

DIVERSITY MATTERS

DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY

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To our readers:

I am pleased to report that since reaffirming our commitment to diversity at the annual partners' meeting in February, we have already made notable progress in our diversity initiative. In the 2006 diversity action plan, we decided to focus on increasing representation of minority attorneys at the firm. As of the end of October, the total number of minority attorneys at the firm had increased by nine from 20 to 29 since the end of 2005. In addition, our 2007 second-year summer associate class will have at least five minority students, compared to just one in 2006.

We also set out to increase our participation in diversity-related events in order to keep the diversity awareness high within the firm and to demonstrate the firm's commitment in the legal community. Our records indicate that by the end of the year, we will have participated in almost 30 such events, compared to 10 last year. Similarly, the number of attorneys attending diversity events almost doubled from 28 attendees last year, as did the number of events for which the firm provided financial sponsorship.

In addition, the firm has been actively participating in diversity programs initiated by various bar associations around the country. This year, our Kansas City office and Wichita office signed onto the Diversity Action Plans in Kansas City, Missouri, and Wichita, Kansas, respectively. In Omaha, we again participated in the Second Annual Nebraska Legal Diversity Summit organized by the Nebraska Bar Association, including providing financial support and participating on the panel discussion. The Denver office continued its participation in the Colorado Pledge to Diversity program sponsored by the Colorado Bar Association. In our Scottsdale office, Paige Martin was appointed earlier this year to serve on the Arizona Bar Association's Diversity Task Force to increase minority representation in Arizona.

Creating a culture that embraces and celebrates diversity requires unwavering commitment over the long haul. The solid progress made this year is a meaningful step in our long journey, but should not be taken as an excuse for complacency going forward. In particular, as our recruiting efforts continue, we will also need to invest ourselves in retaining and promoting diverse attorneys at the firm.

Daphne Hyun-Jin Aronson
Director of Diversity

NAACP and Kutak Rock File a Civil Rights Action Over Breakup of Omaha Public School District

On May 16, Kutak Rock filed a civil rights action lawsuit as co-counsel with the NAACP and the Educational Fund against the State of Nebraska in the U.S. District Court in Omaha. The suit, filed on behalf of the NAACP, students and other local organizations, contends that the recent Nebraska legislation breaking up the Omaha Public Schools into racially identifiable districts is unconstitutional. In mid-September, in a separate suit brought by the Chicano Awareness Center, Douglas County District Judge J. Michael Coffey issued a temporary injunction preventing the division of OPS. Coffey ruled that singling OPS out by breaking it into multiple districts violated several sections of the Nebraska Constitution. A substantial portion of the firm's work in this lawsuit is being provided on a pro bono basis.

Kutak Rock Kicks Off INROADS Internship Program

As part of this year's diversity initiative, the firm partnered with INROADS, a premier international organization for career development of outstanding minority college students. Through this partnership, we welcomed our first pre-law intern, Jessica Merino, to the Omaha office. A junior at University of Nebraska-Omaha, Jessica successfully completed her 10-week internship program which provided exposure to a wide variety of the firm's operations, from the service center to the library. Jessica also participated in a four-week Pre-Law Institute program at the University of Nebraska College of Law for selected minority students. She will return to the firm next summer to continue her internship program.

Women Attorneys' Book Group in Atlanta Provides Unique Forum

Formed in the fall of 2005, the Women Attorneys' Book Group meets monthly to discuss a business- or law-related book over lunch. These brown bag lunch meetings provide a unique opportunity for mentoring, networking and creating a support system for our female attorneys in Atlanta. The books discussed so far have included "Blink," "Discover Your Strengths," "Women-at-Law" and "Nice Don't Get the Corner Office." The Book Group has recently applied for professionalism CLE credits from the Georgia State Bar Office of Continuing Education. Karen Thompson from the Richmond office is also a member of this Book Group.

Rock Awarded for Work on Nebraska's Minority and Justice Task Force

On May 22, Harold Rock received the Visionary Award for his role as a tri-chair of the original Minority and Justice Task Force of the Nebraska Bar Association. Mr. Rock is a current member of the Nebraska Minority and Justice Implementation Committee.

Rupe Receives President's Award for Service in the Wichita Bar Association's Diversity Action Plan

Alan Rupe was recognized with the President's Award for his service in the Drafting Committee of the Wichita Bar Association's Diversity Initiative Action Plan. The firm signed onto the Wichita Bar Diversity Plan in May this year along with other area law firms.

Martin Appointed to Arizona Bar's Diversity Task Force

Paige Martin was appointed to the Arizona State Bar Association's Task Force on Diversity in the Legal Profession. Paige is also the Vice President of the Arizona Women Lawyers Association and a steering committee member of the Arizona Women Lawyers Association in Maricopa County.

Glos Named Director of Orange County's Asian-American Bar Assoc.

Congratulations to Chris Glos, who was recently appointed to the Asian-American Bar Association in Orange County.

Kutak Rock Expands Role of Director of Diversity Nationally

On May 26, the Executive Committee approved expanding Daphne Hyun-Jin Aronson's role as the Director of Diversity nationally. This position was initially created for the Omaha office to focus with dedicated effort and attention on recruiting, retaining and promoting diverse attorneys and staff. With national promotion of this position, the firm will be able to coordinate and pursue various diversity programs among its offices in a cohesive manner.

Diversity Event Highlights

Arizona's Asian-American Bar Assoc. 10th Annual Installation Banquet

Ten of our Scottsdale attorneys attended the 10th Annual Installation Banquet of the Arizona Asian-American Bar Association on February 16 in Phoenix, Arizona. The Scottsdale office also made a financial contribution for the event.

MCCA-2006 South/Southwest Region Employer of Choice Dinner

Nine attorneys attended the Minority Corporate Counsel Association's 2006 South/Southwest Employer of Choice dinner on February 23 in Houston, Texas. MCCA hosts a series of dinners in selected regions of the country to honor leadership on diversity issues.

Hispanic National Bar Foundation Future Latino Leaders Law Camp

The law camp is a week-long program for Hispanic high school students to provide exposure to the legal profession. The program was held at George Washington University this year. Michael Sillyman, Secretary of the Hispanic National Bar Foundation, attended the law camp, and Christina Adams volunteered for the mock trials.

Diversity Event Highlights

National Women Lawyers Assoc. Annual Luncheon

Kutak Rock was a sponsor at the NWLA annual luncheon in New York on July 18. Nine attorneys represented the firm at the luncheon, where the NWLA challenge was issued calling for law firms and corporate law departments to increase women representation at the equity partner and chief legal officer level to 30% by 2015.

Hispanic National Bar Assoc. Annual Convention

Michael Sillyman and Antoinette Hewitt attended the HNBA annual convention in San Francisco this year.

Heartland Diversity Legal Job Fair

The firm attended the Heartland Diversity Legal Job Fair (HDLJF) in Kansas City on September 8-9. In its second year, almost 170 minority students came to interview with 35 employers.

Rocky Mountain Diversity Legal Career Fair

Cindy Shearon attended the Rocky Mountain Diversity Legal Career Fair (RMDLC) in Denver on September 15. Kutak Rock has participated in RMDLC every year since its inception.

Second Annual Nebraska Legal Diversity Summit

The Omaha office provided underwriting sponsorship for the Second Annual Nebraska Legal Diversity Summit held on October 6 in Omaha. Daphne Hyun-Jin Aronson participated in the panel discussion on "Hiring and Retention of Attorneys of Color" at the summit.

Atlanta Women's Foundation Annual Luncheon

As an "enterprising" sponsor for the Atlanta Women's Foundation, six attorneys from our Atlanta office attended the Foundation's luncheon on October 24, along with a few of the firm's clients. There were over 1,700 attendees at the luncheon, and our sponsorship was noted in the program materials.

Arizona Women Lawyers Association 27th Annual Convention

Our Scottsdale office sponsored the Arizona Women Lawyers Association Annual Convention on November 3 in Tucson. The theme of this year's convention was "Women Lawyers Making a Difference", and the Honorable Mary M. Schroeder, Chief Judge of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals provided a keynote speech.

Third Annual American Indian Symposium

Mary Daniel, an associate in the Kansas City office, presented at the American Indian symposium on November 8 at the University of Missouri – Kansas City. This year's symposium was entitled "Continuing Our Journey."