



Ius Laboris USA Global HR Lawyers

# FordHarrison

## DIVERSITY

*moving forward*



### Letter from the Diversity and Inclusion Partner

We have been very busy in our efforts to chart a course forward along the cultural competence continuum through our internal FH-C3 (Cross Cultural Competence) programming. Our goal in focusing on Cross Cultural Competence is to redefine our thought process as a law firm, individual lawyers and community citizens. Throughout 2014, we spotlighted the cultural backgrounds of our lawyers both nationally and internationally, identifying and explaining the cultural nuances necessary to effectively conduct business and represent our clients in the United States and abroad. This was a wonderful educational experience for our firm. In December 2014, we brought together a number of our lawyers in diversity focus groups to gather candid information about our experiences, perspectives, and practices relating to diversity and inclusion. In addition, the focus groups were tasked with identifying “best practices” to ensure that FordHarrison offers an optimum work environment and opportunities for our lawyers to progress along the cultural competence continuum that consultant Vernā Myers spoke about at our June 2014 mid-year meeting. Myers has used the information from the focus groups to develop a full-day leadership training program for our Executive and Management Committees, as well as key firm leaders. Our firm leadership’s commitment to increasing FordHarrison’s cultural competence at every level has had and will continue to have a positive impact on our attorneys and staff. What we learn during this intensive training session will help chart our course for the year to come. I hope that you will enjoy this edition of Diversity Moving Forward and learn more about our firm and our lawyers through this snapshot of activities and achievements!



**Dawn Siler-Nixon**

## Corporate Counsel Women of Color

On October 8-10, 2014 the Corporate Counsel Women of Color (CCWC) held the 10th Annual Career Strategies Conference in Beverly Hills, CA. FordHarrison served as a sponsor for this event, and Michelle Abidoye from the firm's LA office was part of a panel that presented "Managing a Data Security Breach." Also in attendance were Liz Rodriguez (Miami office) and Dawn Siler-Nixon (Tampa office). There were over 800 women in attendance, only 10% of which were outside counsel.



Liz Rodriguez, Michelle Abidoye, Dawn Siler-Nixon, and Vicki Brunn, Senior Counsel at Amgen, Inc.

## Atlanta Legal Aid 90th party

On October 2, 2014, the Atlanta Legal Aid (ALA) celebrated 90 years of representing Atlanta's underprivileged in civil legal cases. Their work helps their clients deal with some of life's most basic needs -- a safe home, enough food to eat, a decent education, protection against fraud, and personal safety. The following individuals represented FordHarrison at the anniversary celebration in support of the ALA's amazing accomplishments: from left to right; Sara Sahni, Meg Holman, Jessica Asbridge, Katie O'Shea, Patrick Ryan, John Monroe, Bennet Alsher, and Lash Harrison.



## Univeristy of the District of Columbia's Brick & Paver Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



Michele Baskerville, Gary Lieber, and Anessa Abrams with FordHarrison's paver.

FordHarrison client, University of the District of Columbia (UDC), held its Dr. Cleveland L. Dennard Plaza Brick & Paver Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on October 23, 2014. UDC sold bricks and pavers to be placed on the recently renovated Dr. Cleveland L. Dennard Plaza. FordHarrison purchased a paver in support of UDC, a historically black college and university and an urban land-grant institution of higher education. Attorneys Gary Lieber and Anessa Abrams and paralegal Michele Baskerville, all from FordHarrison's Washington, DC office, attended the ribbon cutting ceremony.

# FordHarrison: Diversity in the News

## Inside Counsel

### HR strategies for same-sex secondments internationally

October 17, 2014 & November 17, 2014

Atlanta attorneys Tiffany Downs and Scott Wagner wrote a two part article for Inside Counsel on best practices for handling same-sex secondments internationally. With the global marketplace continuously growing, companies are more frequently depending on secondments to place talent around the world. This is great for finding diverse skill sets; however, employers should be aware of any differences between the way the home country and host country treat same-sex marriages and protections for GLBT employees. Part 1 of Tiffany and Scott's article, published October 17, 2014 outlines several jurisdictions' treatment of same-sex marriages and protections based on sexual orientation and gender identification. Part 2, published November 17, outlines best practices and suggestions for planning and executing international secondments. Read them both: Part 1 - [www.fordharrison.com/samesexsecondments1](http://www.fordharrison.com/samesexsecondments1); Part 2 - [www.fordharrison.com/samesexsecondment2](http://www.fordharrison.com/samesexsecondment2).



Tiffany Downs



Scott Wagner

## Bennet Alsher

### Bennet Alsher Elected to the National Commission of the Anti-Defamation League

On November 8, 2014, Bennet Alsher, a partner in the firm's Atlanta office, was elected to the National Commission of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) at the ADL's annual meeting in Los Angeles. Bennet has been a member of the ADL's Southeast Region Board of Directors since 1993. The Anti-Defamation League was founded in 1913 "to stop the defamation of the Jewish people and to secure justice and fair treatment to all." Now the nation's premier civil rights/human relations agency, ADL fights anti-Semitism and all forms of bigotry, defends democratic ideals and protects civil rights for all.



Bennet Alsher

## Ellen Ham



Ellen Ham

### Ellen Ham Selected as Member of FordHarrison's Executive Committee

Ellen Ham, a partner in the firm's Atlanta office, has been elected to the firm's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee consists of seven diverse firm partners who oversee every aspect of the firm's operation and development. They are responsible for the implementation of major firm decisions and policies, and for overseeing the day-to-day management of the firm.

## Legal Developments Impacting Diversity

These legal alerts can be found at [www.fordharrison.com/868](http://www.fordharrison.com/868).

- » [How Will Obama's Immigration Actions Impact Employers?, November 24, 2014](#)
- » [Dallas Voters Approve City Charter Amendment Prohibiting Discrimination Against City Employees Based on Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation, November 11, 2014](#)
- » [Recent Changes to Maryland Law Give Pregnant Employees and New Parents Enhanced Employment Protections, November 6, 2014](#)
- » [VETS Publishes Final Rule on VEVRAA Reporting Requirements, October 1, 2014](#)
- » [OFCCP Publishes Directive on Gender Identity and Sex Discrimination, August 21, 2014](#)

## EntertainHR Blog Posts Involving Diversity

Entries on EntertainHR, FordHarrison's blog, can be found at <http://blogs.hrhero.com/entertainhr/>.

- » [Did I Say That?, October 13, 2014](#)
- » [All You Need is Employment Law, August 4, 2014](#)



# Recognition



## Tracey Jaensch Named to Profiles in Diversity Journal's 2015 Women Worth Watching List

Tracey Jaensch, a partner in the firm's Tampa office, is featured in the 2015 Women Worth Watching® issue of *Profiles in Diversity Journal*. The prestigious award is in its 13th year, and was featured in the publication's September/October 2014 issue.

Nominated by their employers for their passion, their potential, and their positive influence both inside and outside the workplace, the winners represent corporations, government agencies, and nonprofits from across North America and Europe. Their first-person accounts of lessons learned during their careers—featured in the magazine's print and online editions—are insightful and thought provoking. The women highlighted in this issue are as diverse as the industries and locations in which they work.

"I am elated to be in the '2015 Women Worth Watching' issue of Profiles in Diversity Journal, and in such amazing company," commented Jaensch. "The publication does a great job of highlighting talented women leaders, and I feel honored to be included."

To see Tracey's feature in *Profiles in Diversity Journal*, visit <http://bit.ly/1wejthu>.



Tracey Jaensch

## Diversity Journal Spotlight

Fred Gaona, an attorney in the Dallas office, was included in the *Profiles in Diversity Journal* Hispanic Heritage Month feature. On supporting other Hispanic professionals, Fred said, "I try to pay my blessings forward by being a mentor to other Hispanic and minority attorneys. We all need sound advice and a helping hand from time to time."



Fred Gaona



## Women in Law Empowerment Forum

As mentioned in the last Diversity Moving Forward issue, FordHarrison was named as a Gold Standard Firm by the Women in Law Empowerment Forum (WILEF), being one of the few firms to meet all six standards. On September 17, 2014, at The Yale Club in New York City, the organization held the WILEF 2014 Gold Standard Luncheon to honor the winners. Dawn Siler-Nixon attended the luncheon to accept the award on behalf of FordHarrison, who also sponsored the event.

## Michael Yim Elected to the Board of Directors of the International Association of Korean Lawyers

Michael Yim, a Partner in the firm's New York office, was elected to the Overseas Board of Directors of the International Association of Korean Lawyers (IAKL).

Michael joins the Board of Directors, which provides oversight for the group. He was also a lead member of the host committee for the 22nd IAKL Annual Conference in New York City on October 2-5, 2014. The 2014 Conference hosted over 450 members from over 20 countries. In addition to host committee duties, Michael served as a speaker on the panel, "Key Labor and Employment Issues to Consider when Handling Cross-border Transactions."

For more information on our Diversity Recognitions, visit <http://www.fordharrison.com/diversity>.



Michael Yim

# Community Involvement

## California Women Lawyers

### Michelle Abidoye Appointed to Leadership Positions in California Women Lawyers (CWL) and Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles (WLALA)



From the LA Office: Stephan Black, Catherine Hazany and Michelle Abidoye at the event

Michelle Abidoye was appointed to the CWL Board of Governors and was chosen as the First Vice President, as well as the Co-Chair of the Litigation Section for the WLALA. Michelle was sworn in for her CWL Board of Governors position on September 11 and for her WLALA position on September 18.

As the only statewide bar association for women in California, CWL maintains a primary focus on advancing women in the legal profession. Since 1974, CWL has represented the interests of more than 30,000 women in all facets of the legal profession, influencing lawyers, educators, students and judges. WLALA was established in 1919 and has been a powerful and respected advocate of women attorneys, women in general, persons of color, the disadvantaged, and the under-represented in Southern California.

## Latin American Corporate Counsel Association

The Latin American Corporate Counsel Association returned to Miami for its annual regional meeting, which is regularly attended by 50-60 general counsel. Programming included critical updates on law department management, recruitment and retention, compliance and ethics, and more. Ius Laboris, a global employment and labor law alliance of which FordHarrison is the sole U.S. member, sponsored a booth, and Miami-based FordHarrison attorneys Chris Curran, Liz Rodriguez, David Sawyer and Rey Velazquez attended in support.

## Kozyak Minority Mentoring Picnic

Merry Lindberg, from the firm's West Palm Beach office, and David Sawyer and Rey Velazquez, both from the Miami office attended the Kozyak Minority Mentoring Picnic and manned the FordHarrison-sponsored table at the event. The picnic took place on November 1 in Hialeah, FL. The Kozyak Minority Mentoring Picnic is the organization's premier annual event. The picnic has grown exponentially each year and is well attended by judges, established lawyers and law students from every school in Florida.



Merry Lindberg



David Sawyer



Rey Velasquez



Ashwin Trehan



Michael Yim

## National Asian Pacific American Bar

Ashwin Trehan and Michael Yim attended the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Conference in Arizona November 6 – 9. NAPABA is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students. NAPABA represents the interests of over 40,000 attorneys and approximately 70 national, state, and local bar associations.

# Sponsorships

## National Korean American Service and Education Consortium

**August 8, 2014** | Los Angeles, CA

FordHarrison sponsored the “Building a Movement for Change” Fundraiser, hosted by the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NKASEC) and the Korean Resource Center. New York-based attorney Michael Yim attended the event, and is an active member in the NKASEC.

Michael Yim and FordHarrison also sponsored the International Association of Korean Lawyers (IAKL)’s annual conference on October 2.



Ius Laboris USA Global HR Lawyers

**FordHarrison**

**FordHarrison LLP is proud to sponsor the  
National Korean American Service and Education Consortium**

*and the*

**Korean Resource Center’s**

**“Building a Movement for Change” Fundraiser**  
*and congratulates all of this year’s awardees.*



**Fred Gaona**



**Jennifer Jones**



**Allyn Lowell**

## Texas Minority Counsel

**September 3-5, 2014** | Austin, TX

Dallas attorneys Fred Gaona, Jennifer Jones, and Allyn Lowell attended the 22nd Annual Texas Minority Counsel Program (TMCP), which FordHarrison also sponsored. The TMCP gives attendees an opportunity to participate in informational interviews to discuss outside counsel opportunities.

The TMCP was created in 1993 with the mission of increasing opportunities for minority and women attorneys who provide legal services to corporate and government clients, and highlighting the legal talent found in these communities. Since its inception, the TMCP has been instrumental in enhancing opportunities for diverse attorneys.

## Hispanic Institute for Life and Leadership of Northeast Florida

**September 16, 2014** | Jacksonville, FL

Peter Corbin, Michelle Tatum, and Amy Turci from the firm’s Jacksonville office, along with Sarah Wimberly from the Atlanta office, were in attendance of the Hispanic Institute for Life and Leadership of Northeast Florida’s Las Voces Guest Speaker Series Event, for which FordHarrison was also a sponsor. “Las Voces” exposes attendees to the most important business and employment issues for Northeast Florida’s Hispanic community.



Ius Laboris USA Global HR Lawyers

**FordHarrison**

**FordHarrison is proud to sponsor  
Hispanic Institute for Life and Leadership  
of Northeast Florida’s**

*Las Voces - Guest Speaker Series Event*

FordHarrison is a labor & employment law firm with 28 offices, including five affiliate firms. As a member of the global employment law firm alliance, Ius Laboris, FordHarrison provides clients the “right response at the right time” for employment law issues throughout the world. For more information contact Amy Turci at 904.357.2004, or at aturci@fordharrison.com.



## Tri-State Diversity Council

**November 6, 2014** | New York, NY

For the second year in a row, FordHarrison was a sponsor of the Tri-State Diversity Council’s NYC Leadership Summit. Linda Cavanna-Wilk, from the firm’s New York office, attended this event on behalf of the firm. Linda is actively involved in the Tri-State Diversity Council and serves on their Board.



# FordHarrison Holiday Card 2014

## Catching Up with Cambodia

In January 2013, FordHarrison officially opened the doors of The FordHarrison School, located in the Prey Veng Province of southeastern Cambodia. The firm's lawyers and staff raised more than \$85,000 to build and equip the school.

The firm provided funds for the children to have their very first lessons in drawing and painting. To encourage their creativity, we held an art contest among the students and planned for the winning masterpiece to be featured in our 2013 holiday card.

We were overjoyed to find that people loved seeing the children's artistry as much as we did, and so we decided to continue the tradition of sharing their wonderful artwork. The images on these postcards are all works from the students of The FordHarrison School.

Two years after opening the doors of the school, the students in Cambodia still continue to impress us, and help us to realize how blessed we are.

To view this year's holiday card, please visit:

<http://www.fordharrison.com/files/2014-holiday-card/index.html>



## Food Bank Donations

FordHarrison is proud to announce that in lieu of client holiday gifts, the firm made monetary donations to Feed America food banks in 19 cities where FordHarrison has offices. The firm has made these donations annually since 2009, totaling more than \$125,000 in contributions.

"FordHarrison is proud to continue our support of Feed America food banks across the country," said Lash Harrison, Managing Partner of the firm. "We feel fortunate to have the opportunity to give monetary donations to those in need during the holiday season in honor of our clients and friends."

## Jacksonville Office



Standing - Left to Right: Peter Corbin, Brenda James, Laura Cox, John Duvall, Sheila McQuaide, and Richard Ruth  
Sitting - Left to Right: Amy Turci, Michelle Tatum, and Gregg Gerlach

# SPIRIT OF INCLUSION AWARD

*This award is given to a FordHarrison 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 FordHarrison.*

Congratulations to the Jacksonville office of FordHarrison for winning the seventh annual FH Spirit of Inclusion Award! The attorneys and staff in the Jacksonville office demonstrate the firm's ongoing commitment to diversity and inclusion. A few of the many diversity activities our office members are involved in are discussed below:

- The Jacksonville office has been a sponsor of the Jacksonville Area Sexual Minority Youth Network (JASMYN) since 2012. Members of the office have participated annually in the Strides for Pride 5K since its inaugural event in 2012. The office was also a Partner in Community Sponsor of JASMYN's 20th Anniversary Celebration on November 15, 2014.
- The office was a Silver Sponsor of The Hispanic Institute of Life and Leadership of Northeast Florida's Las Voces Speaker Event on September 16, 2014.
- Michelle Tatum currently serves as President of the University of North Florida Alumni Association Board of Directors. The Association raises funds for the First Generation scholarship fund, which provides need-based scholarships for students who are the first in their families to attend college. Michelle also addressed the graduating class during the Summer 2014 commencement ceremony and gave the awards at the Summer 2014 and Fall 2014 commencement ceremonies on behalf of the Alumni Association including the Alumni Association's Senior Service Award.
- Peter Corbin is actively involved in a small Episcopal Mission Church in Hilliard which has been in existence since 1915. Peter has served as Senior Warden for the church since 1987. The church does a great deal of community outreach, including working with a soup kitchen in Kingsland, GA.
- John Duvall serves in leadership positions for a number of community and diversity related activities including:
  - Past President and Director of the North Florida AIDS Network, Inc.;
  - Past Chair and Director of Jacksonville Area Legal Aid, Inc. (JALA);
  - Past Director of the JALA Foundation, Inc.;
  - Past Chair and Director of Mental Health Center of Jacksonville, Inc.; and
  - Pro bono legal counsel for JASMYN.
- Amy Turci has been involved in the Northeast Florida Division of the March of Dimes since 2010, was elected to the Board of Directors in 2012, and currently serves as the Board Chair. She is also on the committee for the March of Dimes Signature Chefs Auction, having previously served as committee Chair. Amy recently served as the Emcee of the March of Dimes Signature Chefs Auction on November 13, 2014. Amy is on the Executive Committee of the Associated Builders and Contractors Women's Council, which raises funds and collects school supplies for the Child Guidance Center (CGC)'s school supply drive, and sponsors families from CGC and Angel Works each Christmas, raising money and purchasing gifts for the families.
- Attorney and baritone Gregg Gerlach has sung with The Heritage Singers of Jacksonville (HSJ) since its inception in 2010, also serving as Vice President of HSJ's Board from 2010 – 2013. HSJ members are auditioned singers dedicated to revitalizing the choral music experience, for singer and audience alike. Gregg also sings with the Jacksonville Symphony Chorus, which will be performing Mozart's Requiem and Beethoven's Missa Solemnis this season.



Amy Turci speaking at the Associated Builders and Contractors' event



# FH Diversity Champion: Champion Brands Makes Great Effort Towards Diversity and Inclusion



*FH Diversity Champion organizations are FordHarrison's client leaders of diversity and inclusion. They have been highlighted as 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 also taking significant steps towards its advancement in their industry and beyond. We are proud at FordHarrison to have partnered with these diversity elite who have made a long-lasting impact on our professions and the world as a whole.*

## Company Information

Located in Jacksonville Florida, Champion Brands is one of North Florida's leading beverage distribution centers. Champion serves as the local distributor for many local, national and import brands as well as several non-alcoholic beverages. The Champion Brands portfolio continues to expand with changes in consumer beverage preferences.

## History

Originally purchased by the CEO Earl Benton, as Duval Beverage in 1985, the company started with just 65 employees. He then acquired St. John's Beverage and Neal Tyler & Sons to grow his business into one of the fastest growing beverage distributors in the Southeast. Champion Brands currently has over 270 employees and services Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. Champion also has an office in Georgia that provides Red Bull to 31 counties in the state.

## Going Green

Champion Brands recently made the decision to lead the way as a model corporate citizen in the Jacksonville community for protecting the environment by utilizing sustainable clean energy. As part of their plan for the company's fuel consumption, the company is converting their fleet of diesel trucks to compressed natural gas and offering Jacksonville the first public CNG station by partnering with Trillium CNG.

## Charitable Work

Champion Brands believes in the importance of giving back to the community and will continue to build many great relationships by being involved in charities and numerous community events around North Florida. Below are some of the charities and community events that Champion Brands was involved with in 2014:

- Girls Gone Green
- 1st Coast No More Homeless Pets
- Catholic Charities
- Baptist Health Foundation
- Red Cross Foundation
- Clay County Humane Society
- Child Cancer Fund
- Leukemia Iron Man Fundraiser
- Sulzbacher Homeless Center
- Boobapalooza
- Southside Business Men Association
- Guardian Catholic Schools
- Alpha-1 Foundation
- River Garden Foundation
- Downtown Ecumenical Service Council
- St. Boniface Haiti Foundation
- City Rescue Mission
- St. Vincent's Foundation
- United Service Organization
- Jacksonville Craft & Import Beer Festival
- Florida/Georgia Landing Sponsorship
- Big Ticket Concert
- Gate River Run
- Jacksonville Jazz Festival
- World of Nations
- Navy-Marine Corps Classic
- Sea & Sky Spectacular
- Food Fight
- Jax Beach Oktoberfest
- St. Augustine Seafood Festival
- Hogs for Dogs
- Art Walk
- Annual Chamber of Commerce Event
- Celtic Fest
- Jacksonville Humane Society
- Make a Wish Foundation
- Dreams Come True Foundation
- Spina Bifida Association
- Children's Miracle Network
- Wounded Warrior Project
- Clay County Safe Animal Shelter
- Orange Park Haven Hospice
- Alzheimer's Disease Research
- Deerwood Rotary Foundation
- JT Townsend Foundation
- Malivai Washington Youth Foundation
- Tennis 4 Cancer
- The Bridge of N.E. Florida
- Covenant House
- Catholic Relief Services
- Food For the Poor
- Gate Foundation
- Community Connections
- Fernandina Shrimp Festival
- City of Jacksonville/4th of July Celebration
- Starry Nights
- Funk's Punks
- Oktoberfest
- St. Augustine ½ Marathon
- Caribbean Carnival Fest
- St. Johns River Blues Festival
- Adamec-Harley Bike Night
- Florida Surfing Championships
- Bark After Dark
- Riverside Art Market
- First Community Saturday
- J.P. Hall Children's Charities

Learn more about Champion Brands at <http://www.championbrands.net/>.