

FIRM HOSTS 16TH ANNUAL DIVERSITY DINNER



Jameel Jaffer (right) and Partner Scott Wilkens at the 2017 Diversity Dinner in Chicago

“It is very difficult to be effective in the world if you do not have a diverse team. Without a diverse team, it is too likely that you will either overlook, undervalue or misunderstand an argument,” said Jameel Jaffer, the inaugural director of Columbia University’s Knight First Amendment Institute and former deputy legal director at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), who was the keynote speaker for the 16th Annual Jenner & Block Diversity Dinner.

Jameel made his remarks before 190 lawyers, summer associates, Jenner & Block diversity scholars and others attending the event on June 27th in the Chicago office. After an introduction by Susan J. Kohlmann, New York office managing partner and chair of the firm’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Jameel participated in a casual Q&A-style interview with Partner Scott B. Wilkens, of the Washington, DC office. He spoke about leaving Canada (and trading in his Leonard Cohen records for Johnny Cash) to pursue education in the United States and staying on as work and life opportunities presented

themselves. While working in private practice, Jameel did pro bono work for the ACLU that led him to a fulltime position there shortly after the 9/11 attacks.

Jameel remained with the ACLU for the next 14 years, through the administrations of both President Bush and President Obama. During that time, he litigated some of the most significant post-9/11 cases involving national security and civil liberties. Much of this work involved seeking disclosure of government information and included a US Supreme Court case – *Clapper v. Amnesty International* – that Jameel argued as Hurricane Sandy was hitting Washington, DC.

The Knight First Amendment Institute, which opened its doors in January, was established by Columbia University and The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to preserve and expand First Amendment rights in the digital age. Among today’s threats to the First Amendment, Jameel cited government secrecy, the privatization of the public sphere and the chilling effect of corporate and government surveillance.



From left: Susan Kohlmann with Diversity Scholars André Washington, Maria Pulido and Argie Mina

DIVERSITY SCHOLARS

During the Diversity Dinner, Associate Board of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee members Marina K. Jenkins and LaRue L. Robinson introduced the firm’s Diversity Scholars: Nicholas DeFiesta, Stanford Law School; Argie Mina, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law; Maria Pulido, University of Illinois College of Law; and André Washington, The University of Chicago; and the 2017 Grant Folland Scholar, University of Chicago law student Kathrine Gutierrez.



Ms. Bracey

KALI BRACEY REJOINS JENNER & BLOCK IN WASHINGTON, DC

In February, Kali N. Bracey, a former deputy assistant attorney general for the Torts

Branch of the US Department of Justice’s Civil Division, rejoined the firm as a litigation partner in the Government Controversies and Public Policy Litigation Practice in the firm’s DC office. Before serving as deputy assistant attorney general, Kali worked as a senior counsel for the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) in the Office of Supervision Policy.

“Kali is an experienced litigator and we are proud that she chose to rejoin our team,” said Jenner & Block Managing Partner Terrence J. Truax. “Her complex commercial litigation and regulatory leadership as well as her knowledge of CFPB, in particular, will be beneficial to a broad array of our clients.”

Kali first joined Jenner & Block as an associate in 2002 before becoming a partner in 2007.

ELEVATED PARTNERS



Mr. Bhabha

Ishan K. Bhabha is a member of the firm’s Appellate and Supreme Court Practice. His practice focuses on complex issues of regulatory, constitutional, and commercial law. He also has an active pro bono practice.



Ms. Jacobs

Precious S. Jacobs is a member of the Complex Commercial Litigation Practice. In her pro bono practice, she secured relief for thousands of Illinois parents and other caretakers wrongly labeled as guilty of child neglect through the Illinois DCFS’ use of a void regulation.



Mr. Prokop

Edward L. Prokop advises clients in domestic and cross-border public and private transactions, both on the buy-side and sell-side, including mergers, stock and asset purchases, restructurings and leveraged acquisitions, as well as joint ventures and strategic alliances.



Ms. Kohlmann with PepsiCo General Counsel Tony West (courtesy of PepsiCo photographer)

JENNER & BLOCK HONORED AT PEPSICO'S 2017 OUTSIDE COUNSEL DIVERSITY RECOGNITION DAY

The firm was recognized for its commitment to diversity and inclusion at PepsiCo's 2017 Outside Counsel Diversity Recognition Day in April. "We are pleased to be recognized by PepsiCo for our commitment to equality and inclusiveness," said Partner Susan J. Kohlmann. "Fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment is a core value that the entire firm is dedicated to. We are honored to work with clients such as PepsiCo that share our deep-seated commitment to diversity and inclusion."

The annual program is part of PepsiCo's outside counsel diversity initiative where law firms dedicated to diversifying the legal profession are honored based on results from PepsiCo's diversity survey. PepsiCo recognized 15 firms that earned diversity index scores above the median in comparison to their peers and that demonstrated an exceptional commitment to diversity and inclusion through qualitative efforts.

JENNER & BLOCK JOINS PILOT PROGRAM TO IMPROVE DIVERSITY IN LAW FIRMS

Jenner & Block is among 30 leading law firms that are piloting a year-long initiative to boost diversity in leadership ranks. Called the "Mansfield Rule," the program is one of the winning ideas that came out of the 2016 Women in Law Hackathon, hosted by Diversity Lab with Bloomberg Law and Stanford Law School. The program was inspired by the NFL's "Rooney Rule," which requires every NFL team to interview at least one minority candidate for head coach vacancies. The Mansfield Rule is named after Arabella Mansfield, the first woman admitted to the practice of law in the United States. Participating firms certify that women and lawyers of color comprise at least 30 percent of the candidate pool for leadership and governance roles, equity partner promotions and lateral positions.

The firm's participation in the Mansfield Rule follows its involvement in last year's inaugural Hackathon. The Hackathon brought together 54 partners from law firms across the United States to tackle the problem of the gender imbalance in leadership.

"We were thrilled to be a part of the Hackathon Alliance, and we are delighted to take the next step with Diversity Lab and join the Mansfield Rule effort, a concrete strategy aimed at improving diversity in the profession," said Susan J. Kohlmann, chair of the firm's Diversity & Inclusion Committee and managing partner of the New York office. "Jenner & Block is committed to finding innovative ways to improve diversity through strategies like the Mansfield Rule."



Ms. Hill

MERCEDES HILL WINS LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE IN THE LAW AWARD

Partner Mercedes M. Hill is among six lawyers in Illinois who were honored with a Leadership Excellence in the Law Award from the National Diversity Council. Mercedes is a member of the firm's Corporate Practice and plays a key role in some of the firm's biggest transactions. She leads the firm's African American Affinity Group and is a member of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Hiring Committee and Associate Development and Evaluation Committee.

The award recognizes lawyers who have distinguished themselves through their leadership, resolve and outstanding achievements for the benefit of their clients, collaborators and communities.

INTRODUCING NEW SPECIAL COUNSEL



Ms. Arshad

Amna Arshad joined the firm on April 8 as special counsel in the Aviation and Aerospace Practice in the Washington, DC office. With more than 10 years of diverse experience in the public and private sectors, Amna has represented major US and foreign air carriers and leading aviation-related entities including airports, aerospace manufacturers, travel distribution clients, drone operators and corporations in a variety of DOT/FAA/NTSB federal regulatory, commercial and litigation matters.



Ms. Thomas

Johanna Thomas joined the firm as special counsel in the Communications, Internet and Technology Practice. She has extensive experience working with communications, media and internet companies on regulatory and transactional matters before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). As legal counsel advisor to FCC Commissioner Rosenworcel, Johanna provided strategic legal and policy counsel on wireless, international and public safety issues. At the FCC, she also served as a legal advisor to the chief of the Wireless Telecommunications.

FIRM WELCOMES TWO PRE-LAW SEO FELLOWS

Joella Jones and Imara McMillan, two pre-law Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) Fellows, joined Jenner & Block for a 10-week fellowship program this summer.



Ms. Jones

Joella received a B.A. in African American Studies from Wesleyan University and a Masters in French from New York University. She completed her fellowship in our New York office and will be attending Columbia Law this fall.



Ms. McMillan

Imara completed her fellowship in our Washington, DC office and received her B.A. in History from Wellesley College. This fall, she will attend the University of Chicago Law School. SEO is a diversity pipeline program that pairs diverse incoming law school students with top law firms for fellowships the summer before they begin their first year of law school.



Ms. Stanford

KEISHA STANFORD JOINS ASSOCIATE-DRIVEN GRANT FOUNDATION

Associate Keisha N. Stanford joined the board of a unique grant foundation called The Associates Committee. Composed of 200 associates from “some of America’s most celebrated law firms,”

the Committee awards grants to the most promising and deserving public interest organizations in the United States. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$75,000 and are used to support organizations that provide legal services to those who cannot afford them. Associate Alexander J. Bandza is among the foundation’s founding members.



Ms. Sikdar

FIRM REPRESENTS CHICAGO URBAN LEAGUE AND CHICAGO BOARD OF EDUCATION IN SCHOOL FUNDING CASES

Jenner & Block won a victory for pro bono client Chicago Urban League in a long-running school funding suit. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) unanimously voted to settle the lawsuit, which challenged the state’s school funding system on the basis that it disparately impacts low-income and minority students. The settlement ends the ISBE’s “proration” practice, an across-the-board method of cutting funding to districts when there is insufficient money available for the state to meet its required payments. The settlement requires that, in the event of a funding shortfall, state aid will be distributed based on student and district need. Associates Reena Sikdar and Ramon Villalpando were members of the team working on this matter.



Mr. Villalpando



Mr. Sercye

The firm is currently pro bono counsel to the Chicago Board of Education and several parents whose children attend Chicago Public Schools (CPS). A firm team recently filed an amended complaint against Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner, the State of Illinois, the ISBE and the Illinois comptroller, alleging that the state is misappropriating money in a manner that patently discriminates against CPS’s African American and Hispanic students. It also presents claims that the state imposes a separate and demonstrably unequal pension-funding obligation on CPS, in comparison to all other school districts in Illinois. Associate Blake P. Sercye is among the lawyers working on this case.



Ms. de Lou

JAMI DE LOU HONORED WITH ILLINOIS DIVERSITY COUNCIL’S INAUGURAL DIVERSITYFIRST AWARD

Jami de Lou, associate director of Talent Development, Diversity & Inclusion, was recognized for her commitment to cultural diversity and inclusion

at the DiversityFIRST™ Awards Luncheon hosted by the Illinois Diversity Council. Jami was one of three individuals, and the only law firm diversity professional, honored with the council’s inaugural DiversityFIRST™ Award for her outstanding achievements and sustained commitment to the pursuit of cultural diversity and inclusion in the community and workplace.

The Illinois Diversity Council is a nonprofit organization that champions diversity and inclusion throughout Illinois academia, businesses and communities.



Ms. Park

ELIN PARK ELECTED TO BOARD OF KOREAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO

Associate Elin I. Park was elected as a board member of the Korean American Bar Association of Chicago. Elin, who will serve a two-year term on the board, is an associate in the Litigation Department and a member

of the Complex Commercial Litigation and Class Action groups. Her practice focuses on class action litigation, as well as matters arising out of contractual disputes and complex financial transactions.



Ms. Bajowala

REENA BAJOWALA HOSTS LCLD ALUMNI LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM

Partner Reena R. Bajowala recently served on the Planning Committee for the Leadership Council On Legal Diversity’s (LCLD) Sixth Annual LCLD Fellows Alumni Leadership Symposium. Fellows participated in a mock networking session with students from the Eagle Academy for Young Men in Brooklyn. Reena, who is a 2013 LCLD Fellow and founder of the Fellow’s annual fundraising and community service competition and the Community Service Award, presented the award to the winning Fellows class. This year, the Fellows raised \$12,500 for the Eagle Academy. Susan J. Kohlmann, the New York office’s managing partner and chair of the firm’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee, also took part in the Symposium, leading a table discussion about diversity with a group of Fellows.

Partner Kelly M. Morrison was selected this year as the firm’s 2017 LCLD Fellow. Other Jenner & Block Fellows include Partners L. David Russell (2016) and Jolene E. Negre (2014).

The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity is an organization of more than 265 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners who have dedicated themselves to creating a truly diverse US legal profession. Its Fellows Program works by identifying high-potential, mid-career lawyers from diverse backgrounds and setting them on the path to leadership.



Mr. Sercye

BLAKE SERCYE HONORED AS ONE OF CHICAGO SCHOLARS “35 UNDER 35 LEADERS MAKING AN IMPACT”

Associate Blake P. Sercye is recognized as a “35 Under 35 Leader” by Chicago Scholars, a college access organization dedicated to resolving the

fundamental barriers to success for academically driven, first-generation college students from Chicago’s most under-resourced communities. Blake was selected out of a highly competitive group of nominees for his outstanding professional accomplishments and commitment to making a difference in Chicago. Blake is a member of the firm’s Investigation, Compliance and Defense Practice. He is active in several civic and community organizations, currently serving as chair of Chicago’s Zoning Board of Appeals and president of the Illinois Medical District Commission. He is also a member of the Chicago West Side Branch of the NAACP and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.

The “35 Under 35” award recognizes diverse, talented young professionals in Chicago who are making an impact on youth. These young professionals are in the civic, corporate, nonprofit and tech/start-up sectors and believe in giving back to the community.

EVENTS

Members of the firm's New York office volunteered at a resumé review session hosted by the NYC Bar's Thurgood Marshall Summer Law Pre-Employment Training program, a program that places high-achieving, inner-city high school students with legal employers for the summer. Participating students were from the New York area, interested in a career in law and in the early stages of their professional development. This program is part of the NYC Bar's continuing efforts to enhance diversity in the legal profession. Volunteers included Associate Lorenzo Di Silvio.

The New York office hosted a professional development and networking event for college undergraduates and recent graduates as part of the NYC Bar's "Launching Your Career" Student Pipeline Program. Firm participants included Partners Elizabeth A. Edmondson and Edward L. Prokop; Associates Ali M. Arain, Lori B. Day, David B. Diesenhouse, Thomas D. Garza, Rémi J. D. Jaffré, Stephanie C. Krent, Christine I. Lee, Jessica M. Ly, Ava U. McAlpin, Danielle Muniz and Kara K. Trowell; and Law Clerk Jonathan M. Diaz.

Firm lawyers in the Washington, DC office participated in a career fair for local educational nonprofit Capital Partners for Education, an organization that helps at-risk high school students prepare for college, improve study and academic training and identify career opportunities. The firm team hosted one of the legal career tables and spoke to students who were interested in careers in law. Volunteers from Jenner & Block included Partner Mary Ellen Callahan, a Capital Partners board member, and Associates Emily A. Bruemmer, Tassity Johnson, Leonard R. Powell, Karthik P. Reddy and Previn Warren (Career Fair Host Committee).

Partner Jerome L. Epstein, vice chair of Thurgood Marshall Academy (TMA), recently participated in TMA's 17th Annual Shining Star Gala in celebration of its students' academic success. TMA is a public charter high school in Washington, DC that serves students who live in the District's most poverty stricken communities.

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Mr. Ling

Partner S. Tony Ling discussed the "Path to Partnership as a Diverse Attorney" in a program sponsored by Northwestern University's Asian Pacific American Law Students Association. Issues and challenges facing diverse lawyers who become partners at major law firms were explored.



Ms. Bugan



Mr. Fuentes



Ms. Negre

Partners Ana R. Bugan, Gabriel A. Fuentes and Jolene E. Negre spoke at the 41st Annual Convention of the Hispanic National Bar Association. Ana discussed the growing risk to compliance officers; Gabe spoke on anti-corruption developments in Latin America and beyond; and Jolene discussed the importance of "boilerplate" language in contracts.



Mr. Smith

COLONEL CHARLES MCGEE RECALLS SERVING AS A TUSKEGEE AIRMAN

Partner Damon Y. Smith's grandfather, Colonel Charles McGee, a Tuskegee Airman during World War II, visited the firm's Washington, DC office as a speaker for Jenner & Block's 2017 diversity series.

The program began with a brief documentary about Colonel McGee, who one day in August 1944 shot down a German fighter in Czechoslovakia. It was his first confirmed victory in World War II. During his presentation, Colonel McGee focused not so much on his own achievements as a Tuskegee Airman, but rather on the achievements of his fellow fighter pilots, the first African American military aviators in the US Armed Forces. He mentioned military reports detailing that blacks could never serve the country as pilots. He recalled Jim Crow laws of the era and warnings against patronizing businesses or visiting certain places when he left the northern United States to travel to Alabama for training in 1941. Yet, Colonel McGee said he dwelled not on obstacles but on his goal of becoming a fighter pilot, focusing on the opportunity to do something that had been denied.



USSAF Portrait of Colonel McGee

Today, Colonel McGee often speaks to youth, highlighting the need to know history and the four "P's": perceive, prepare, perform and persevere.

By the time he retired in 1973, Colonel McGee had served the United States in three wars and had flown 409 aerial combat missions. In 2007, he received the Congressional Gold Medal. He has been inducted into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

RECOGNITIONS

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