

DIVERSITY

moving forward



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F O R D & H A R R I S O N^{LLP}
THE RIGHT RESPONSE AT THE RIGHT TIME



Dawn Siler-Nixon

Letter from the Diversity and Inclusion Partner

As I reflect upon 2011, I am truly amazed at the good work our firm has done and the impact we have had on the communities we serve and am spurred forward to do more in 2012. As you will see from the pages of this, our fourth publication of *Moving Forward*, we continue to work hard towards our diversity and inclusion goals. In 2011 we expanded from 19 to 24 offices. Yet, each office and the individuals in our Ford & Harrison family continue to be independently and collectively focused on ensuring that in everything we do diversity and inclusion is a top priority. This means that in all work performed, all outreach undertaken, and all strategies developed, diversity and inclusion is at the forefront.

In 2011 we focused on our firm's diversity and inclusion goal to build and sustain an inclusive workplace that mirrors the increasing diversity of our clients and the communities we serve and that will enable the firm to attract and retain top talent and cultivate long-term client relationships. We developed and integrated three strategic objectives in 2010, which included an aggressive three-year plan. I am proud to report that all of our 2011 objectives were not only met, but exceeded:

I. RECRUIT, RETAIN, ADVANCE – Integrate recruitment, retention and advancement into our firm's overall objectives, through continuing to: create partnerships within the community; develop an environment that is truly supportive of change and fosters good working relationships; and create an achievable pathway to advancement within the firm.

2011 Objective - Build on the guidelines established in 2010, by developing and implementing an orientation program for pipeline mentors/mentees, and make recommendations for future mentors.

II. CREATE A BETTER WORKPLACE – Foster a culture and work environment that focuses on developing a tailored plan for internal and external mentoring and opportunities for cross-cultural dialogue to eliminate subtle bias and stereotyping and to open minds to alternative solutions.

2011 Objective - Develop, disseminate and analyze data from the internal employee opinion survey and publish the results through an interactive presentation in each Ford & Harrison office. Compile recommendations for future diversity goals for discussion.

III. CREATE AN ENGAGED AND ACTIVE WORKFORCE – Develop and implement a plan for utilizing the firm's "assets" – its members, to create a culture of inclusion through innovation, collaboration and risk taking for change.

2011 Objectives –

Gen Y Task Force – Create a joint task force of generationally diverse attorneys to address specific issues facing the firm and to provide drivers for needed change.

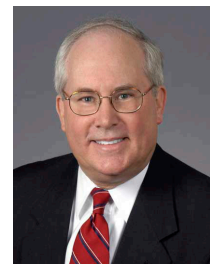
Integration of Marketing Plan – Work with the marketing committee to develop a system of individual recognition for completing and exceeding diversity goals identified in individual marketing plans.

It is an honor and a privilege to be a partner in a firm where everyone is aligned together to focus on such an important goal. Our firm's commitment to excellence is fueled by our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We understand it is a driver to our ultimate success and know that you and all of our clients are on the same bus. Enjoy the articles that follow and know that these are just a small sample of the things Ford & Harrison is doing as we continue Moving Forward!



Anti-Defamation League Partners With Ford & Harrison and Atlanta Braves on Anti-Bullying Campaign

On June 15, 2011 Ford & Harrison sponsored a firm-wide CLE program on cyberbullying. The program was conducted by Holli Levinson, Education Director for the Southeast Region of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Levinson gave an engaging and informative presentation about the ways in which parents can protect their children against cyberbullies in schools. She also discussed a number of cases in which the courts have attempted to articulate legal standards to guide public school administrators who are faced with disciplinary issues arising from cyberbullying both on and away from school campuses. Levinson noted that with the growth of the Internet and social media such as facebook and Twitter, an increasing number of students are sending malicious, harassing and intimidating messages and images to their peers. The legal issue is whether public schools have the right to discipline – including whether to suspend or expel – students who engage in cyberbullying. As Levinson’s presentation pointed out, the line is not always clear.



By: Bennet Alsher

Recently, the ADL established a partnership with the Atlanta Braves to combat bullying. The new campaign is aimed at fighting name-calling and bullying within schools. The Braves gave the ADL a grant of \$5,000 to support classroom programs that teach students and teachers about how to combat bullying at schools.

UM BLSA Banquet



By: Zascha Abbot

On April 9, 2011, Ford & Harrison’s Miami office was a Platinum sponsor for the University of Miami School of Law’s Black Law Students Association (“BLSA”) banquet. The BLSA strives to articulate and promote the educational and professional needs and goals of black law students by fostering relationships between black law students, UM alumni and other attorneys in the community. During this banquet, the students had an opportunity to share their experiences and accomplishments from the past year.

Several Ford & Harrison attorneys attended the banquet including the office’s administrative partner Elizabeth M. Rodriguez, Chris Curran and myself.

Military Month

During the month of July, Ford & Harrison honored active duty military and some of our military veterans within the firm by doing video spotlights of myself and Atlanta partner Andy McClintock. Andy was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant and flew CH-53E helicopters from May 1985 until 1990, when he was assigned to an infantry battalion. I served with the USMC during the Vietnam War.

We also did a special video spotlight from Afghanistan with of-counsel John Lowrie, who is currently serving with the Afghanistan Justice Sector Support Program. This is a program funded by the U.S. State Department to help the post-Taliban government develop and strengthen its criminal justice sector.

Additionally, to show appreciation of and support for our active duty military, Ford & Harrison organized a firm-wide care package drive for employees with family members or friends who are currently deployed abroad.



By: Tom Garwood

Ford & Harrison Sponsors the Seventh Annual Corporate Counsel Women of Color Career Strategies Conference

Ford & Harrison sponsored the seventh annual Corporate Counsel Women of Color (“CCWC”) career strategies conference held in Los Angeles from October 5 through 7 at the Beverly Hilton hotel. Diversity and Inclusion Partner Dawn Siler-Nixon attended from the Tampa office. Partner Vista Lyons attended from the Dallas office and associate Michelle B. Abidoye attended from the Los Angeles office.

CCWC is a not-for-profit organization of approximately 2,500 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. Its mission is to facilitate discussions with law firms, companies and corporations in an effort to heighten awareness and to emphasize the importance of diversity. Recognizing that women of color face unique challenges, particularly with respect to the glass ceiling, other institutional barriers, and minimized opportunities to form networks with those of similar interests and backgrounds, the organization seeks to remedy these problems by investing in its members and advocating for diversity.

This year’s conference was filled with informative sessions, workshops, inspirational speakers and opportunities to network. Teresa M. Sebastian, Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary for Darden Restaurants, Inc., served as the keynote speaker and was honored with the CCWC Diamond Award of Excellence in recognition of her achievements. Other speakers included Judge Glenda Hatchett, Dr. Robin L. Smith and Stedman Graham.

At the conference, Laurie N. Robinson, founder and CEO of CCWC, distributed results of a CCWC online survey for in-house women of color. The results provided the following recommendations for enhancing the progression of women of color attorneys in a law firm setting: take affirmative steps to include women of color on key projects, meetings with clients and networking events; create individualized development plans for first- and second-year attorneys; provide quarterly feedback to women of color to ensure they are receiving adequate training and challenging work assignments; provide opportunities for women of color to develop relationships with their managing partner; and ensure that women of color have opportunities to interact with corporate clients.



L-R: Michelle Abidoye, Dawn Siler-Nixon, Vista Lyons



By: Michelle Abidoye

The conference also provided practical career advice on topics such as avoiding career burnout, managing stress, the art of reading nonverbal communication and how to advance in your career. Next year’s conference will be held in Chicago in October 2012.

Memphis Bar Association High School Summer Law Intern Program



By: Asia Diggs

This summer, Ford & Harrison’s Memphis office completed its third year of participation in the Memphis Bar Association’s Summer Law Intern Program. Since its creation in 2007, the Summer Law Intern Program has been geared at exposing Shelby County high school students to the “real world” practice of law and encouraging them to consider law as a career. The program also seeks to develop and nurture an interest in the legal profession among young people from underrepresented groups, with the long-term goal of increasing diversity in the legal profession. Students are afforded the opportunity to work 15 hours a week during a four-week period in private law firms, corporate legal departments and government agencies. Additionally, the interns participate in group activities on Friday afternoons during the program, including a meeting with local judges; a Q&A with local attorneys; and a college/financial aid session for both the interns and their parents/guardians. After the successful completion of the program, interns receive a \$500 stipend. The MBA Summer Law Intern Program was honored with the 2009 American Bar Association Partnership Award. The award recognizes, on a national level, the community wide effort this program generated in improving diversity in our profession.

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This past summer, the Memphis office hosted Keyma Goss. Keyma gained experience in conducting research, reviewing deposition transcripts and attending court appearances in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee.

Ford & Harrison's Dallas Office Sponsors Lambda Legal's 2nd Annual Landmark Dinner Helping to Raise Record Funds

Ford & Harrison sponsored Lambda Legal's 2nd Annual Landmark Dinner on August 13, 2011 at the W Hotel in Dallas, Texas. Dallas partner, Vista Lyons and Tampa associate Aisha Sanchez attended the sold-out event featuring keynote speaker and local attorney Lisa Blue Baron.

Lambda Legal is a national organization that strategically uses litigation, education, and public policy initiatives to fulfill its mission to achieve full civil rights recognition for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgendered individuals, and those with HIV. This was the second year for the Landmark Dinner, which raised more than \$120,000 for the organization. Previously, Lambda Delta's largest regional fundraising event was the 2010 Landmark Dinner, which raised \$50,000.

Ford & Harrison's support of this year's Landmark Dinner coincides with the firm's goal to build and sustain an inclusive workplace that mirrors the increasing diversity of our clients and the communities we serve. This year's Landmark Dinner will take place on August 12, 2012.



L-R: Vista Lyons, Aisha Sanchez

Ford & Harrison Sponsors the Black Women Lawyers' Association's Spring Scholarship Luncheon



L-R: Candace Hansford, Rebekah Childers, Suheily Natal, Bettina Stanford

On April 13, 2011, the Black Women Lawyers' Association of Greater Chicago (BWLA) held its annual scholarship luncheon. This luncheon included a lively panel discussion entitled: The State of the Union: The Role of Race and Gender at the Intersection of Law, Business and Human Rights. Panelists included the Honorable Wiley Branton Jr.; Karen Ripley, Chief Legal Officer for MillerCoors LLC.; author and professor, Adrien K. Wing, and Cheryl Blake, Enterprises and Transactions Counsel for A&E Television. The discussion was moderated by Cheryl Mayberry McKissack, President and CEO of Nia Enterprises. Attendees earned 1.0 hour of professional development continuing education credit for attending.

At the event, held at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, BWLA awarded five scholarships to Chicago area law and undergraduate students. In addition to their monetary awards, law student scholarship winners also received \$1000 vouchers to be applied toward their BarBri Bar Review course. The scholarship application process included submission of a

written essay, a review of transcripts and an in-person interview with members of the scholarship board. Earlier in the year, BWLA also awarded book scholarships to three Chicago area law students.

Chicago office associate Suheily Natal was the 2010-2011 BWLA Scholarship Board Chairman and Ford & Harrison sponsored the event. All attorneys from the Chicago office joined Suheily and Diversity and Inclusion Partner Dawn Siler-Nixon at the luncheon. Suheily is pictured above with the three 2011 law student scholarship winners.

Young Women's Leadership Symposium

On February 26, 2011, Ford & Harrison sponsored and participated in the 2011 Young Women's Leadership Symposium. The Symposium was started through the Tampa Chapter of the Florida Diversity Council (FLDC), which is a member of the National Diversity Council. The FLDC was created to enable organizations to foster diversity through partnerships, advocacy and education. The mission of the Young Women's Leadership Symposium is to promote the development of future business leaders by giving young women access to mentors and businesses that support their goals.

This year's keynote speaker was Collins Tuohy, subject of the Oscar-winning movie "The Blind Side." Tammie Fields, weekend anchor at 10 Connects, was the emcee at the event. A panel of female executives, including Rita Lowman, President of American Momentum Bank; Stephanie Wright, Project Manager for Dr. Faith Felder; Dr. Catherine Lee, Assistant Professor of Surgery, Division of Oncologic Sciences at the University of South Florida; and Jan Barr, Vice President of Human Resources for Senior Home Care, shared their challenges and success stories with the young women.



"This is a great way for the business women in the community to encourage and mentor these young women and hopefully make a difference in their lives." said Tracey Jaensch, managing partner of Ford & Harrison's Tampa Office and board member of the FLDC.

Connections for Success Program



By: Chad Shultz

Ford & Harrison hosted the Connections for Success program for a second year. Connections for Success is a mentorship program Ford & Harrison created for finalists in the Boys & Girls Club of America's (BGCA) Southeast Region Youth of the Year (YOY) competition.

The BGCA YOY recognition is the highest honor a Club member can achieve. Since its inception in 1947, the YOY program has celebrated youth who have overcome enormous odds and demonstrated exceptional character and accomplishments. These deserving young people are recognized for service to their Club and community, academic performance and contributions to their family. The Southeast Region YOY finalists are 10 state YOY winners from the region. The regional winner is selected at a special dinner in his or her honor. Each regional winner receives a total of \$22,000 in college scholarships from founding sponsors Reader's Digest Foundation and Tupperware Brands, Corp. The national winner receives an additional \$15,000 scholarship from Reader's Digest

Foundation and up to \$50,000 from The Rick and Susan Goings Foundation.

Orlando Associate Chelsie Flynn is the mentor to the Southeast YOY winner Ahkeem Hollimon from Orlando, Florida. Ahkeem was a six year member of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Florida, honor student and recent graduate of Osceola High School. He is currently a freshman at Valencia Community College and plans to major in engineering and business management. Ford & Harrison attorneys Chad Shultz, Dawn Siler-Nixon and Chelsie Flynn all went to Washington D.C. to support Ahkeem as he competed against other regional winners for the National Youth of the Year Award. Although Ahkeem did not win the National YOY award, he got to meet President Obama in the Oval Office and was honored at a congressional breakfast in the Capitol. He also had dinner with actor Denzel Washington, NBA star LeBron James, director Ron Howard and singer Ashanti. In the Connections for Success program, ten Ford & Harrison attorneys mentored the ten BGCA YOY regional finalists. The year-long mentorship program will focus on helping these state YOY winners adjust between life as a Boys & Girls Club member and life as a young adult. The primary goals of the mentors are to offer smart business practices and to help the mentees develop the skills they need to prepare for college, employment and social/business networking.



Acknowledging the Past, Moving Toward the Future

On February 22, 2011, in honor of Black History Month, Ford & Harrison conducted a special program, with Shirley Sherrod, the former Georgia State Director of Rural Development with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Ms. Sherrod discussed her history, “the controversy” surrounding the call for her resignation following a blog posting of alleged racist remarks concerning a farmer who sought her help in financing for his farm in 1986, her public vilification by the NAACP and other organizations, the apology by White House official Tom Vilsack, and how she acknowledged her own unconscious bias and moved forward to a point of racial reconciliation. Atlanta associate Cullen Stafford shared his thoughts:



By: Cullen Stafford



Shirley Sherrod

Like most people, I was aware that Ms. Sherrod had lost her position with the Department of Agriculture due to the defamatory statements and well-edited video clips of an overzealous blogger. However, I was not aware how this incident negatively impacted all Georgians. As she discussed in her presentation, Ms. Sherrod dedicated her professional life to helping small farmers in rural Georgia, a demographic that defies any racial classification. The sad irony is that while Ms. Sherrod spent her adult life fighting for individuals regardless of their race, Ms. Sherrod was thrust into the public eye by individuals who wanted to use race as a political weapon. In the rush to judgment that ensued, Ms. Sherrod lost her job, but small farmers across the state lost an accomplished advocate. Indeed, Ms. Sherrod’s story is a compelling example of how racial prejudice robs society by denying opportunities to the most talented and dedicated among us. Everyone at Ford & Harrison was honored that she agreed to share this message with our office.

Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, Ford & Harrison partnered with SunTrust Banks and KPMG to host an event showcasing the artwork of Carlos Arturo Solis, Pedro Fuentes and Jose Pena from the Latin Artist Group, Contrapunto. Miami Office administrative partner Elizabeth M. Rodriguez opened the event by discussing her experience growing up in Miami as a child of Cuban parents. Other speakers included Maria Elena Lagomasino, CEO of GenSpring Family Offices, and Tim Bentsen, Senior Audit Partner with KPMG. Ms. Lagomasino discussed immigrating to the United States from Cuba and assimilating to American culture. Mr. Bentsen discussed doing business in the different Hispanic communities throughout the United States.



GABWA Gala

In 2011 Ford & Harrison was an Anniversary Year Partner for Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys (GABWA) and attended GABWA's 30th Anniversary Gala and Auction to support the GABWA Foundation. At the Gala, United States Representative John Lewis discussed the importance of diversity and the need for more female African American federal court judges.

The GABWA Foundation has provided more than \$150,000 in scholarships to African-American females attending law schools in Georgia and spearheads a variety of community service projects that empower the African American community through education and mentoring programs. GABWA represents the interests of more than 2,000 women and men across the state of Georgia including judges, law firm attorneys, in-house counsel, solo practitioners, public interest and government lawyers, political leaders, academicians, and law students.



Patricia Griffith

F&H Diversity Champion

These organizations are Ford & Harrison's client leaders of diversity and inclusion. They have been highlighted as being leaders in this important area and have been chosen and recognized by their employees, peers, industry groups and organizations as being leaders of change and innovation in not only recognizing the need for diversity and inclusion, but taking significant steps towards its advancement in their industry and beyond. We are proud at Ford & Harrison to have partnered with these diversity elite who have made a long-lasting impact on our professions and the world as a whole.



Since its founding in 1927, Marriott has valued diversity and inclusion of all associates. This legacy is now a fundamental operating principle and business imperative.

Since 2003, Marriott's Committee for Excellence, a standing committee of the Board of Directors that includes company executive leadership, has promoted the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women and minority employees, and initiated efforts to develop an increasingly diverse owner, guest, and supplier base. In 2005, the J. W. Marriott Diversity Excellence Award was created to recognize a business unit or department for promoting diversity and building an inclusive environment.

Marriott's 10-member Board of Directors includes three minorities, including two women. Its Regional Diversity and Inclusion Councils ensure that Marriott's diversity strategy is implemented in local markets with strategic partnerships, targeted recruitment campaigns, diversity communications, and other outreach to associates.

As Marriott grows and expands globally, it continues to broaden how it thinks about global diversity and inclusion, reaching across cultural borders to embrace the unique gifts and talents of the communities it serves.

"Everyone brings something different to Marriott. We believe that embracing and valuing differences makes us successful. We are committed to a culture of inclusiveness...it is in the fabric of our culture; our employees, customers, owners, suppliers and shareholders expect it and Marriott is successful because of it."

– Maruiel Perkins-Chavis
Vice President, Workforce Effectiveness and Global Diversity

F&H Spirit of Inclusion Award

This award is given to a Ford & Harrison office, group or individual who has distinguished themselves through their outstanding commitment to promoting diversity, understanding, inclusion and awareness. The recipient has actively worked to reduce obstacles that prevent an open dialogue regarding diversity and inclusion, through their personal involvement, activities and actions, both within the firm and in their surrounding community. Through this award recipient's actions, bridges have been built that will advance the infrastructure of diversity and inclusion throughout Ford & Harrison.

The Tampa office of Ford & Harrison is, to say the least, proud of the activities in which it is involved with regard to diversity and inclusion. We are mentioning just a few of our office members in this article, but the entire Tampa office participates in many diversity events during the year.

Among numerous other diversity activities, Tracey Jaensch is Chair and Co-Chair of many diversity and inclusion committees, including the Board of the Florida Diversity Council, Gen Y Committee, and the Women in Leadership Symposium to name a few. As such, she and many other members of our office have participated in functions throughout the year for these worthwhile organizations. Tracey is also a firm minority mentor and Year One mentor.

The Tampa office had a booth at the Stetson College of Law Diversity Picnic. Several of our office members attended and helped "man" our booth.

Aisha Sanchez is a member of the Pan American Bar Association and participates in their activities throughout the year.

In addition to her firm responsibilities as Diversity and Inclusion Partner and involvement in many other organizations, Dawn Siler-Nixon is the Chair of the ABA AIDS Coordinating Committee and the Chair of the George Edgecomb Bar Association Scholarship Banquet, which the Tampa Office sponsors on an annual basis. She also serves as a minority mentor to a Stetson law student.

Lavern Wilson is also active in numerous diversity activities, including the GEBA Scholarship Banquet. Lavern serves on the firm's diversity sub-committee and is also a volunteer mentor with Connections for Success.

Dorshae Bradley volunteers at Boys and Girls Clubs, Mother Love Family Fitness Festival, Hoops for Haiti, Hoops 4 Happiness (she donated and delivered 50+ hoops to Haiti) and Hoops for Uganda. She enjoys teaching adults and children how to Hooola Hoop for health, fun and self-esteem. She also participated in World Hoop Day on 11/11/11, which was an endeavor to get everyone around the world hooping!

As noted above, recognition is given to the entire Tampa team for their activities in local organizations and charitable endeavors. That involvement includes, among other things: monthly monetary "Random Acts of Kindness" contributions to such worthwhile organizations as Kids Charity of Tampa Bay, Inc., (www.kidscharitytb.org), Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking (www.stophumantrafficking.org), Metropolitan Ministries (www.metromin.org), Make-A-Wish Foundation® of Central and Northern Florida (<http://wishcentralfl.wish.org>), Salvation Army's Trinity Café (www.trinitycafe.org), Meals on Wheels (www.mealcall.org), Wheels of Success (www.wheelsofsuccess.org) and the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation (www.toysfortots.org). The office has also donated needed supplies to "Help Us Fill the Wagon" School Supply Drive for Foster Children, food for Metropolitan Ministries and so far we've sent 12 large boxes of supplies and goodies to our Afghanistan troops.



Ford & Harrison Tampa Office