

Diversity *Connections*[™]

What's new in firmwide diversitySM

Religious Diversity, Mission Critical

The Firm's Diversity Mission Statement now explicitly incorporates Sonnenschein's inclusion of people of diverse religious backgrounds. The revised Diversity Mission Statement now reads as follows (change is ***bold and in italics***):

"Diversity at Sonnenschein, as reflected in this Plan, means inclusion of attorneys, professionals and other staff members of different races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnic ***and religious*** backgrounds and abilities/disabilities. The Firm's goal is that the demographics of each office reflect the community in which the office is located."

We recognize religious diversity in the workplace requires a delicate balance. Our goal is to be inclusive of employees of all religious beliefs or degree of religiosity, and at the same time avoid imposition of religious beliefs on others, and to respect an employee's wish for religious expression and privacy.

Sonnenschein Sponsors NAPABA Convention

By Yabo Lin



(Yabo Lin, Mike Froy)

As platinum sponsor of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association's (NAPABA) Annual Convention held in Chicago on October 20-23, 2005, Sonnenschein participated prominently in one of the largest gatherings of Asian Pacific American lawyers in the country. More than 800 in-

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Cooking with Sonnenschein & Rocco DiSpirito

by Gisel Arias

On February 22, 2006, the Women's Business Development Committee hosted a fun-filled evening of cooking and feasting at the Institute of Culinary Education with celebrity Chef and Sonnenschein client, Rocco DiSpirito. The night's events combined all of the ingredients for a well-received business networking recipe. Female clients/prospects nationwide were invited to interact professionally and socially.



(Amy Bess and client)

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A Look Around the Firm

CHICAGO

- Jerome Davis participated on a panel entitled “Tips for Junior Associates.” He and other panelists shared their experiences as minority attorneys in Chicago law firms.
- Marty Castro has initiated monthly “Lawyers of Color” lunches, which provide Chicago minority attorneys with opportunities for networking.
- Jacquie Vidmar has been elected to serve a two-year term as Vice Chair of the Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms.

KANSAS CITY

- The Diversity Committee sponsored the Negro League Baseball Museum's 6th Annual Legacy Awards held on January 7th. Mark Bryant is a member of the League's Board of Directors.

LOS ANGELES

- Chris Prince served on the planning committee for the National Bar Association's

17th Annual Wiley A. Branton Symposium. The Symposium focused on criminal justice issues. Speakers included criminal defense attorney Carl Douglas, U.S. District Court Judge Audrey Collins and former Congressman Ronald Dellums.

NEW YORK

- On November 14 and 15, 2005, Arlene Dubin, Barbara Pedersen and Carole Bass were featured speakers at Lambda Legal's Life Planning Symposium co-hosted by Sonnenschein and Merrill Lynch. See “Life Planning Symposium” article in this issue.
- The Diversity Committee sponsored the 2006 Annual Banquet of the Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY) held on February 9th.
- The Women's Business Development Committee hosted an evening of cooking lessons with celebrity chef Rocco DiSpirito on February 22nd. For details, see the news item on page 1.

SAN FRANCISCO

- The San Francisco Diversity Committee is sponsoring the National Center for Lesbian Rights 29th Annual Anniversary Gala to be held on April 22nd.

ST. LOUIS

- On November 30, 2005, the St. Louis office and Lambda Legal co-hosted a reception, which was held at the St. Louis office. Roger Heidenreich introduced Camilla Taylor, Lambda Legal Staff Attorney, who provided the guests with a short legal briefing. See “Sonnenschein Hosts Lambda Legal Reception and CLE Presentation” in this issue.
- On January 13th, the St. Louis office sponsored the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner, hosted by the Defense Bars of Southern Illinois and Eastern Missouri.

WASHINGTON, DC

- Elizabeth Ferrell and Drew Marrocco represented the firm at the 9th Annual National Latina/o Law Student

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Life Planning Symposium

On November 14th and 15th Arlene G. Dubin, Barbara Lynn Pedersen and Carole M. Bass, along with Todd G. Sears of Merrill Lynch Global Private Client Group, delivered an estate planning presentation for same-sex couples at Lambda Legal's Life Planning Symposium in New York City. Under discussion were the special challenges facing the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community in planning for retirement, incapacity, health care decision making, death and the possible termination of a relationship.

Unavailability of the federal estate tax marital deduction for lesbian and gay couples with substantial assets was a key area of discussion. While transfers between spouses during life are not subject to federal gift tax, transfers between same-sex partners are treated as transfers to a non-spouse and may be subject to gift tax. Thus, planning for transfers during life and at death are more complicated and require additional planning. For example, married couples may transfer unlimited assets back and forth between one

another without triggering any gift tax consequences. But potential gift tax consequences are "hidden" in the day-to-day lives of gay and lesbian couples. Even unequal payment of living expenses can be deemed to be a gift by one partner to the other.

Planning for incapacity and health care decision-making was also addressed. Designating a health care agent to make health care decisions in the event of incapacity is particularly important in the LGBT community. In the absence of a health care designation, a hospital is likely to take instructions from biological relatives rather than from the domestic partner. It is also critical to execute a HIPAA Authorization permitting the person designated as the health care agent to obtain medical records to assist him or her with medical decision-making.

Arlene discussed the importance of cohabitation agreements for lesbian and gay couples, and the absence of a default law such as applies to married couples. Barbara and Carole presented the importance of a will for members of

the LGBT community who wish to benefit their partners. If an individual dies without a will, state law determines the recipients of his or her assets. Same-sex partners are not included among the statutory beneficiaries.

A Look Around the Firm continued

Association Conference and Job Fair on October 21st at the American University Washington College of Law.

- On November 2, 2005, Reed Stephens spoke on the "Straight Talk in Advancing Your Personal Career Strategies" panel at the MCCA Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference in New York.
- The MultiCultural Law Magazine's 2006 Award Dinner was held on January 12th in Washington, DC. MultiCultural Law Magazine ranked Sonnenschein 10th for overall diversity, 9th for partners, 6th for associates, 10th for women and 2nd for attorneys with disabilities.

Year-End Report



The ultimate goal of Sonnenschein's diversity initiative is to ensure that the Firm's culture values

all kinds of human differences and that we understand that diversity is in the Firm's own best interest. Although the diversity of employees that a firm attracts and retains may indicate how well the environment supports difference, it is only one yardstick of success. Without an environment that supports an inclusive culture, numeric progress will not last.

With that caveat in mind, however, the gains in the number of attorneys in underrepresented groups and their retention and promotion are the statistics most frequently relied on by clients in determining whether a law firm's diversity initiative is adequately supportive of diversity. Accordingly, we are publishing the

Year-End Diversity Statistics Report, which compares our attorney demographics at the end of 2004 and 2005. To ensure that our percentages are consistent from year to year, we have measured the percentage that women and "diverse" attorneys represent of our entire attorney population, even though in 2004, we only counted attorneys who voluntarily self-identified. "Diverse" attorneys, or more accurately underrepresented attorneys, include African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino American, Native American, multiracial, "other racial or ethnic minority", openly gay/lesbian attorneys and attorneys with disabilities.

Sonnenschein is making some progress but we certainly should not be complacent. Our partnership ranks continue to reflect broader diversity and the percentages of both women attorneys and women partners have increased slightly. Although we are attracting a greater diversity

of associate talent, however, the attrition rate of minority attorneys during 2005 was greater than that of white attorneys, which contributed to an actual decline in Sonnenschein's percentage of diverse attorneys.

- *Helise Harrington*

Year-End Diversity Report continued

2004 and 2005 Comparison

CHICAGO	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	37.8%	39.7%
Diverse Attorneys	18.7%	18.3%
Women Partners	23.3%	24.6%
Diverse Partners	7.5%	7.9%

SAN FRANCISCO	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	42.3%	39.4%
Diverse Attorneys	21.1%	18.2%
Women Partners	31.4%	27.0%
Diverse Partners	17.1%	18.2%

KANSAS CITY	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	36.2%	31.8%
Diverse Attorneys	10.3%	15.2%
Women Partners	20.0%	15.6%
Diverse Partners	4.0%	9.4%

ST. LOUIS	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	26.1%	26.1%
Diverse Attorneys	10.9%	13.0%
Women Partners	9.5%	10.0%
Diverse Partners	0.0%	0.0%

LOS ANGELES	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	42.0%	42.1%
Diverse Attorneys	33.3%	38.7%
Women Partners	26.7%	21.2%
Diverse Partners	16.7%	21.2%

WASHINGTON, DC	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	31.0%	35.7%
Diverse Attorneys	23.0%	17.9%
Women Partners	20.0%	26.7%
Diverse Partners	18.0%	14.0%

NY/BOSTON/NJ/WPB	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	29.1%	30.9%
Diverse Attorneys	15.6%	12.9%
Women Partners	17.1%	21.1%
Diverse Partners	4.3%	5.6%

FIRMWIDE	2004	2005
Women Attorneys	35.2%	36.3%
Diverse Attorneys	19.1%	18.9%
Women Partners	21.7%	22.5%
Diverse Partners	9.4%	10.8%

Sonnenschein Sponsors NAPABA Convention continued

house counsel, lawyers, judges, law students and professors attended.

Bill Choe, Chunlin Leonhard, Harumi Hata, Jacquie Vidmar, James Hsu, Marina Saito and Yabo Lin participated as panelists on various topics.

It was gratifying to see so many of our Asian Pacific American partners and associates in attendance – we were a highly visible, impressive and diverse group. We networked with in-house counsel from companies such as Wal-Mart, Allstate, Tyco, Matsushita/Vivendi Universal, LG Electronics, Kimberly-Clark and Toll Brothers.

A convention highlight was NAPABA's selection of James Hsu as one of '21 Best Lawyers under 40.'

Yabo Lin is a partner in the Kansas City office. He is Chair of the Asia Pacific practice group and also a member the Corporate and Securities group. He is a member of the Kansas City Diversity Committee.

Sonnenschein Hosts Lambda Legal Reception and CLE Presentation



From left to right Roger Heidenreich, Sonia Martin, Dee Joyce Hayes, Camilla B. Taylor, Lambda Legal Staff Attorney and Willard Loring Dumas, III, Lambda Legal, Major Gifts Officer.

The St. Louis office and Lambda Legal recently co-hosted a reception for members of the

St. Louis legal community, including faculty and students from Washington University Law School and attorneys from other St Louis firms.

The reception was the first community outreach held by Lambda Legal in Missouri. Lambda's plan is to gain more visible presence and begin a dialogue in states such as Missouri that have enacted laws restricting the right to marry to gay and lesbian couples.

Diversity Vendor Program Update

During 2005, the Firm undertook the implementation of Sonnenschein's Diversity Vendor Program. With the recognition that a large law firm purchases many goods and services from suppliers throughout the country, the intent of the program is to place a portion of the Firm's business expenditures with businesses that are owned and operated by minorities, women, gays/lesbians and the physically challenged.

Our immediate goal was to determine the current level of the Firm's diversity spending. We determined it was about 4% of total expenditures. We are now determining targets for diversity spending for 2006, and beyond. Bill Turkington leads this project, assisted by Karen Gifford, Sue Kalisik, Iris Harris, Erik Miller and Stephen Held.

Charting the Careers of In-House & Outside Counsel of Color

By Melvin M. Wright, Jr.

Reed Stephens, Preston Pugh and I traveled to Leesburg, Virginia to participate in the 8th Annual Conference of Charting Your Own Course (CYOC) held on December 2 - 4, 2005.

While the organization's genesis was to assist minority in-house counsel in paving a successful career path, over the years, minority outside counsel have also been invited to participate. The organization's primary focus is the career development of minority attorneys.

The first day began with a panel discussion entitled, "Understanding the Journey: The Uncut Version" in which several general counsel recounted obstacles they had overcome to succeed in corporate America. Days two and three consisted of breakout sessions addressing issues faced by minority associates in managing their career paths and in building a successful book of business. In-house counsel also challenged certain assumptions held by many outside counsel on issues relating to best practices of seeking business development opportunities.

They recounted anecdotal experiences involving interactions with outside counsel that culminated in successful business opportunities and encounters that were painful and unsuccessful.

The conference concluded with a shared commitment by participants to develop opportunities for attorneys of color. I was impressed with the caliber of CYOC leadership and CYOC's plans to implement opportunities for in-house and outside minority attorneys. I directly benefited from the conference. I met an in-house counsel from WalMart who contacted Sonnenschein's relationship partner for WalMart and recommending that I be staffed on a major trademark infringement matter that we are handling. This was a concrete expression of an in-house counsel's vested interest in the career development of an outside counsel of color.

Mel Wright is a partner in the litigation business regulation practice group. He is a member of the Chicago Diversity Committee.

Cooking with Sonnenschein & Rocco DiSpirito continued



(Kara Basinger, Amy Bess, Holly Falkowitz, Sue Slater-Jansen, Jane Stevens, Rocco DiSpirito, Danielle Strain.)

The evening began with a cocktail hour for guests to get acquainted with each other and Rocco. As 65 clients/prospects and 23 attorneys gathered at their respective stations, an aroma of light-hearted laughter and fresh food filled the air.

The evening's events culminated with the collective enjoyment and pride in the delicious home-made dinner and dessert, prepared by our clients and lawyers. Rocco's latest cookbook was raffled to ten lucky winners. The response from our clients has been overwhelmingly positive, and our marketing department filled in sign up sheets for future WBDC events, which more than two thirds of our attendees completed.

Word from the Chair of the Firmwide Diversity Committee



Now in its third year, our diversity effort has reached a slow but steady cadence of progress. Our collective effort over the last few years is awesome – both literally and figuratively. Over the last two years, we have: self identified, improved our ratios for attorney diversity in all of our ranks, adopted a staff diversity initiative and a Staff Diversity Committee and instituted a vendor diversity

program. The Firm has also been recognized externally and was awarded the Thomas L. Sager Award for Diversity in both the Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regions in 2005. We have huge challenges ahead but we have at least made a good start on our journey to becoming an inclusive firm.

An important part of our effort was our appointment of a lawyer, Helise Harrington, to lead our diversity effort all day every day, someone who has 100% focus on helping the Firm be both efficient and effective in

pursuing and achieving its diversity goals. In recognition of her efforts and our progress, the Firm recently promoted Helise to partner. Please join me in congratulating her. Her elevation clearly communicates to all that diversity is a top priority at Sonnenschein. Can you think of another Firm that has promoted an attorney to partnership solely based of his/her contribution to diversity? Neither can I.

- Kevin Chavous