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CHANGE in motion
PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

2011 ISSUE

WOMEN LEADERS OF ALSTON & BIRD
Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “Remember always that you not only have the right to be an individual, you have an obligation to be one.” Embedded in the words of this great humanitarian and former First Lady is a very clear lesson on leadership: it is our duty to achieve our highest selves, and thus serve as beacons for our peers, helping them reach their own higher selves. This holds true throughout Alston & Bird, at all levels, where the importance of our individuality—our diversity—is fostered and celebrated.

In this issue of Change in Motion, we highlight several prominent women in leadership positions within the firm, all of whom personify Eleanor Roosevelt’s inspiring words. These women, like their peers in the firm, embody the characteristics of leadership: strong, successful and willing to help others.

The firm is recognized throughout the nation, as noted in its recent #11 Vault diversity ranking, for the example it has set time and again in the realm of diversity. While we still have work to do, we are pleased with what we have accomplished so far. With the help of everyone at Alston & Bird, including the women leaders featured herein, we will achieve our goal.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Change in Motion.
Donna Bergeson: These Three Things

Donna Bergeson likes to speak in threes, she admits, laughing. It’s how the current chair of Alston & Bird’s Partners’ Committee and former leader of the firm’s health care practice breaks down questions and organizes their answers.

Donna has been with the firm for 27 years, starting her legal career as a litigator. Subsequently in the mid-1990s, she transitioned into the firm’s burgeoning health care practice, where she now represents such clients as Emory Healthcare, HCA, Inc., Ardent Health Services and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

She knew she wanted to be a lawyer for as long as she can remember. During her early childhood in New Jersey, she would visit the Big Apple, walking the streets with her father and staring up at the skyscrapers. “There was never a doubt in my mind,” she recalls, “that someday I would be a lawyer and work in those tall buildings.”

Her dream was no flight of fancy. After working part-time during high school in a local firm in rural South Carolina, Donna put herself through college and law school, an undertaking fueled by hard work, determination and frugality. “Anyone who knows me knows I can make Lincoln blink on a penny,” she laughs.

So determined were her efforts that she was in law school at the age of 20 and a working lawyer at 23.

When asked if she was inspired in her career and personal life by a particular woman, Donna doesn’t hesitate. “My mother,” she asserts with conviction. And, when she speaks of her mother, it’s hard not to see the parallels between the two women, the perseverance passed down like a birthright. Donna’s mother was born in 1923—“just three years after women could vote”—and Donna traces her own love of learning back to her mother’s experiences: “She went to college right out of high school, which was really unusual for a woman of her era.” She married after earning her undergraduate degree, and proceeded to have six girls (Donna is the youngest). At 50, Donna’s mother went back to school, earning her Master’s and teaching the blind and visually impaired. “I’m really proud of her,” Donna says, emotion tingeing her voice, “and I wish I had her patience.”

Change in Motion recently spoke to Donna about her practice, family and her perspectives on leadership and diversity.

Q. Donna, tell us about your practice.

Health care is highly regulated; there are a lot of special rules that apply to health care providers that don’t apply to others. My practice specialty is to be familiar with those rules so I can help my clients achieve their objectives without
Q. You are currently in your fourth year on Alston & Bird’s Partners’ Committee, and winding down a one-year term as its chair. How do you describe your role?

The firm’s Partnership Agreement describes firm management as two-fold: the managing partner and the Partners’ Committee, of which the managing partner is a member. The managing partner is like a CEO, and the chair of the Partners’ Committee is like the chair of a board of directors. The Partnership Agreement does not delineate specific duties of the chair, but rather gives leeway to the incumbent to define the role. After being elected chair, I called a couple of prior chairs and solicited their insight. Those discussions led me to believe there’s a lot of opportunity for the chair to make the position what he or she envisions. But I also discerned a three-part function. The first is to serve as a confidant and advisor to the managing partner. There are some issues that are very delicate, and the managing partner needs someone with whom to discuss them before sharing them more broadly. So the managing partner will usually call the chair of the Partners’ Committee to discuss things that are particularly sensitive.

Oftentimes, the managing partner will call the chair to discuss a certain issue before it is disclosed to the rest of the Partners’ Committee. In that sense, you might say that the chair is the first among equals in providing advice to the managing partner.

The second function would be to serve as the titular leader of the Partners’ Committee. The Partners’ Committee is an independently elected group that sets policy for the firm, determines compensation and is responsible for the strategic direction and financial performance of the law firm.

The third function is what I would describe as serving as the “face of the firm,” when the managing partner is not available. That could include responding to press inquiries or community issues. One personal goal I set for myself as chair was to be more visible in offices outside of Atlanta. I have tried very hard to work in other offices this past year and celebrate the achievements of our partners. When our partners get recognition that I am made aware of, I like to share in their celebration.

And actually that’s the fun part—getting to know my partners. I would say the best part of being on the committee is getting to know my partners as we go through our partner planning process. Every member of the Partners’ Committee plans a group of lawyers. The group that is planned rotates each year. Since this is my fourth year on the Partners’ Committee, I have planned almost every group. It is a privilege to sit down with my partners and see the pictures in their offices, hear about their families and learn about their practices.

Q. Having done both, what do you see as the difference between leading a major practice group and chairs the Partners’ Committee?

Being a practice group leader is the hardest job in our law firm. Partners in those positions have to juggle hands-on management responsibilities with the active practice of law. All leadership positions require juggling priorities, but they are not as human-intensive as being a practice group leader. The Partners’ Committee role, for example, is more strategic, financial and analytical. The practice group leaders have hands-on human management responsibility. They are in charge of running a business, whether it’s the health care business or the products liability business. The firm asks them to master people management skills, business planning and development, and financial stewardship of firm resources, all while they’re practicing lawyers at the same time. They’ve got a lot on their plates, and they’re on the front line.

Q. What has been the most rewarding part of leadership for you?

Learning from others. Working at Alston & Bird allows me to work with the smartest of the smart, from our lawyers, to our clients, to our staff. We can learn from all of them. And I love learning. Sure, there are days that have their challenges, but I work with smart people, do interesting work and my daily routine includes coming to a beautiful office. It actually is remarkable how fortunate I have been.

Q. What has been the most challenging part?

Keeping my billable practice vibrant. Serving in a firm leadership role takes time to do well, and it is an honor to be afforded the opportunity. I don’t want to take the confidence of my partners for granted. The fact is, however, that there are only 24 hours in a day. If you are taking time away from your billable practice to work on firm management responsibilities, there’s less time for development for your practice.

Q. You’ve raised three children as a working attorney here at Alston & Bird; with all your various responsibilities, how have you juggled it all?

I would say that it’s a daily juggle—I say “juggle” not “struggle” because I think it’s a privilege to have those opportunities, and they are rewarding in and of themselves. Some days my work takes priority, and some days my family takes priority. It just depends on the day. I have a husband and three terrific children, and they are all very important to me. But they also know that my work fulfills me and I am happiest when I’m busy, productive and challenged.
I remember when my oldest son was in second or third grade, and he did a project at his school that identified his favorite things. It was a list of questions “all about me”—the child’s favorite color, favorite food, that sort of thing. At the bottom it said, “the person I admire the most is,” and there was a blank. And then it said, “because,” and there was a blank. My son answered, “my mom [because] she works hard.” I put that in my office and showed it to every client. I was so proud of it, and I still have it.

Q. What advice would you offer women entering the corporate or legal ranks with aspirations of being a leader in her respective field?

I have three pieces of advice. The first one I would say is work hard. It is required. Nothing good comes easily, and if you want to succeed, there is no alternative for hard work. But hard work alone is not enough. The second thing you need is persistence. Vince Lombardi said, “It’s not whether you get knocked down, it’s whether you get up.” I’ve gotten knocked down plenty. Anyone who wants to lead has to be prepared to get knocked down—and then be persistent and courageous enough to get back up. The third thing I would say is to appreciate your friends. In order to be a leader, you need to have people who will stand by you. Also, your friends are the ones who will keep you humble and tell you when you’re wrong, while also ensuring you feel supported. Successful leaders all have a good support system. So work hard, be persistent and appreciate your friends.

Q. As a woman leader in the firm, what do you see as the firm’s role when it comes to diversity?

I once heard John Latham, our diversity partner, speak to a summer class, and he said, “My job as the diversity partner is not to make sure that any particular group gets special visibility. My job is to make sure that everyone has a level playing field.” His point was that everyone should have the same opportunities to show what they can do. Our culture is getting more diverse, which is a wonderful thing because there is so much that we can learn from people who are not just like us. If we can consider other points of view when organizing our law firm, then we will be better prepared to represent our clients.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us.

You’re very welcome.
The FIRST Responder

Elizabeth Germain
Director of Administration, Washington, D.C. Office

I am a general problem solver,” Elizabeth Germain says of her role as Alston & Bird’s director of administration for the Washington, D.C. office, located in the heart of the city’s rejuvenated Penn Quarter. She is responsible for a 70-person staff that supports over 100 lawyers and policy advisors, as well as the daily operations of the office itself, from oversight of every administrative department to management of the six floors of space in the Atlantic Building. Her job, in essence, is to ensure that an active, multi-practice law office—and all that entails—runs smoothly seven days a week.

“I am the first stop if you are not sure who to contact [about an issue],” Germain asserts. “It does not matter if you are an attorney, secretary or part of the administrative staff. If I don’t have the answer myself, I will connect you with the person who does.”

She has a hand in virtually everything affecting the office and those who work in it, from parking issues to structural repair to reviewing the office’s finances. She develops relationships with architects, outside vendors and local businesses. She has fielded all manners of special requests, coordinating every sort of renovation, from the simple painting of walls to, in one case, the introduction of a former partner’s baby grand piano to his 7th floor office. After securing that said partner would pay all the move’s expenses, “we did everything to make it happen,” Germain recalls.

Beyond the day-to-day problem solving, Germain works directly with Washington, D.C. Partner-in-Charge Dennis Garris on the strategic direction of the office and interacts with all of the attorneys on a daily basis, making sure their professional needs are being met. She keeps abreast with new technology, daily basis, making sure their professional needs are.

Germain, a graduate of Hollins College (now University) in Roanoke, Virginia, remembers when there were “only 13 lawyers and a handful of staff” upon her arrival at the D.C. office. She helped build its infrastructure as the firm enjoyed several subsequent growth spurts. “We established the IT, Human Resources and Attorney Hiring departments, and we managed moving everyone over to this new building.” In 2006, the firm moved to the Atlantic Building, which once served as the home of the legendary 9:30 Club, located in the hub of the city’s arts corridor (the office sits adjacent to Ford’s Theatre). She oversaw construction in the space and coordinated the logistics of the move.

As the D.C. office has expanded and evolved, Germain has also adapted, managing a support team entrusted with helping the firm’s attorneys navigate through the fast-paced and demanding legal world.

Even with a full plate of responsibilities, Germain makes a point to talk to every new hire, regardless of his or her level, about “the criticality of communication and the need to communicate with each other about everything; whether something is bothering you, whether something went well—anything. That is just how Alston & Bird operates.”

Germain also strives to lead by example, taking the work seriously, without becoming “hypnotized” by it in the process. “You can love what you do,” she says, “but it is not who you are.” Dovetailing with that concept is the belief that by encouraging employees to be who they are, the firm ultimately empowers what they do. Respecting others’ perspectives and differences is an important factor in a company’s success, and leaders like Germain work hard to maintain this type of work environment.

Over the course of her 13 years with Alston & Bird, Germain thinks this commitment to diversity has strengthened the firm from the inside out. She has seen the diversity program “grow and blossom” over the span of her time here, building on those core components of the firm’s culture that have made it so successful over the years: showing respect for each other, embodying a collaborative nature and utilizing great communication all reinforce the firm’s dedication to diversity. And it begins with each individual. According to Germain, “the employees really are the culture.”

Beyond her role as director, Germain is active on several committees within the firm, including the Sustainability and Pro Bono committees, serves as a crisis manager and chairs the D.C. office’s Good Health and Social Committees. Germain also serves as the president of the Association of Legal Administrators’ Washington, D.C. chapter, and recently received her CLM certification.

“Not every firm supports their administrative staff’s involvement in their respective professional organizations,” Germain explains. “That is something that should not be taken for granted, and I think the longer you are at Alston & Bird, the more you appreciate that this is the norm. When you start talking to other people outside of the firm, you realize this is a pretty fabulous organization and the firm is supportive of their employees.”

At the end of the day, she offers three keys to success for those who carry the ambition to lead: “First, do what you enjoy—discontent is hard to hide, and can affect the culture of your environment. Second, you do not always need to be right—listen to what people are saying with your eyes and your ears. Third, and most importantly, have fun! If you love what you do, you will have fun—you have to have a sense of humor, and Alston & Bird definitely lets you have that.”
Janine Brown’s parents expected her to follow in the footsteps of her chemical engineer father or her math teacher mother, but in her sophomore year of college, the idea of a career in business took root, and by graduation she had decided law school best suited her future plans, though there were no other lawyers in her family. ‘Today, Janine is recognized for her sharp, analytical and creative approaches in multimillion-dollar M&A transactions. And in her role as partner-in-charge of the Atlanta office—the first such position for the office and a first for a woman attorney—she uses these same strengths, as well as her bright smile and congenial nature.

In early 2008, newly elected managing partner Richard Hays contacted Janine and asked her to serve as the Atlanta office’s first official partner-in-charge. Previously, the managing partner had also served as the de facto office head, but Hays, noting that the firm’s rapid growth and emphasis on strategic planning would force him to spend large blocks of time in other offices, needed someone on the ground to manage the Atlanta office, which now comprises 420 attorneys—equal to many mid-sized firms. Janine speculates that part of Hays’ selection was because she is a woman partner in a firm that has served in past leadership positions—on both the legal and administrative sides—is centralized in the Atlanta office, an infrastructure long established before the new position was created. “The partner-in-charge position that resides in Atlanta is a good bit different than the positions in our other offices—much of what I try to do is stay out of the way, because I would not even begin to think that I could jump in when something has in fact been running so smoothly for so long.”

So Janine lasers in on those initiatives that address issues that impact the Atlanta office in a much broader way. In 2013, for instance, the firm will be moving exclusively to the landmark One Atlantic Center, one of the two towers in which it currently resides, reorganizing its space through a multi-phase remodel that will bring the entire office under one (high-rise) roof. Janine has worked extensively on the planning of this 365,000 square foot reorganization for months, and her energy and analytical insight have been invaluable. “There are so many pieces to the puzzle—how are we going to operate in the next 15 or 20 years? How are we going to best use technology? How are we organized now, and how will that change in the years to come?” she asks, electricity in her voice. “These are all important questions to consider, and there are many valuable perspectives to contemplate.”

Beyond its walls, she serves as an ambassador for the firm, working tirelessly on the boards of Spelman College, Piedmont Healthcare, the Georgia Justice Project and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; she is also a member of the Duke Law School Board of Visitors. In these capacities, Janine is in regular conversation and communication with many local executives—a face of Alston & Bird to the community, and a living example of the culture it maintains.

But Janine lights up most when discussing a favorite aspect of being Atlanta’s partner-in-charge: working on staff appreciation events. “We have such an incredible staff and there are many reasons to celebrate what everyone does—it really is a lot of fun and among the things I enjoy the most.” She is not unmoved by the opportunity her position affords her to work with people she would not have otherwise. And while she has always been considered one of the most approachable attorneys at the firm, “I feel like it has put me in much closer touch with many people, particularly here in Atlanta, that, as a corporate lawyer, I would not have been in touch with. When you have a chance to spend some time with folks and roll up your sleeves and work on a project, you can just see what a huge impact other people are making.”

Which itself hints to a fundamental point to be made: Janine still operates a thriving corporate practice, in addition to her responsibilities as Atlanta’s partner-in-charge. “ Virtually all of our partners who have some administrative title are full-time practicing lawyers. We are working with clients on a daily basis and managing relationships and also fulfilling these other administrative duties,” she points out.

She manages to balance all of this—a thriving corporate practice, a challenging additional role as partner-in-charge and her personal roles as a wife and mother—by focusing on the bigger picture. “It’s not a daily register of, ‘Okay, I have to balance all of these things...
at all times.” Different situations demand different hats; a support network both at work and at home is key. “It’s looking at things from the broader perspective of this concept of balance. It’s recognizing that there will be times when you are not getting to everything you would like to be able to get to, and that there are incredibly competent people around who are more than capable of pitching in.”

When pressed to describe the insights she’s learned in the course of her various leadership roles, Janine balks, preferring to focus on the learning still to come. She considers the very notion of a “leader” a sort of misnomer; in Janine’s eyes, the best we can hope for is to keep striving for excellence, setting an example for others and provoking the sorts of questions that elicit positive change. “I hope that I’ve been able to serve as a mentor to some—I know how important those mentoring relationships have been for me, both those in the past and the ones I continue to enjoy. With women, in particular, there can be very much a preconceived notion of how one should present herself, how things should be conducted,” she says. “We can talk all day about stereotypes—but what I think is critically important is this: be the very best professional you can be, but don’t feel you need to box yourself in. You’ve got to be your own person.”

In terms of the bigger diversity picture, Janine—who serves on the firm’s Diversity Committee—is optimistic. “I think that the firm is in just a terrific position to continue to enhance the diversity of our profession. What we aspire to do is ensure that all of the incredibly talented individuals who are coming through our doors are seeing those opportunities, seizing them and developing them, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity or sexual orientation. The legal profession is in a place where we have a great opportunity to do just that—if you’ve got the talent and the drive to solve problems with creativity, you can come in and play a really important and meaningful role here.”

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With over 24 years of professional experience in the diversity field, Elizabeth (Beth) Cole has seized her new role as Alston & Bird’s diversity coordinator and hit the ground running, not missing a beat to help lead the firm’s efforts to maintain its high standards and high visibility with regard to diversity issues in the legal workplace.

The former national program manager of the American Institute for Managing Diversity and recipient of Profiles in Diversity Journal’s 2008 Diversity Leader Award, Beth joined the firm in April, and works closely with John Latham, the firm’s Diversity Partner, as well as the firm’s Diversity Steering Committee, to support the firm’s overarching diversity goals, as well as oversee programs, events and sponsorships.

Cole also works with the members of the firm’s Women’s Initiative, a group of female partners and associates from each of the firm’s 10 offices that leads efforts to support the firm’s diversity steering committee. It serves as a catalyst for change and provides internal and external opportunities for women to meet, share experiences and build their careers.

Beth’s work also involves extensive interaction with external diversity organizations, including the Minority Counsel Program, Corporate Counsel Women of Color, the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers, the Hispanic National Bar Association, the Human Rights Campaign, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association and The National LGBT Bar Association. She worked with the Georgia State Bar’s diversity steering committee and has been involved in the Atlanta Diversity Managers’ Affinity Group (ADMag), a think tank comprised of representatives of organizations from all sectors of the community, for 13 years.
Diversity in Action

Diversity is a core value of Alston & Bird. We believe that a diverse law firm is critical to providing the quality of legal services our clients expect, and we have worked to create and maintain an open, inclusive and nurturing workplace and a diverse workforce of attorneys and staff. Our goal is to provide an environment where everyone feels valued and has the opportunity to succeed.

ATLANTA

Atlanta Diversity Committee Member Shares the Stage with Mrs. Obama

Janine Brown, Atlanta office partner-in-charge, stood with First Lady Michelle Obama at Spelman College’s commencement on Sunday, May 15, 2011. Janine serves on the Spelman College Board of Trustees. Mrs. Obama was the commencement speaker and received an honorary degree.

Firm-Wide Summer Associate Meeting

On Wednesday, June 1, 2011, the summer associate class from all offices arrived in Atlanta for the firm-wide Summer Associate Meeting, which took place over the course of three days. The kick-off event took place at the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, and began with a special guest speaker joining the group in the newly restored Ebenezer Baptist Church. The Rev. Dr. Albert Paul Brinson spoke to the group about growing up with the King family in the heart of the civil rights movement. Following his presentation, attendees were invited to visit the gravesite of Dr. King and Coretta Scott King before meeting in the King Center for a cocktail reception. This event, which highlighted Atlanta’s rich cultural history, was touted by the summer associates as one of the highlights of their time in Atlanta.

Newly restored Ebenezer Baptist Church

Lee DeHihns, a partner in the Environmental and Land Use Group, and Rev. Dr. Albert Paul Brinson

Rev. Dr. Albert Paul Brinson and Angela Payne James, a partner in the Litigation & Trial Practice Group and chair of the firm’s Atlanta Diversity Committee

2012 Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms Rankings:

#11 Best in Diversity
#8 Minorities
#10 LGBT
#16 Women

100% on The Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index for six consecutive years

Selected among Multicultural Law magazine’s 2011 Top 100 Law Firms for Diversity; Top 25 Law Firms for African-Americans; Top 50 Law Firms for Partners; Top 100 Law Firms for Women; Top 50 Law Firms for Associates
Panel Discussion: “Diverse Perspectives from Within the Firm”

On Wednesday, June 15, 2011, the Atlanta Diversity Committee held a panel discussion for the 2011 Summer Associates annual Meet Your Diversity Committee Lunch-n-Learn entitled “Diverse Perspectives from Within the Firm.” Moderated by Janine Brown, partner-in-charge of the Atlanta office, six attorneys representing a vast array of diverse perspectives shared their personal experiences with diversity at the firm and how Alston & Bird’s diversity efforts have helped them both professionally and personally.

On January 13, 2011, the California Diversity Committee hosted an MCLE event that provided two hours of elimination of bias and substance abuse prevention credits for our current and prospective clients and Los Angeles attorneys. California Supreme Court Justice Carlos Moreno (who had just announced his retirement from the bench), Shedrick Davis (formerly with JPMorgan Chase) and Kathleen Kim (from BP) were our esteemed panelists, speaking about challenges and successes they had experienced as diverse attorneys.

David Mann from The Other Bar (a non-profit organization that addresses substance abuse issues in the legal profession) provided a riveting one-hour presentation about his personal experience with substance abuse while he was a practicing attorney. Almost 100 people attended the event. After the program, the Los Angeles office hosted an event with food catered by a minority-owned business.

Gala of the Mexican American Bar Foundation 20th Anniversary Scholarship & Awards Dinner Gala

The 20th Anniversary Gala of the Mexican American Bar Foundation Scholarship & Awards Dinner was held on June 18, 2011, in Los Angeles. Jesse Jauregui, partner in the Labor & Employment, Global Services and Litigation & Trial Practice Groups, serves on the Board of Trustees and had the honor of introducing his friend, former California Supreme Court Justice Carlos Moreno, who was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from MABF. The event was notable on several fronts, including the fact that the organization surpassed the $1 million mark in fundraising, which included substantial contributions by corporate sponsors such as Verizon, Wal-Mart and prominent law firms such as Alston & Bird LLP. The event was extremely well-attended, with over 650 guests, including many leading members of the Los Angeles legal community.
Deborah Yoon Jones Elected to Board of Directors for Center for the Pacific Asian Family and Serves Second Year as President of the Asian Business League for 2011

Deborah Yoon Jones was recently elected to the board of directors for the Center for the Pacific Asian Family (CPAF). CPAF is a non-profit organization committed to assisting Asian Pacific Islander (API) women and their families who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. CPAF established the first multilingual hotline in 1978 and the first multilingual and multicultural emergency shelter in the nation that specialized in service to API domestic violence survivors. In addition, for the second consecutive year, Deborah is acting as the 2011 President of the Asian Business League of Southern California (ABL). The ABL is a non-profit and non-political organization that facilitates relationships that generate business opportunities for individuals, entrepreneurs and companies throughout Southern California. ABL provides educational programs for the business community, including topics such as technology and e-commerce, real estate development and the Pacific Rim business climate.

Annual California “Women of Distinction” Awards

On Wednesday, March 30, 2011, Alston & Bird presented its annual California “Women of Distinction” awards at a cocktail reception in celebration of the firm’s female clients and friends. Awards were given to two California women of distinction, Dawn Haghighi, assistant general counsel of Princess Cruise Lines, Ltd., and Sophia Esparza, CEO of the Chicana Service Action Center.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

On Wednesday, June 22, 2011, the Washington, D.C. office sponsored the Second Annual Ballou Senior High School Graduation Party, “A Celebration of the Passports to Success Scholarship Recipients.” As part of a pipeline initiative, the D.C. office of Alston & Bird has been involved with the school and its non-profit fundraising arm, “Friends of Ballou,” teaming up with corporate partners such as Toyota, Coca-Cola and the George Washington University, to name a few, helping raise $1 million from partnerships and individual donors. Friends of Ballou supports basic expenses, after-school tutoring, a Saturday academy, teacher training, scholarship programs and the new building fund.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Dave Gatton, U.S. Conference of Mayors; John Marshall, Morgan Stanley; Rahman Branch, Principal of Ballou Senior High School; and Dennis Garris, partner-in-charge of the Washington, D.C. office

LEFT TO RIGHT: Tom Biaz of the Chicana Service Action Center; honoree Sophia Esparza; Peter Masaitis, partner in the Products Liability and Litigation & Trial Practice Groups; Lindsay Carlson, senior associate in the Litigation & Trial Practice and Labor & Employment Groups; and Terry O’Neal, Chicana Service Action Center

LEFT TO RIGHT: Ruth Jones, Director of Resource Development, Ballou Senior High School; and Emily Mao, partner in the Employee Benefits & Executive Compensation Group and co-chair of the D.C. Diversity Committee. Emily is holding the Leadership Circle Award, which was presented to Alston & Bird by Ballou Senior High School in recognition of the firm’s investment in and advocacy on behalf of the students, families and staff of Ballou Senior High School