams in major complex litigation across the U.S. He is listed in Chambers USA as one of America’s Leading Lawyers in Business. He is also listed among the 115 Alston & Bird lawyers as the *Best Lawyers in America 2008*, and he is one of 90 attorneys at the firm who have been recognized as a “Georgia Super Lawyer”. In 2007, he was inducted into the American College of Trial Lawyers in London, England.

In addition to his many successes as a trial lawyer, BT has served on the Diversity Committee since its inception. He was the first Black person on the Partners Committee, as well as

the first Black to Chair the Partners Committee. BT is also President and Chair of the Board of Directors, for the 100 Black Men of DeKalb County, Georgia. He serves as a mentor and role model for all lawyers, and especially for young African-American lawyers, by setting an example of excellence.

Quote of the Day

“We must embrace our differences if we are to ensure the integrity, strength and admiration of the profession in the future.”

Bernard Taylor

BT is one example of superior achievement at the firm. Our commitment to providing excellent service that supports our lawyers and staff is critical to helping the firm be the leader that it is among the top U.S. law firms. BT’s role as a practice group leader provides an environment which enables the members of his team to strive and succeed.

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Group Discussion

Discuss how having a strong role model contributes to an individual’s success.

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As we continue our look at some of the Black leaders at the firm, today let's look at the career of one of the outstanding members of our staff, Linda Sims. Linda is the Secretarial Support/Resource Center Manager in the Atlanta office and serves on the firm's Administrative Executive Staff. She joined the firm in 1969 and was the first African-American staff member. She is a significant role model and mentor for many of our staff.

Each year, the Diversity Committee recognizes someone at the firm whose efforts have benefited the firm's Diversity initiative. Linda is the recipient of the 2007 Diversity Leadership Award. We

Quote of the Day

"To me, diversity is the ability to step outside of one's comfort zone and create an atmosphere that embraces change and the differences that can come about from that change."

Linda Sims

encourage you to go to the Diversity section on the Portal where we publish the copies of the firm's *Change in Motion* magazine. Please check out the summer 2005 issue and read the article "From Where I Stand" featuring Linda.

Linda served on the Diversity Committee and chaired the firmwide Diversity Task Force since its inception in September 2004 through December 2007. The goal of the Task Force is to support the firm's commitment to diversity awareness by providing opportunities for understanding and learning through events, recognition and celebration. During the time period Linda chaired the Task Force, we have enjoyed many diversity related programs and speakers in recognition of Black History month, Hispanic Heritage month, Gay and Lesbian Pride month, Celebrate Diversity month, Women's History month, Asian Pacific Heritage month, Disability Awareness month and American Indian Heritage month.

As a firm, our commitment to diversity demonstrates our openness to learning and understanding differences. When we work together to bring the best of the best to the table, the outcome is a superior product that supports the creativity and integrity of those who contribute.

Prioritize Today's Activities

Share information on what's happening today in your department.

Group Discussion

Discuss with your group how recognizing other cultures and events creates an environment that demonstrates respect and inclusion.

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Today's focus is on two leaders of the Diversity Committee. The Diversity Committee is structured as a firm-wide Steering Committee, which oversees the local offices, firm-wide procedures, training and budget. Each office has a committee of attorneys and staff focusing on the specific needs of that office.

Let's start with Christopher D. Ford. Chris is a partner in our D.C. office and a member of the Global Corporate Strategies & Telecommunications groups. He received his J.D. from Emory Law School in 1993 and a B.S. in Systems Engineering from UVA in 1987. When Chris joined the firm in 1993, he was located in Atlanta. In 2000, he moved to D.C. and became partner in 2001. *Chambers USA: America's Leading Lawyers for Business*, recently named Chris as one of the country's foremost lawyers in advising clients on outsourcing transactions. Chris co-chairs the D.C. Diversity Committee. He plays a significant role as a motivator for the committee to promote the firm's diversity initiative with a strong focus on recruitment, retention and advancement.

Angela Payne James is a partner in the IP-Litigation group. She received

her J.D., cum laude, in 1996 from Harvard Law School. She received a B.A. in Government in 1992 from Harvard College. Angela chairs the Atlanta Diversity Committee. Her vision that our diversity initiative address specific needs led to the implementation of the diversity liaison program for diverse associates, designed to assist the committees in determining what is working well and what needs improvement. Angela was the 2006 recipient of the Diversity Leadership Award. She serves on the Board of Hands on Atlanta, a non-profit organization providing volunteer opportunities throughout the Atlanta area.

Quote of the Day

“As someone once said to me, if you were asked to draw a picture of a landscape, would you rather have a box full of identical blue crayons or one with many colors?”

Angela Payne-James

Alston & Bird has many African-American lawyers and staff members who are leaders and contribute greatly to the success of the firm. We are fortunate to have an environment that welcomes diversity of ethnicity, gender, cultures, sexual orientation, thought, backgrounds, and interests.

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Share information on what's happening today in your department.

Group Discussion

How does knowing about some of the efforts of the leaders at the firm motivate you or your team?