

change in motion

Diversity Magazine

Spring 2010

Diversity 2010: Where Do We Go From Here



**Achievements and Challenges
Accolades and Benefits
Administrative Efforts
Diverse Cultural Initiatives**

ALSTON+BIRD LLP

Diversity 2010: Where Do We Go From Here

Steering Committee

Randall Allen
Blas Arroyo
Cathy Benton
Barbara Bryant
Nachael Bright
Rosalie Chamberlain
Cari Dawson
Dennis Garris
Mary Gill
Darren Hauck
Jamie Hutchinson
Angela Payne James
Jesse Jauregui
Debbie Jones
John Latham
Emily Leeson
Emily Mao
Claristine Pinckney
Liz Price
Pref Ramirez
Mark Sivin
Erin Springer
Murray Spruill



It is hard to believe it's been almost nine years since we formalized the firm's longstanding commitment to diversity and Ben Johnson asked me to serve as the firm's first Diversity Partner. The firm's commitment under Ben, and now Richards Hays, his successor, remains the same today as it was in 2001—to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to succeed at Alston & Bird.

We have accomplished a great deal. The firm is considerably more “diverse” and we have been recognized by our clients and numerous diversity organizations for our leadership in this area. The commitment at the top is unwavering and diversity is a key part of our culture. Each of us has reason to be proud of the firm. Yet, we have much more to do and the need for effective diversity management has never been greater.

The challenges presented by the economy affect every aspect of the law firm and require us to remain ever vigilant if we are to achieve our goal. Since taking the position of Diversity Partner, I have learned that there are no easy fixes and no programs or policies that ensure success. Rather, we will attain our goal inch by inch, based on the commitment of each and every one of us to this end.

As we turn into 2010 and reflect on what lies ahead, I envision this moment, as Winston Churchill noted, as “perhaps, the end of the beginning,” for much is still required. As you read this edition of *Change in Motion*, you will note achievements and activity across the firm, as well as our thoughts for the future. There is much of which we should be proud. And our work will continue.

John Latham, April 2010

Feature Article: Diversity Roundtable 2

- 6 Gilford Takes Reins of NAWL
- 8 Where's the Benefit? Then and Now
- 9 Reasons to Celebrate
- 10 A&B Supports Diversity
- 12 From Where I Stand
- 13 Diverse Attorney Spotlight



Diversity Roundtable

John Latham is the Diversity Partner at Alston & Bird. He recently sat down with partners on the firm's Diversity Board to garner a sense of what progress Alston & Bird has made on the diversity front in the last decade, and discuss what issues and goals board members foresee moving ahead.

“

I THINK WE HAVE A TRACK
RECORD THAT WE CAN BE
PROUD OF, BUT CERTAINLY
WE'RE NOT AT THE FINISH LINE.

”

Q.

As we talk today about our diversity efforts over the past 10 years, where do you think Alston & Bird is on the diversity continuum, especially with regard to the retention and advancement of diverse attorneys?

Mary Gill: While we are well on our way, there is still room to grow in this area, so I think of Alston & Bird as being in the late adolescent stage. At the same time, one of the strengths of the firm on the diversity front is that the vast majority of diverse partners are lawyers who began their career at Alston & Bird. That is an indicator that reflects much more than numbers. We have a strong group of individuals who have built a career with the firm and are now successful, with many of them serving in leadership positions. I think we have a track record that we can be proud of, but certainly we're not at the finish line.

Pref Ramirez: I would suggest that the firm is maybe a little farther along, and I would characterize our position as “young adult.” It doesn't seem to me that A&B lawyers have to grapple with the notion of diversity anymore—it seems like diversity is part of the firm's culture, part of the fundamentals. That's not to say that there isn't a lot of work yet to do, but I would phrase our diversity maturity in terms of young adult.

Q.

What do you think the firm has done well in the diversity arena?

Emily Mao: As Pref mentioned, I think the firm has done a very good job of making diversity part of its core culture. We also have excelled, I believe, in reaching out to diverse entities within the cities where we reside. The firm is very inclusive in giving any interested attorney or staff member the opportunity, support and encouragement to become more involved with those groups.

Pam Privett: I haven't been with the firm all that long, but I have been impressed since I joined with the high level of effort, energy and dialogue there is within the firm about diversity, and I think that is a really critical starting point. You have to be talking about it—you have to be focused on it—and the firm puts its money where its mouth is, as well. That has been impressive.



*Mary Gill, Partner
Securities Litigation*



*Pref Ramirez, Partner
Financial Services & Products*

Pref Ramirez: I think Pam has hit the nail on the head. Talk is cheap, and Alston & Bird has been willing to provide the diversity dollars, even when budgets are tight. For example, the diversity forums underwritten by the firm have been extremely effective and viewed as high-level support for diverse lawyers. Internally, the firm has provided an LGBT forum, an Asian-American attorney forum, a Women of Color Career Strategies Workshop, the Business Development Forum for Women and, most recently, the Hispanic attorney forum. These were geared toward, speaking from the Hispanic attorney forum perspective, providing great networking and cross-marketing opportunities. Our Hispanic attorneys were able to visit the Washington office, meet each other and think about ways to develop their careers going forward.

Q.

In which areas can the firm improve its diversity efforts?

Mary Gill: I think we should focus more on rising partners and young partners, and helping them to make the transition into becoming mature partners. I think we also can do a better job helping them learn the skill sets to become client attorneys—good client attorneys—really working on that phase of their professional development.

Q.

You're saying the firm needs to focus on people coming up for partner and who just made partner as much as it does the entry associate?

Mary Gill: Exactly. And the need may be more acute with the diverse lawyers. For instance, that young partner phase is a particularly vulnerable time for women who are beginning families. When you're talking about a senior associate or a young partner, typically you're talking about somebody who's in their early 30s, which generally is the time when women are starting to have families. That's a particularly vulnerable time for women in their careers, and firms such as Alston & Bird are susceptible to losing those women. In 2006, after an internal study the firm adopted a formal Alternative Career Path Policy. The policy openly addresses the challenges of balancing the demands of family and career. This new policy has been very helpful to our female attorneys, and I think we need to continually look at other issues to see where there are barriers to the growth and development of our attorneys—whether diverse or not.

“

TALK IS CHEAP, AND
ALSTON & BIRD HAS BEEN
WILLING TO PROVIDE THE
DIVERSITY DOLLARS, EVEN
WHEN BUDGETS ARE TIGHT.

”



Emily Mao, Partner
Employee Benefits & Exec. Comp.

“

... I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT
TO HAVE MORE DIVERSE
LEADERSHIP SO PEOPLE
CAN SEE THAT THERE ARE
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
EVERYONE WITHIN THE FIRM.

”

Emily Mao: I agree with Mary regarding the issues related to mentoring rising associates and new partners to give them better skills as managers of their careers. This will improve the retention of diverse and female attorneys. For example, I think getting the good work assignments is one part of the issue, but there's also a second part in that the attorneys have to be willing to aggressively advocate for their own careers. If you look at all of the people who have been at the firm for a long time and are successful, the one thing everyone has in common is that no one was initially afraid to stand up and advocate for themselves, and make sure they got the work or the experiences they wanted. The firm perhaps needs to do a better job of encouraging people to do that. I think it definitely is a two-way street, and associates need to take responsibility on their own and go get those good work assignments, be reliable and become the person that the partners always want to go to.

Pam Privett: I would agree with that, Emily. I think there's a real tendency for some young, diverse attorneys to be somewhat reluctant to raise their hand and advocate for themselves. In those cases, the firm should encourage them to take advantage of mentor relationships, whether the ones that the Diversity Committee provides or with someone the attorney trusts. I believe mentors are extremely valuable in retaining diverse attorneys, and the firm has done a great job in making such resources available—not only to diverse associates, but all associates. We need to keep this going.

Pref Ramirez: During the firm's Hispanic forum, one of the things we tried to impress upon associates was the need for them to take charge of their careers, and we've been talking about this very concept today in different ways. Ultimately, it will help young attorneys develop the skills that are needed to be effective counselors.

Emily Mao: Following up on that, I attended part of the Hispanic forum, and what I thought to be most beneficial, in addition to the practical tips that were provided to everybody, was that the associates who were there had a chance to interact with the presenters who can serve as role models for the associates. In terms of leadership opportunities within the firm, I think it's important to have more diverse leadership so people can see that there are opportunities for everyone within the firm.

Mary Gill: A corollary to that is building a network and visibility within the firm, as well as externally in their respective communities. One of the things I talk a lot about with the women's initiative is building alliances with the other offices and practice groups. I advise the firm's female attorneys to elevate their visibility, not just within their own office or practice group, but on a broader level, so that when those opportunities are available, people will know to call them. Attorneys should identify opportunities in community organizations and begin to build relationships within them, and with the community at large.

Q.

What can our clients do to help support diversity?

Pam Privett: I think one thing clients could do is make an effort to meet the firm's diverse attorneys and get to know who they are, so that they can put a face with the name. Attorney-client relationships are based on trust and confidence, and this can be greatly enhanced through forming personal relationships. Another thing that's come up is when a client is a member of a club that's not particularly friendly to one diverse group or another, they sometimes schedule meetings or events at the club. They

just don't think about it, but a little bit of consciousness about those issues would be helpful.

Mary Gill: To expand on Pam's first point, lead attorneys can also encourage their clients to establish direct contact with diverse members on their team. Ultimately, what you hope would happen is that the client will call that diverse lawyer directly. That is going to allow them to demonstrate that they are adding value to the team.

Another way clients can help us on the diversity front is to endorse individuals who are on reduced-hour schedules or alternative career paths. Until we have clients who embrace that concept, there will be resistance to wholehearted support of those individuals. I think it's the responsibility of the lead attorney to have that conversation—when it is established that the service that we are providing to each client is still seamless. That goes a long way toward supporting the alternative career path, and women and their careers as well.

Q.

What is the next stage in Alston & Bird's diversity evolution?

Mary Gill: I think Alston & Bird is at a crossroads, in the sense that the firm has had success and takes pride in where it stands on diversity issues—it's the beneficiary of a number of accolades in that regard. At the same time, as the firm moves through this challenging economy, we have to be mindful neither to rest on our laurels nor let the pressures facing the entire legal industry cause us to take our collective eye off the ball regarding diversity. It's important that we stay focused. In fact, at this 10th-year marker, it's an appropriate time to look back and really re-evaluate where the firm is and determine if it's lost any ground—are there areas that it needs to focus on, or move forward with? I'm pleased that we are doing that.

To me, one of the most worthy goals is that we reach the point where, when someone is talking about the Partners' Committee, you don't hear them say, "Well, we already have a woman, or we already have an African-American . . ." Whoever qualifies and has the support of the partners gets a seat at the table, regardless of what their color or stripes are.

Pam Privett: I think another step in Alston & Bird's evolution might be to continue to make the business case for diversity—loudly and continuously—especially while we are in this recession. It's easy, when everyone is worried about survival issues, to lose focus on an effort like diversity, but it's critical for the firm to continue to make the business case for diversity, because I think it's strong. I think it's getting stronger all the time.

Pref Ramirez: I agree that the firm needs to push forward with leveraging its diversity efforts to develop business. I think that's a way to get everyone to really understand how diversity helps—not just that it's the right thing to do, but that there is a business value to it as well. I think that's something that will promote what we've been talking about today.

John Latham: You each have raised valid and important issues, and your perspectives and leadership in this effort will continue to be critical to our future successes. Thank you all for participating in this discussion today. ■



*Pam Privett, Partner
Real Estate Finance & Investment*

“

... IT'S CRITICAL FOR THE FIRM
TO CONTINUE TO MAKE THE
BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY,
BECAUSE I THINK IT'S STRONG.

”

Gilford Takes Reins of NAWL

Lisa Gilford was inducted as president of the National Association of Women Lawyers on July 23, 2009, at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. She is the 82nd president of NAWL and will serve until July of 2010. The following is a reprint of her remarks made before over 300 ceremony attendees. They eloquently reflect the importance of diversity in Lisa's own life, as well as her personal dedication to diversity within the legal profession.

Ms. Gilford is a partner in Alston & Bird's Products Liability Group and practices out of the firm's Los Angeles office. NAWL celebrated its centennial in 1999. A fascinating history of the organization is available online at www.nawl.org.



It is with great humility, excitement and gratitude that I take office as president of the National Association of Women Lawyers. After a year filled with many unexpected events and challenges for our nation and the world, I would like to begin my tenure as president by offering my sincere appreciation. Thank you to all of our members, sponsors, honorees, distinguished guests and friends. Thank you to my partners and colleagues at Alston & Bird and thank you to my wonderful family for joining us here at our annual celebration.

Since I first became a member of NAWL several years ago, I've often reflected on the extraordinary, active hope and courage that began this organization's journey. As you've heard, NAWL began as the Women's Lawyer Club in 1899, right here in New York City. Long be-

fore most states admitted women to the Bar, long before most law schools admitted women to even study, a group of 18 women lawyers banded together to form a sisterhood. I think about this, and I wonder what an act of pure audacity to have started a club where affiliation was impossible for most of its perspective members. I mean, think about it: what kind of lawyers start a club when it is by and large against the law to join its ranks? These women must have been so much fun to hang out with. I wonder at their audacity, and I wonder at their courage. In order to have formed that club, they must have realized that there are some challenges in life one cannot take on by oneself. They must have realized that there is power and strength in a community banding together to make a difference, and that as that community comes together, it reaches out and grows

“

LONG BEFORE MOST STATES
ADMITTED WOMEN TO THE BAR,
LONG BEFORE MOST LAW SCHOOLS
ADMITTED WOMEN TO EVEN STUDY,
A GROUP OF 18 WOMEN LAWYERS
BANDED TOGETHER TO FORM A
SISTERHOOD.

”

and finds its voice. And sure enough, over time and through great effort, that voice can become the dominant one in the room. That voice can become the one that everyone listens to.

And despite all of the progress we have clearly made since 1899, the question

still weighing on our minds is how do we get all the way there? How do we put women in key leadership positions? How do we ensure pay equity? How do we ensure that our contributions are valued fairly? There are larger questions, too. How do we keep dominion over our own bodies and maintain our reproductive freedom? How do we ensure that everyone has the right to marry? To have their households recognized under the law and by society as the very life- and love-sustaining families that they are. Casting our eyes beyond our borders, how do we spread some of our good fortune to women around the world? How do we help our sisters and their daughters in other countries who still do not have equal access to education, the right to vote or professional advancement? At NAWL, we think the answer to these questions is the same as it was back in 1899. We have to band together. Not just those who practice at private law firms, but those of us in-house at corporations and government service and in the non-profit sector. And not just women lawyers, but men lawyers as well. We have to band together. For that is what precedent teaches us is the most effective way to unleash any change in the world.

I have had the honor of serving on the NAWL board with a dedicated group of sisters passionate about NAWL and its mission for four years now. If we could bottle the energy of this board, we could solve the world's energy crisis overnight. At NAWL, we come together to address some of the questions I just raised by presenting hallmark professional development programming. We offer best practices on retaining and advancing women through our summit report. We engage in appellate advocacy and key cases through our Amicus Committee. We assist and network with women lawyers in other countries through our international committee, and we speak out on injustices like Prop. 8 in my home

state of California. I've talked about the history of this organization a lot because we must always honor the past, but at the same time, we have to embrace the future. Eleanor Roosevelt said that the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams. So what do we at NAWL dream of for our future? What beauty do we foresee? I am in awe of what women were able to accomplish a hundred years ago without the tools we now have at our disposal. We have technology to keep us informed and in touch better than ever before. I'd like to harness the power of this technology over the next year to increase the flow of business from women to women and to further the goals of the NAWL chal-

“

AND DESPITE ALL OF THE
PROGRESS WE HAVE CLEARLY
MADE SINCE 1899, THE QUESTION
STILL WEIGHING ON OUR MINDS
IS HOW DO WE GET ALL
THE WAY THERE?

”

lenge, the vision of our former president, Lorraine Koc, which is to double the number of key women in key leadership positions in the legal profession by 2015.

The board was sworn in today by Justice Betty Ellerin, who worked with NAWL in 1960 and who serves as a shining example of what women can accomplish in the law. And we also have with us Jessie Kornberg of Ms. JD, an organization dedicated to women law students, and a number of women lawyers just beginning their careers. Our continuing challenge is to make NAWL as relevant and accessible for the women lawyers of Ms. Kornberg's generation as it was for those of Justice Ellerin's. And does this striv-

ing and organizing make a difference? As members and sponsors you may ask, what good do your dollars and time spent away from the billable hour really do? At NAWL, we conduct research on these questions and have a lot of data to measure our progress from year to year. But I'd like to offer you an example of progress from a purely personal perspective.

As Justice Ellerin mentioned, I was raised in Charleston, South Carolina, by a single mother and her mother, my beloved grandmother Isabelle, for whom my daughter is named. My grandmother was a nurse and my mother ran a substance abuse clinic for people in the throws of addiction who did not have access to expensive rehab. My mother and grandmother led lives of service and were loving and supportive caregivers. So I had two pretty remarkable examples of what women could give to their families and to the world. But after choosing the law as my profession, and choosing a private law firm as my practice venue, I was at a bit of a loss as to how to proceed. And I was even more at a loss as to how to succeed. It was an environment that was utterly foreign to me. What I needed, I decided, was a good lawyer. Or better yet, a few. I needed advocates. I needed to find people as supportive and inspiring to me as my mother and grandmother. I reflected on my relationships with my mentors over the years in preparing my comments to you today. One of my mentors is my law partner, Mark Rochefort. We certainly don't look alike. We don't really have that much in common beyond the law. But despite our differences, Mark took an active interest in my career and presented me with opportunities I might not otherwise have had were it not for him. So as much as we like to all credit ourselves for our own successes, if we

(Continued on p. 13)

Then and Now

Business Case for Benefits Diversity

To be an employer of choice, Alston & Bird attracts and retains the best attorneys and staff by providing them with the necessary resources and benefits to maintain their focus on practicing law. We are fortunate to have a very diverse population, and we want our benefits offerings to meet these diverse needs. There may be a lawyer who needs the Back-Up Care Advantage Program to provide childcare while they are at a trial in another state. Another lawyer may have an elderly parent who took a bad fall and needs in-home help. At the same time, there may be an employee who needs the support of the Employee Assistance Program to assist with a family crisis. And another lawyer may simply need assistance through the busy holiday season and utilize the firm's "2 Places At 1 Time" concierge service to purchase, wrap and deliver gifts. We want to provide our attorneys and staff with the peace of mind that the firm has resources available to assist them with whatever situation they may be facing.

Evolution of Benefits

The core of Alston & Bird's benefit program remains the same as in the late 1990s, but the benefits have been expanded to meet the changing needs of our workforce. For example, a decade ago, BrownRichards Family Referral Service was available to help new parents locate full-time childcare centers, but back-up childcare consisted of only one option—the Downtown Child Development Center in Atlanta. At that time, the three-month paid parental leave policy only applied to exempt women attorneys and staff, and fertility benefits were limited and only covered certain medications and medically necessary procedures. Ten years ago, the only option for obtaining a diversified retire-

2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A&B Children's Campus Opens ▶ High Deductible Medical Plan with HSA option ▶ Domestic Partner Coverage ▶ 2 Places at 1 Time Concierge Service
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Nursing Mother Rooms ▶ Profit Sharing increased from 5.7% to 7%
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Fertility Coverage Available ▶ Catastrophic Leave Sharing
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Medical Plans Begin Covering Autism-Related Expenses ▶ Dining Room open to Staff ▶ Expanded Parental Leave Benefits ▶ Retiree Medical Insurance ▶ Community Service Leave
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Tuition Reimbursement ▶ 9/75 and Compressed Work Week Program ▶ Marriage Counseling
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Non-Primary Caregiver Parental Leave ▶ In-Home Child and Elder Care ▶ Pregnancy Parking
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ PTO Leave Policy
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Teleworking ▶ Health Advocate
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Cancer Support Group ▶ Lap Band Procedure ▶ Nutritional Counseling ▶ Hearing Exams ▶ Acupuncture
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Aflac Specified Health

Pre 1999 Benefits:

At Work Banking Programs • Firm Paid Flu Shots • Job Sharing • Medical Opt Out Program
 DCDC Downtown Child Development Center (back-up care) • Smoking Cessation
 BrownRichards & Associates Family Referral Service • Adoption Policy • Weight Watchers at Work
 Massage Therapy • EAP • Aflac Supplemental Plans

ment portfolio in the 401(k) plan required attorneys and staff to make all the decisions in selecting, monitoring and rebalancing the available fund menu. The profit sharing for staff was at 5.7 percent versus the current 7 percent. There was no continuation of medical benefits for early retirees, and domestic partner coverage for medical, dental, vision and supplemental life insurance was not available.

Throughout the past decade, we have enhanced our comprehensive benefits program to encompass the entire life cycle of our employees. As the demand for high-quality childcare increased, the firm took advantage of the Georgia tax credit for corporate-sponsored childcare and opened The Children's Campus at A&B in October 2001. Our state of the art center offers full-time care for more than 100 children, as well as back-up care and a mother's day out program. At that time, Alston & Bird was the only law firm in the Southeast to have its own childcare center. Now, eight years later, many of the major firms have followed suit. Back-up childcare options are now available for attorneys and employees in all offices. The firm also expanded the parental leave policy to include non-exempt staff and non-primary caregivers. To help ease the transition back to work for new parents, the firm instituted nursing mother rooms, parent support groups and alternative work schedules. Additionally, retirement accounts can now be managed using Target Date Retirement Funds, which automatically rebalance and provide asset allocation according to retirement date. Retiree medical insurance is now available for attorneys and staff to help bridge the gap until they are eligible for Medicare. Our medical coverage expanded to provide marriage counseling, acupuncture, hearing exams and the lap band procedure. Finally, the fertility coverage was increased to \$25,000 and includes in-vitro procedures.

Best Place to Work

When the rubber meets the road, the firm takes real-life situations into consideration rather than taking a strictly "black and white" stance toward our policies. Alston & Bird prides itself on tailoring the firm's benefits around our lawyers' and employees' needs, and the needs of their families, as long as the benefits continue to make sound business sense. Many of our benefits are a direct result of individual situations our employees have and continue to face. Our goal at Alston & Bird is to be the best place to work—and practice law—in America. ■



Reasons to Celebrate

- Ranked #10 in Overall Diversity by the 2010 *Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms*; also ranked fifth with respect to GLBT and seventh with respect to Minorities in the guide
- Selected among *Multicultural Law* magazine's 2009 Top 100 Law Firms for Diversity; Top Law Firms for Women; Top 50 Law Firms for Associates; Top 25 Law Firms for African-Americans
- Selected among the 2009 Top 50 Best Law Firms for Women by *Working Mother* magazine and *Flex-Time Lawyers*
- Ranked #60 on the *Minority Law Journal* 2010 Diversity Scorecard, out of 250 AmLaw firms nationwide
- Scored 100 percent on The Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index for five consecutive years



Diversity Outreach

The Washington, D.C., office of Alston & Bird on November 12 hosted an art class from Ballou Senior High School for lunch and a tour of the office's art work. Ballou's district, located in Anacostia, suffers the highest crime and poverty rates in the metropolitan area, and the school does not receive support from a traditional parent organization. The Diversity Committee, in addition to the luncheon, is managing an ongoing initiative with the nonprofit Friends of Ballou to purchase digital cameras, art supplies and other necessary equipment for Ballou's art program.

Contributor: Emily Mao, Washington, D.C.



A+B

Supports Diversity

Hispanic Initiatives

On November 5 and 6, the Alston & Bird Diversity Steering Committee conducted a Hispanic Attorney Forum in the firm's Washington, D.C., office. The event was modeled on our 2007 Asian Attorney Forum; since that forum, we have experienced reduced attrition and an increase in cross-marketing among our Asian lawyers. The firm currently has 20 Hispanic attorneys, including four partners, two counsel and 14 associates. The purpose of the Hispanic Forum was to make connections, obtain and provide valuable information, and develop proposed actions that will be beneficial for our attorneys and for the firm as a whole. The event was a tremendous success, with positive energy and enthusiasm to work together to provide an environment that supports our attorneys, encourages prospective candidates to join the firm and is attractive to clients and prospective clients.

The D.C. office was chosen as host because the largest number of the firm's Hispanic attorneys are in the D.C. and

New York offices. The event began on Thursday evening with a cocktail reception and continued on Friday until mid-afternoon. Ramona Romero, in-house counsel at DuPont and immediate past-president of the Hispanic National Bar Association, attended the reception and was our keynote speaker for the lunch portion of Friday's agenda. Ms. Romero's topic was "Effective Business Development – Perspectives from an In-House Lawyer," and it proved to be an outstanding program. In addition to our Hispanic lawyers, attendees included Liz Price, Emily Leeson, Dennis Garriss and Emily Mao (co-chairs of the D.C. Diversity Committee), Diversity Partner John Latham, the firm's Diversity Manager Rosalie Chamberlain and Richard Hays, who attended the reception.

Prior to the conference, a survey was circulated to the Hispanic attorneys to determine issues, concerns and successes in the areas of recruitment, retention and advancement. Roger Cerda and Charles Cantu, associates from the firm's Los Angeles and Dallas offices, respectively, presented the results of the survey to

the larger group during the forum. Pref Ramirez, Jesse Jauregui and Blas Arroyo provided key pointers on business and professional development, as well as professional and bar association and other organizational involvement.

The action items established by the attendees are as follows:

- ▶ Conduct mentorship lunches in each office, to include partner-in-charge, group leaders (where applicable) and partners.
- ▶ Conduct quarterly videoconference meetings for the Hispanic attorneys to continue networking, cross-marketing and other activities to be identified by the group and the professional development team.
- ▶ Utilize the existing Hispanic Attorney email distribution list to highlight achievements, opportunities and events.
- ▶ Identify schools among our current recruiting list where opportunities may exist to provide events, either on campus or at the firm, to draw interest from Hispanic law students. Also, determine if additional schools where there are larger populations of Hispanic students should be added to our recruiting list.

- ▶ Identify at least one of our Hispanic lawyers to join the Hiring Committee.
- ▶ Help identify organizations for attorney involvement and encourage individuals to seek leadership roles.
- ▶ Promote a broader perspective of the firm's diversity by increasing awareness with the Business Development Department, partners and practice group leaders, to be sure we are promoting our Hispanic attorneys within our diversity efforts.
- ▶ Provide an environment that encourages our Hispanic attorneys to speak up with concerns and ideas as to how we can continually improve.

The Washington, D.C., event was a great success, and participants expect to see tangible benefits for the firm, much like those that were seen in the wake of the previous Asian Attorney Forum.

Contributor: Pref Ramirez, New York

African-American Initiatives

Alston & Bird has worked extensively behind the scenes to promote African-American initiatives, both inside the firm and beyond its walls. Alston & Bird continues to be a significant sponsor of the National Bar Association (NBA); founded in 1925, the NBA is the oldest and largest association of African-American lawyers and judges, representing their interests across the United States. In the Atlanta area, the firm is also a significant sponsor of the Gate City Bar Association, the local affiliate of the NBA.

Alston & Bird is also active in supporting the Black Entertainment and Sports Lawyers Association (BESLA), which has hosted several informative panels in New York City, Atlanta and Washington, D.C., and will host upcoming panels in Los Angeles this year. The firm also works with the J. L. Turner Legal Association, the African-American bar association in Dallas.

Contributor: Rosalie Chamberlain

Women of Color Initiatives

In October, five women of color partners from the Atlanta and Los Angeles offices of Alston & Bird attended the fifth annual Corporate Counsel Women of Color Career Strategies Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. Corporate Counsel Women of Color® is an organization of women attorneys of color who serve as general counsel, assistant general counsel, corporate counsel, in-house legal counsel and in other capacities for Fortune 1000 companies, Forbes 2000 companies and not-for-profit corporations in the United States of America and abroad.

Nearly all of the conference attendees, including 550 minority women, were in-house counsel, and the vast majority of those were senior in-house counsel. Attorneys from over 350 corporations were in attendance, including those from some of the most well known and highly respected businesses in the world. The event proved an excellent opportunity for sharing ideas, supporting diversity in the legal profession and developing business relationships with our current and potential clients.

Gloria Santona, Corporate Executive Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary of McDonald's Corporation, was the keynote speaker and Diamond Award honoree at the event. Cari Dawson, a partner in Alston & Bird's Litigation & Trial Practice Group, was a featured speaker at the conference, presenting on a panel entitled "Building Alliances to be a More Effective Business Partner with Your In-House Clients."

In 2010, the national conference will be held in New York City, and networking receptions will be held in Atlanta, Chicago, Charlotte, Dallas, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Alston & Bird will be participating in a number of these events.

Also of note is the fact that the women of color attorneys have held lunches over

the course of the year featuring discussions on diversity initiatives within the firm, professional development, effective mentoring and business development opportunities.

Contributor: Cari Dawson, Atlanta

Asian-American Initiatives

As a firm committed to diversity initiatives, Alston & Bird has been a strong and dedicated sponsor of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). As in years past, through the support of the firm, a number of APA attorneys from three offices attended the 2009 NAPABA National Convention in Boston. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for our APA lawyers to network and exchange ideas with in-house counsel and other legal professionals regarding the practice of law as an APA. During the National Convention, Shiraz Tangri, a partner in our Los Angeles office, was named as a co-chair of the Pro-Bono & Community Service Committee of NAPABA. Shiraz also presented to the NAPABA board of directors a summary of the firm's pro bono work for Kids In Need of Defense (KIND), and the board approved KIND as its national pro bono project.

Not only does Alston & Bird support NAPABA, but the firm also actively sponsors the local NAPABA affiliates. Through our platinum sponsorship of the Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association (GAPABA), and with the active participation of some of our attorneys, GAPABA submitted a proposal and successfully secured the NAPABA National Convention for Atlanta in 2011. With the NAPABA National Convention coming to Los Angeles in 2010 and Atlanta in 2011, Alston & Bird looks forward to working with NAPABA to showcase the firm at both national events.

Contributor: Trinh Huynh, Atlanta ■



From Where I Stand

Cathy Benton, Chief Human Resources Officer, Alston & Bird.

Alston & Bird continues to see diversity as a business imperative—a core element in the firm's dedication to its clients and employees. Since its beginning, the firm has been a leader among law firms in promoting equal opportunity for women, minorities and the LGBT community. For example, Alston & Bird was one of the first law firms to hire women lawyers, adding Ellyn Strickland in 1924. We continued hiring and promoting women and took radical steps toward gender equality in the workplace by paying women competitive salaries and empowering them with greater independent responsibility.

As the 1960s produced great changes in society, and societal barriers across the United States were torn down, Alston & Bird likewise fostered and supported the new era. The firm hired Orinda D. Evans, who later became the firm's first woman partner and the first woman partner in any major Atlanta law firm. In 1969, the firm hired its first African-American attorney.

By retracing our rich heritage, we gain valuable insight and inspiration. And, by following in the footsteps of our predecessors, we help to ensure that their important legacy endures. As we continue to innovate with groundbreaking initiatives, we also build upon our past and move toward a more diverse and successful future.

An important phase of our journey toward a more diverse Alston & Bird is to provide time and resources for honest dialogue. In 2003, we mandated that all lawyers and staff participate in foundational diversity training; our goal was to foster a receptive climate for having the hard discussions about the challenges facing a diverse workforce. Our diversity awareness component offers a language, framework and opportunity to think about and discuss issues of diversity in a safe, non-judgmental environment. While this accomplishment may seem relatively small, it ensures we meet our people where they are—and further

validates the firm's long-standing commitment to diversity.

Three powerful trends in modern times have made diversity an important issue that will be focused on in the years ahead. First, the global market in which U.S. law firms do business continues to be highly competitive. Second, the makeup of the U.S. population continues to change dramatically. Third, individuals require that we celebrate our differences instead of compromising our uniqueness to "fit in."

Here are a few emerging trends that we'll be focusing on over the next few years:

DEVELOPING A DIVERSE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Virtually all law firms agree that advancing diversity among their executive leadership teams is the right thing to do. Firms that have significant and enduring representation of minorities in their top ranks are more likely to attract the most talented minority candidates for all C-suite positions. Diversity at the top provides a competitive advantage by attracting and representing a broad range of people, understanding their needs and providing services that meet those needs. We believe when employees see their value reflected in the composition of the leadership team, they are more likely to feel engaged and connected to the firm.

DIVERSE WORK TEAMS

Diversity in the workplace has taken on new importance as changing economics prompt us to downsize and restructure our administrative service departments into flatter, more decentralized entities. The result is that collaboration within a group of diverse people who approach problems from different perspectives produces more creative and effective outcomes. In our dynamic service environment, we are seeking every opportunity to harness the innovation and creativity born of working in teams.

EMBRACING AGE DIVERSITY

The challenge of multigenerational workplaces is building up to be the employment issue of the next five years and beyond. Attention needs to be focused on the older, as well as the younger generations. Each generation brings attributes and attitudes that have value to the workplace, and each has a role to play in the overall, enduring success of our firm. In the next few years, the trend may be more seniors returning to work after retirement or postponing retirement. There can be economical savings by using seniors in contract positions that ebb and flow into the workforce, in order to meet temporary project needs. ■

Diverse Attorney Spotlight



Alston & Bird recognizes that promoting diversity must be a continuous process that we pursue from year to year. We are committed to hiring, developing, retaining and promoting individuals who reflect the society in which we live and the global clients that we serve. In that vein, we are proud to give mention to a new attorney in our New York office, Ana Cruz-Backman.

Ana Cruz-Backman is counsel in the Financial Services & Products Group, concentrating on project finance and infrastructure development, with an emphasis on Latin America. Ana was born and raised in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, and served as president of the Law Student Hispanic Law Association

when she was studying at University of Chicago. Remaining connected to this association after she graduated, she met one of our New York partners, Pref Ramirez, at a function for the Hispanic Law Association in New York. Pref invited Ana to learn more about Alston & Bird. She joined the New York office in November 2009.

“As a Hispanic woman lawyer, new to the firm, I was impressed by the Hispanic Attorney Forum held in Washington last November. It brought together attorneys from all offices and promoted a better understanding of issues Hispanic attorneys may face. I am inspired by the firm’s commitment to bringing awareness and understanding of differences to our employees.”

— Ana Cruz-Backman, Counsel
Financial Services & Products

Gilford Takes Reins of NAWL

(Continued from p. 7)

are truthful about it, many of the good things that come to us in this profession happen because someone clears the path and points the way. As a lawyer, I am certainly a beneficiary of the work and sacrifices of the founders of the Women’s Lawyer Club of 1899 and of the Suffragettes and women war volunteers and women who fought and marched for equal and civil rights. We are all beneficiaries. I have also learned invaluable lessons from many women of my generation and from my sisters here at NAWL. But I am also the beneficiary of the work of many men who listened and learned the lessons those women taught, and who, without much recognition or fanfare or hope of personal gain, did the right thing. I have seen very clearly that the message of diversity and inclusion

NAWL and other organizations have worked so hard to craft has, in fact, been delivered and received because it has produced tangible results in my own life and career. NAWL is a federation whose mission is to advance women in and under the law. But NAWL recognizes that this is a mission that cannot and should not be accomplished by women alone—we have to band together. A true sign of our progress is our willingness to work together to make the profession a hallmark of equality, excellence and integrity.

I look forward to another tremendous year here at NAWL, and I am honored to serve as its president. I will continue to use the example of the 18 women of the Women’s Lawyer Club and all of you to motivate and inspire me. ■



The National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) is the leading national voluntary organization devoted to the interests of women lawyers and women’s rights. Founded over 100 years ago, NAWL has historically served as an educational forum and an active voice for the concerns of women in the legal profession.

■ ■ ■

ATLANTA

One Atlantic Center
1201 West Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30309-3424
404.881.7000

CHARLOTTE

Bank of America Plaza
Suite 4000
101 South Tryon Street
Charlotte, NC 28280-4000
704.444.1000

DALLAS

Chase Tower
Suite 3601
2200 Ross Avenue
Dallas TX 75201
214.922.3400

LOS ANGELES

333 South Hope Street
16th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071-3004
213.576.1000

NEW YORK

90 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016-1387
212.210.9400

RESEARCH TRIANGLE

Suite 600
3201 Beechleaf Court
Raleigh, NC 27604-1062
919.862.2200

SILICON VALLEY

Two Palo Alto Square
Suite 400
3000 El Camino Real
Palo Alto, CA 94306-2112
650.838.2000

VENTURA COUNTY

Suite 215
2801 Townsgate Road
Westlake Village, CA 91361
805.497.9474

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Atlantic Building
950 F Street, NW
Washington, DC 20004-1404
202.756.3300



www.alston.com