

DEI

DIVERSITY
EQUITY &
INCLUSION

UPDATE

ROBINS KAPLAN LLP

FALL 2021 | INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Robins Kaplan is committed to attracting, retaining, and advancing top diverse talent who will help drive innovation and success. Diverse teams are more creative, nimble, and generate stronger results. Through our efforts, we will leverage the power of our collective diversity. By doing so, we redefine and expand the possibilities of success for our clients and ourselves.

PRIDE MONTH CLE:

ISSUES FACING THE TRANSGENDER AND LARGER LGBTQ COMMUNITY



During Pride Month in June, the LGBTQ+ Resource Group hosted an informative CLE program via Zoom. The CLE included updates on legislation targeting the transgender community that threatens access to healthcare, sports competition, public accommodations, and other key issues. Rebecca Bact served as the event coordinator and panel moderator. The panelists were Jess Braverman, Legal Director of Gender Justice, and Heron Greensmith, Senior Research Analyst at Political Research Associates. Discussion included overviews of state and federal transgender legislation, litigation, and inmate civil rights.

EVENT RECAP



JEFF HOVDEN



ELLEN LEVISCH



MOLLY SANDSTROM

LAVENDER LAW PARTICIPATION

In July, the firm sponsored the Lavender Law Conference and Career Fair, the largest LGBTQ+ legal conference in the country. The National LGBTQ+ Bar hosted the conference in a virtual format for the second year in a row; however, planners are hoping to host next year's conference in Los Angeles.

Firm involvement included participation in the Lavender Law Career Fair Booth and virtual conference attendance by attorneys Jeff Hovden and Ellen Levisch, and staff member Molly Sandstrom. The firm also participated in the LGBTQ+ Bar Index diversity survey, which assists law students in evaluating perspective employers.

Using the virtual career booth, Hovden and Levisch interviewed several associate candidates. Recruiting now has access to the attendees who submitted resumes.

Sandstrom attended several of the conference sessions and shared that as a staff attendee, "To my surprise and delight, the seminars were accessible and educational. I learned about pressing legal issues under the new administration. I heard from groundbreaking judges who reminded me how far we have come in fights for equality and representation. I participated in passionate discussions about attempts to ban trans women and girls from sports. My attendance was not only informative but also deeply meaningful and affirming as a queer and nonbinary firm member. . . . **Lavender Law was a powerful testament to the LGBTQ+ community that declared loudly - you are not alone.**"

WOMEN OF ROBINS KAPLAN (WoRK) GROUP EVENT

In August, the firm hosted a firm-wide webinar titled "Mental Health and Returning to the Workplace" with guest speaker Mandi J. Buckner MHA, CCC, CPS. The Women of Robins Kaplan (WoRK) Resource Group and the Family Resource Group (FRG) co-sponsored the event. As a Return to Work, Workplace and Peer Consultant specializing in the field of mental health, Ms. Buckner's presentation focused on equipping listeners with tools for building resilience, achieving goals of wellbeing and recovery in light of the ongoing pandemic, and efforts for returning to the workplace. Ms. Buckner also provided insight on developing self-awareness regarding stress level and circumstances (whether attributed to young children, aging parents, or other life scenarios.) She also identified tips for adapting and responding to needs through self-care.

The Authentic Happiness Character Strengths Survey Ms. Buckner referenced can be accessed by creating an account at:

<https://www.authentic-happiness.com/questionnaires/survey-character-strengths>

MENTAL HEALTH AND RETURNING TO THE WORKPLACE

WOMEN of ROBINS KAPLAN
WoRK

Co-Sponsor: Family Resource Group



Mansfield Rule
Certified *Plus* 2021 Powered by DIVERSITYLAB

Robins Kaplan achieved Mansfield 4.0 Certification again, and for the first time achieved *Plus* status for 2021. The *Plus* status indicates that, in addition to meeting or exceeding the baseline diversity certification requirements, the firm reached at least 30 percent underrepresented lawyer representation in a notable number of current leadership roles.

"We are proud to once again achieve Mansfield Certification," said Robins Kaplan Managing Partner Steve Schumeister. "In a year filled with ongoing challenges, we have shown that our steadfast commitment to diversity and inclusion doesn't waiver and we continue to raise the bar for ourselves with the addition of the 'Plus' status."

The Mansfield Rule was launched in 2017 by Diversity Lab in collaboration with Bloomberg Law and Stanford Law School. It was named for Arabella Mansfield, the first woman admitted to the practice of law in the United States. The initiative was inspired by the NFL's Rooney Rule, which requires every NFL team to interview at least one person of color for head coach vacancies. In the years following its implementation, the league doubled the number of head coaches of color hired.

DEI SPOTLIGHT

**DIVERSITY SPOTLIGHT:
RASHANDA C. BRUCE, ASSOCIATE | MASS TORT**



What is one fun fact about you?

I have coached cheerleading for students in grades K-12 for the past 15 years.

What inspires you?

My grandfather. He was a selfless, hardworking man. We lost him this past winter but I always admired his tenacity through life's challenges.

Why is diversity, equity and inclusion important to you?

DEI is important because it allows us to embrace our differences--race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs, etc. Everyone deserves an opportunity, and to feel accepted for who they are without fear of judgment or exclusion.

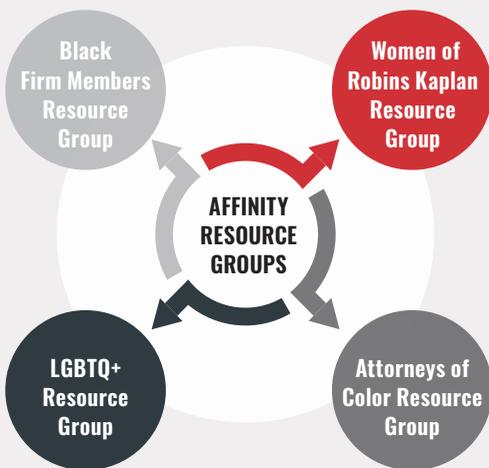
What are you looking forward to most this winter?

Spending the holidays with my family. We always create some of our favorite memories together.

**AFFINITY GROUPS' NAMES CHANGE
FROM WORK GROUPS TO RESOURCE GROUPS**

Robins Kaplan's affinity groups play a very important role in achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the firm. The change in nomenclature for the groups is in response to several questions from firm members regarding what is a "work group" and how to become part of one. The groups with the former title of Working Groups are focused on planning and executing group events and initiatives; and are now identified as Resource Group subcommittees. These changes clarify for perspective and current firm members the structure and purpose of the Affinity Resource Groups.

THE FIRM'S AFFINITY RESOURCE GROUPS ARE:



ATTORNEYS OF COLOR RESOURCE GROUP - led by Christine Yun Sauer: Attorneys who identify as Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, American Indian/Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and two or more races.

BLACK FIRM MEMBERS RESOURCE GROUP - led by Brandon Vaughn: Attorneys and staff who identify as Black or African American.

LGBTQ+ RESOURCE GROUP - led by Daniel Allender and Doug Lancet: Attorneys and staff who identify as LGBTQ+.

WOMEN OF ROBINS KAPLAN (WoRK) RESOURCE GROUP - led by Holly Dolejsi: Attorneys who identify as female.

Note: the Family Resource Group is a sub-group of WoRK.



CHRISTINE YUN SAUER



BRANDON VAUGHN



DANIEL ALLENDER



DOUG LANCET



HOLLY DOLEJSI

AFFINITY RESOURCE GROUP PARTICIPATION

Moving forward, new firm members who self-identify in on-boarding materials in a diverse category will be invited to opt in to join that resource group within 15-30 days of joining the firm. The timing allows DEI staff to receive diversity designations from HR. Additionally, allies are welcome to participate in resource groups.

Resource Group leaders and members will collaborate with DEI staff to ensure groups continuously address member needs and align all activities with the firm's broader DEI mission and objectives.

For more information regarding DEI Affinity Resource Groups, please see the DEI Committee Affinity Resource Group Guidelines available on [RK Hub](#) or email DEI-Team@RobinsKaplan.com.

CONGRATULATIONS



CONGRATULATIONS
SHARON ROBERG-PEREZ

ROBINS  KAPLAN LLP



CONGRATULATIONS
CASEY MATTHIESEN

ELECTED PRESIDENT
OF THE MINNESOTA
AMERICAN INDIAN BAR
ASSOCIATION (MAIBA)



MAIBA
Minnesota American Indian Bar Association