

BLANKROME

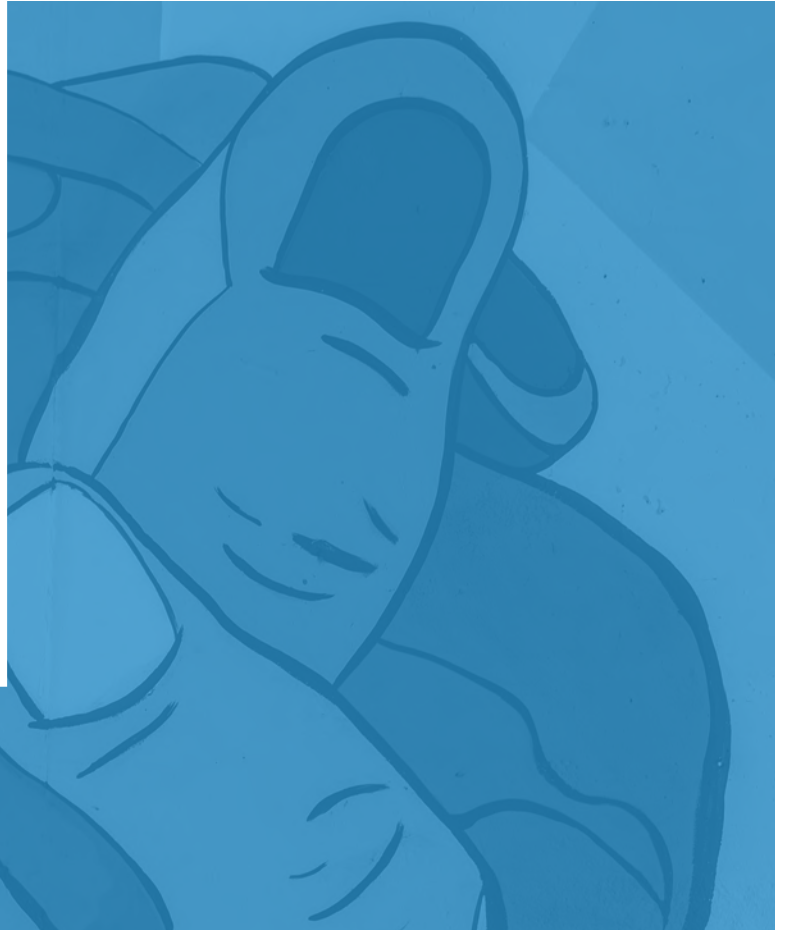
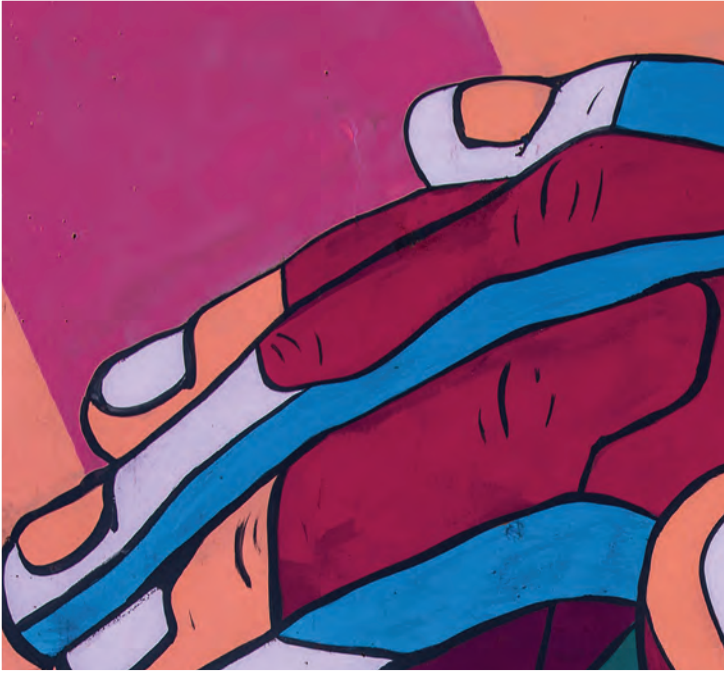


THE 2021-2022 ISSUE

PERSPECTIVES

Uniting in Times of Adversity





Where We Stand

We continue to build upon the firm's foundation of diversity to foster inclusivity and equity.



Alan J. Hoffman



Grant S. Palmer

Welcome to *Perspectives*



Dear Friends,

Hello and welcome to the 2021–2022 issue of *Perspectives*, Blank Rome’s diversity, equity, and inclusion report. Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee has compiled this annual review of our firm’s programs, partnerships, accomplishments, and initiatives that directly support and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in our firm, the legal industry, and the communities where we live and work.

In 2021 we were thrilled to welcome two new members of our team who are helping lead and advance our diversity and inclusion goals: Shonette Gaston, Chief Operating Officer, and Krystal Studavent Ramsey, Director of Diversity & Inclusion. We are so grateful to have a tremendous network of dedicated colleagues across the firm—including the members of our Diversity and Inclusion Committee, affinity groups, and working groups—who work tirelessly to advocate for racial equality and social justice.

Looking back and moving ahead. In 2021, we celebrated our firm’s 75th anniversary. Blank Rome was formed in 1946 during a period of great change—the end of World War II and in a time of persistent discrimination. Our founders stayed focused on their vision of creating a firm where people of diverse religious and racial backgrounds could gather to practice law. As we enter our next 75 years, we similarly find ourselves in a period of global transformation. But just like our founders, we remain

committed to implementing innovative goals and initiatives for increasing and harnessing our diverse talents to enhance how we support our clients, colleagues, and communities. We believe that together we can discover opportunity amid change and look forward to Blank Rome’s next 75 years.

Staying connected. During another year with less in-person engagement, we were grateful to find meaningful opportunities to connect with clients and friends of the firm on programs that help advance our shared goals, some of which we have highlighted in this issue. We are excited to continue this momentum through 2022 and beyond and welcome your feedback, suggestions, and ideas on how we can partner to expand our efforts and impact.

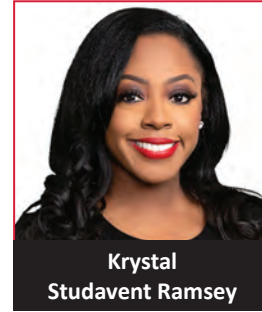
Regards,

ALAN J. HOFFMAN

Chair

GRANT S. PALMER

Managing Partner and CEO



Krystal Studavent Ramsey

A Note from Blank Rome’s Director of Diversity & Inclusion

BY KRYSTAL STUDAVENT RAMSEY

In January 2021, I joined Blank Rome as its first full-time Director of Diversity & Inclusion, expanding on the excellent work of our former chief diversity and inclusion officers, and in further support of our firm’s longstanding commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (“DEI”). In this role, I work closely with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, firm management, affinity groups, and other key stakeholders to create, lead, and implement our strategic long-term and short-term DEI strategies.

My career has focused on diverse legal talent development, legal talent management, business development, legal recruiting, and leadership development initiatives and programs. I have enjoyed working in various capacities across the legal industry—from general counsel to business development and DEI in BigLaw and the nonprofit sector to consulting. I leverage these diverse work experiences in my current role.

2021 was a perplexing and exhausting year for everyone. I joined the firm remotely because of the pandemic. Due to ongoing social upheaval, we witnessed a proliferation of calls to action/pledges for social justice and racial equity. We dealt with an uptick in anti-Asian, anti-Black, and anti-semitic discrimination and violence, which pervaded the country. We experienced the “Great Resignation” and “Great Migration” with an exodus of attorneys from the legal profession and increased mobility from attorneys and legal professionals who moved from employer to employer and industry to industry, and a heightened burn-out, especially among women and caregivers who have had increased responsibility during the pandemic.

Even amid all those challenges, we showed our resolve to adapt to change and our resilience, remaining steadfast in our commitment to DEI and finding new ways to connect. We uplifted each other across offices, exchanging stories, pictures, and innovative ideas. Collectively, we worked to navigate our “new normal,” adopt a hybrid work model, and effectively implement integration strategies.

I am proud of our work in 2021 and how we were able to unite through adversity, including but not limited to achieving Mansfield 4.0 Certification Plus status from Diversity Lab, conducting a successful listening tour,

forging new relationships across the firm, building out our Diversity & Inclusion department, expanding and engaging more leaders in our 21-Day Antiracism Leadership Challenge, joining forces with new strategic partners and clients, launching a firm-wide pronoun initiative, leading racial equity and transgender empowerment pro bono projects, and hosting our DEI Awards ceremony to recognize some of our DEI champions and their work to promote and advance DEI at Blank Rome and beyond. I am grateful to my Blank Rome family for their openness, patience, enthusiasm, and optimism about the future of work and DEI at Blank Rome. I appreciate and acknowledge our DEI networks for putting in hard work, day after day, in efforts to accomplish our firm’s DEI goals.

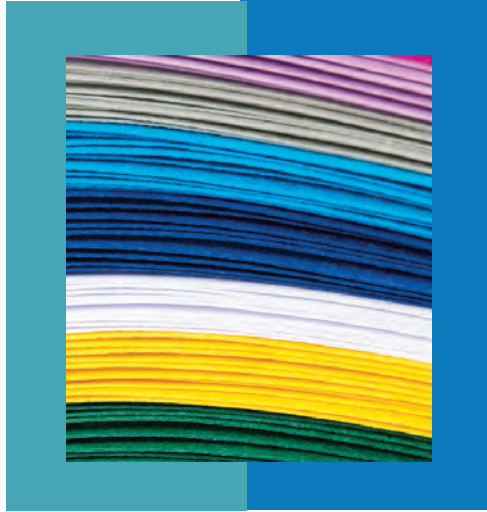
I am excited about collaborating with my colleagues to shape and implement our 2022 DEI strategy and build upon our foundation. I am looking forward to working closely with our workforce, clients, strategic partners, and communities to scale and accelerate DEI at our firm and throughout the legal industry. I am also looking forward to developing and embedding accountability mechanisms that will help us track our performance and productivity.

We hope you find this issue of *Perspectives*, our 2021-2022 DEI report, insightful and motivational as we all continue to do impactful DEI work, to implement sustainable strategies, to elevate the legal industry, and to create a better world. ■



“

I am excited about collaborating with my colleagues to shape and implement our 2022 DEI strategy and build upon our foundation.



Blank Rome Women Attend the Premier Conference for Women of Color in the Law



“With the opportunity to learn from and, in some instances, meet with women of color general counsels and other in-house attorneys; leading diversity, equity, and inclusion practitioners; as well as be uplifted by Grammy award-winning duo Mary Mary at the closing ceremony, Corporate Counsel Women of Color (“CCWC”) once again delivered on a stellar event and a promise of making lasting connections for all attendees,” said Co-Department Head of Litigation, Co-Chair of Blank Rome’s Washington, D.C., Office, and Partner Shawn Wright.

We are a proud sponsor of the CCWC Conference, which in September 2021 took place in a hybrid format. Blank Rome was represented by Partners Shawn Wright and Dominique Casimir, and Director of Diversity & Inclusion Krystal Studavent Ramsey. ■

Expanded Strategic Partnership with Leadership Council on Legal Diversity



LCLD Fellow and Pathfinder Program

BY ERNESTINE MINGS

Blank Rome has proudly participated in Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (“LCLD”) Fellow and Pathfinder programs since 2011. I was honored to be chosen, alongside two other amazing women of color, to be part of the 2021 LCLD Program. Asima Ahmad and I were selected to be Blank Rome’s 2021 Pathfinders, and Melanie Carter was selected to be a Fellow. This hallmark program is dedicated to producing a generation of attorneys with strong leadership and relationship skills who are committed to fostering diversity and inclusion within their individual institutions and throughout the legal industry.

LCLD Pathfinder meetings and programs throughout the year featured dynamic speakers, including Adam Grant, professor at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania; Carrie J. Fletcher, affiliate instructor at Harvard Law School Executive Education; and Rick Palmore, LCLD founding chair emeritus and senior counsel at Dentons. Each speaker offered a unique approach to the challenges faced by attorneys at various points in their careers, with many sharing personal stories that added context to the e-modules we completed throughout the Pathfinder year.

In addition to the larger, virtual meetings, there were programs designed to build connections between Pathfinder participants and LCLD alumni. The Compass Conversations Program, for example, featured small-group gatherings of Pathfinders and alumni and offered an opportunity for us to network with emerging leaders in the legal profession. In these sessions, we received professional development advice and shared our perspectives on topics that ranged from work-life balance to dealing with microaggressions in a professional setting. ■

LCLD Success in Law School Mentorship Program

In 2021, as a participant in LCLD’s Success in Law School Mentorship Program, we paired mentors with mentees in Houston, Philadelphia, and New York. The primary objective of the LCLD Success in Law School Mentoring Program is to ensure that talented and diverse first-year law students receive the mentoring and preparation they need to maximize their potential in law school and beyond. LCLD member organizations can enroll their attorneys as mentors in the Individual Mentoring Program (“IMP”), have them participate in the Group Mentoring Program, or both. The IMP is a comprehensive initiative for first-year law students from diverse backgrounds based on the principles of legal excellence and personal involvement. Attorney mentors are matched 1:1 with talented law student mentees to ensure that mentees receive the mentoring they need to navigate their first year of law school and maximize their long-term potential. LCLD provides a comprehensive mentoring toolkit to assist both mentor and mentee in developing a successful relationship.

LCLD Leaders at the Front Initiative

As active members of LCLD, an organization of more than 350 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners, we are part of a team working to build a more inclusive industry and focusing on developing strategies to increase diversity in the legal profession by helping its member organizations find, hire, retain, promote, and engage the best talent for their workforces. As members of LCLD, Grant Palmer and Alan Hoffman, along with other leaders of some of the country’s leading law firms and corporate legal departments, have created and published personal action plans (Leader’s Pledges), publicly committing to accomplishing these plans, with the goal of building a more perfect union throughout the legal industry—in our organizations, our communities, and our world.

LCLD Alumni Program

Blank Rome has had 10 LCLD Fellows and 10 Pathfinders since 2011, and actively participates in LCLD’s Alumni Program, including Saminaz Akhter, a partner in our D.C. office and 2015 LCLD Fellow, who serves as LCLD’s Alumni City Lead for Washington, D.C. The LCLD Alumni Program is designed to build upon the relationships and leadership skills acquired during the LCLD Fellows and Pathfinder programming year. Founded by the alumni themselves in 2012, the program is guided by the following mission statement: Through our commitment to fostering personal connections and sustained and targeted investment in diverse legal talent, we strive to empower our Alumni, Fellows, and Pathfinders with the goal of cultivating leaders, transforming career trajectories, and advancing diversity in the legal profession. The LCLD Alumni Program is open to more than 2,600 diverse attorneys who have participated in LCLD’s Fellows and Pathfinder programs.

Firm Signs ACC NCR Racial & Social Justice Challenge

Launched on Martin Luther King Day 2021, President of the Association of Corporate Counsel–National Capital Region (“ACC NCR”) and VP and Deputy General Counsel, Employment Law and Employee Relations, Freddie Mac, Greg Watchman, invited strategic partners and members to join the ACC NCR Racial & Social Justice Challenge and to support the ACC NCR Racial & Social Justice Fundraising Campaign to benefit the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. The ACC NCR community is 2,500 attorneys strong, 900 member organizations strong, and 50 sponsors strong.

The events of 2020 and the first two weeks of 2021 increased our nation’s focus on the profound and urgent need to eliminate individual and institutional racial and social injustice from our society. Systemic racism and inequality still pervade our lives—from education to employment, from housing to criminal justice.

By signing the Challenge, our firm committed to expanding its DEI efforts and to fighting for racial and social justice within our



communities. In addition, we are leveraging the Challenge to accelerate activity throughout our law firm and beyond.

As part of our commitment, our Director of Diversity & Inclusion, Krystal Studavent Ramsey, has spoken at ACC NCR events including the Racial & Social Justice Challenge kickoff luncheon and the Sponsorship Return on Investment Program.

Blank Rome’s 21-Day Leadership Challenge (see article, page 22) was spotlighted at ACC NCR’s DEI Conference in November 2021 with a video featuring Dominique Casimir, the partner who introduced the Challenge to our firm, and Donna Branca, our Director of Strategic Leadership who is managing the program.

Krystal has also served as an adviser to some of the in-house counsel members of ACC NCR on ways they can increase DEI, and was featured in ACC NCR’s social media series, sharing why Blank Rome committed to participating in this important challenge. ■

Blank Rome Signs HBA 2021 Gender Fairness Commitment Statement



Blank Rome Associate Emery Gullickson Richards served as a co-chair of the Houston Bar Association’s (“HBA”) Gender Fairness Committee for the 2019–2020 term. In this role, Emery joined her co-chairs, Kristin Kruse Lotz and Marissa Marquez, in leading the Committee’s mission of examining issues related to gender fairness in the legal profession and developing programs to discuss the issues, including seminars and networking opportunities.



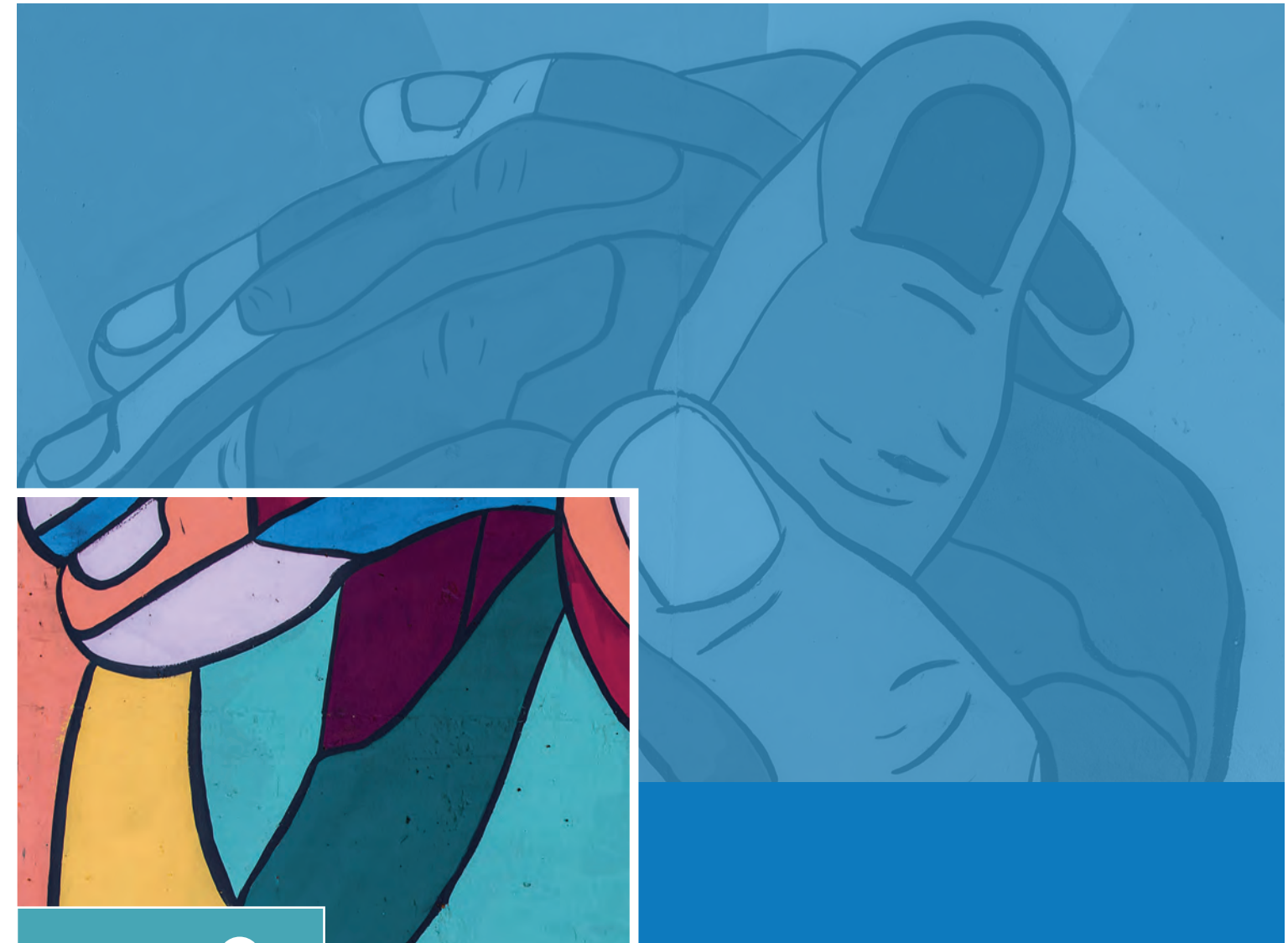
Emery Gullickson Richards

Emery spearheaded our firm’s continued support as a signatory of the HBA’s 2021 Gender Fairness Commitment Statement. The initiative asks law firms, legal departments, and other institutions to commit

to taking concrete action to advance gender equity in the legal profession. Blank Rome supports the initiative and

the various changes to the Commitment Statement evident in its 2021 iteration, including embracing inclusion of all genders and an enduring dedication to flexible work arrangements that are viable and equitable for all attorneys.

"We are proud of our programs that align with the Statement’s seven key pillars, including our active affinity group—BR Women, annual Women’s Leadership Summit, Women’s Business Development Academy, Women Who Lead Roundtable Program, and BR Women Bootcamps, among many other firm initiatives and policies" said Emery. ■



Leading with Intentionality

We share with you a sample of thoughtful interviews and insights, and honor our champions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Shawn M. Wright on Her New Role as Litigation Department Co-head: Being the First Means Being a Model for Others

Shawn M. Wright



On January 1, 2022, Partner Shawn M. Wright was appointed as co-head of our firm-wide Litigation Department. Shawn is the first woman to lead the Litigation Department and the first person of color to lead a firm department. We asked Shawn about her new role and the importance of diversity in leadership.



What does it mean to be the first attorney of color to lead any firm department and the first woman to lead our firm's more than 300-attorney Litigation Department?

SHAWN M. WRIGHT: First, I am extremely honored that Grant and Alan trusted me enough to appoint me to this role. I never thought of being the “first” in these categories, but perhaps being the first means breaking down a barrier that we didn’t realize existed. Being the first means that I hope to be a role model for more to follow. At the same time, I know that I am not in this role because I am a first. I am the right person at the right time to assist the Litigation Department and the firm in reaching new heights.



What experience will you bring to this role to enhance our Litigation Department's services and culture?

SHAWN M. WRIGHT: I have more than 18 years of experience with the firm. During that time, I have participated on many committees and in leadership roles, including former practice group leader, chair of the Lawyers Promotion Committee, the Executive Committee and Partner Board, and as co-chair of our Washington, D.C., office. So, I bring a different perspective based on my tenure, resident office, and practice area, generally. My roles within the firm have provided me with an opportunity to understand how the firm works. My unique journey has given me a vantage point to see the firm in different ways. One perspective is not better than another, just different, and that diversity benefits everyone. I believe my perspective will provide opportunities to be creative in staffing teams, in resolving disputes, in supporting clients, in professional development, and in department growth.



What are your top priorities in your new role?

SHAWN M. WRIGHT: My first priority is to listen. To get to know my fellow litigators at all levels and make sure they feel heard,

invested in, and empowered. My goal is to be a sounding board, supporting and challenging my colleagues to be their best selves and, ultimately, to help our department and our firm succeed. I want to meet people where they are and help them get to where they want to be. I am looking for ways to be intentional and impactful that will benefit our clients, our Department, and our firm.



How will you advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in your new role?

SHAWN M. WRIGHT: I don’t believe that you have to have a title or a position to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. Each of us, no matter our role in the firm, should continue to create an environment where everyone can bring their best selves to the office, get a seat at the table, and have our voices and opinions heard. It’s easy when you treat each other with kindness and respect, the rest just happens. We all don’t have to agree, but we do have to listen. I hope that I can be impactful by integrating my perspective into the decision-making process, assist with making sure everyone gets an opportunity to succeed, and first and foremost making sure that we not only serve our clients’ needs, but they get to see the best picture of our firm.



What differentiates our firm's Litigation Department services from other law firms?

SHAWN M. WRIGHT: We have some of the best kick-ass litigators, first and foremost!!! In all seriousness, we have a department that is entrepreneurial in nature, meaning, we are uniquely creative in our approaches to problem solving and solutions. Our clients’ issues and opportunities are not cookie-cutter. We have a strong focus on deeply understanding our clients’ businesses and helping them achieve resolutions that fit their needs and goals. Most importantly, we are always prepared to litigate if needed.



Why is it important to have diversity in law firm and practice leadership?

SHAWN M. WRIGHT: It is a fact that problem solving is enhanced by diversity. Our clients, our firm, and our colleagues benefit from diverse perspectives. We need to have leaders who look like us for people to envision longevity, growth, and upward mobility. Having commonalities with our leaders—not just by gender, race, sexual orientation, or preference, but also by being a parent or a caregiver—gives us comfort that someone else understands our journey. ■



I am looking for ways to be intentional and impactful that will benefit our clients, our department, and our firm.

Partnering with PNC Bank on Diversity Lab's 2022 Inclusion Blueprint Initiative

Our firm is proud to partner with PNC Bank, a longstanding client, to participate in Diversity Lab's Inclusion Blueprint initiative. As a member of Diversity Lab's Move the Needle Fund Diversity Dividends Collective, a group of more than 30 in-house legal departments, PNC Bank invited us to participate in this important initiative along with them. "PNC is so pleased to partner with Blank Rome to increase the inclusivity and diversity of our outside counsel team," said Alexandria Samuel, managing senior counsel of litigation and chair of PNC's Legal Department Diversity and Inclusion Council.

Designed by Diversity Lab (creator of the Mansfield Rule, OnRamp Fellowship, and other data-driven efforts) and first piloted in collaboration with CHIPs in 2018, the Inclusion Blueprint is a roadmap of activities that law firms can and should undertake to ensure that all lawyers—with a particular focus on underrepresented lawyers—have fair and equal access to quality work, influential people, and other meaningful career opportunities. The Blueprint is also a diagnostic tool that allows law firms to track and measure: (1) the representation of diverse lawyers against specific "average" and "above-average" benchmarks; (2) the inclusion activities at both the leadership and practice group levels that are necessary to ensure that all



lawyers—including underrepresented lawyers—have fair and equal access to career advancement opportunities; and (3) the "Do Something Hard" commitments that firms can make to continue investing in their talent. As part of this initiative, we have agreed to participate at both the leadership and practice group levels.

"We value our longstanding relationship with PNC Bank and align with their core values, embracing diversity and inclusion and applying these values to deliver quality client service," said Lawrence F. Flick II, Blank Rome's vice chair and chair of our Financial Services industry group. "We are excited about this partnership with PNC Bank to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in our respective organizations and throughout the legal industry. Working collaboratively is a great way to accelerate our shared goals while deepening our relationship," said Krystal Studavent Ramsey, Blank Rome's Director of Diversity & Inclusion. ■

Blank Rome's 2021 Distinguished Diversity & Inclusion Awards

In October 2021, our firm presented Partner Stacy D. Phillips with the Bonnie Glantz Fatell Women's 2021 Advocacy and Leadership Award, and Partner Christopher A. Lewis with the Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones 2021 Diversity and Inclusion Award, in recognition of their outstanding contributions to advancing DEI at the firm, across the legal industry, and within their local communities. ■



Stacy D. Phillips



Christopher Lewis

2021 Corporate Equality Index



In January 2021, our firm received 100 percent on the 2021 Corporate Equality Index, the nation's foremost benchmarking survey and report measuring corporate policies and practices related to LGBTQ workplace equality, administered by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. With this score, Blank Rome has been designated for the sixth year in a row as a "Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality." ■

2021 Best Law Firm for Women by Seramount

In June 2021, we were named for the fifth year as one of the Best Law Firms for Women by Seramount (formerly Working Mother Media), in recognition of "utilizing best practices in recruiting, retaining, promoting, and developing women lawyers." We are among 50 firms that earned recognition in the list. ■

2021 Yale Law Women's Top Firms for Gender Equity & Family Friendliness Report

In April 2021, we were again honored in the Yale Law Women's ("YLW") Top Firms for Gender Equity & Family Friendliness Report as a "Top Firm for Part-Time Options." This marks the fourth year in a row that our firm has been recognized in YLW's annual report for our commitment to advancing women within our firm and throughout the legal industry.



Exelon's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Honor Roll

In September 2021, our firm was named to client Exelon's 2021 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Honor Roll, marking the second year in a row that we were recognized for our efforts to include women and people of color in key roles on Exelon's account teams as well as our strategic initiatives that highlight the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Blank Rome is notably one of only six law firms honored in the select list of 38 companies.

As a pilot member of the inaugural Mansfield Rule, our firm has received Mansfield Certification for each subsequent iteration of the program and earned the Mansfield Certification Plus designation for Mansfield Rule 2.0 through 4.0.

Mansfield Certification Plus for Mansfield Rule 4.0



In September 2021, we achieved Mansfield Certification Plus status after successfully completing Diversity Lab's year-long Mansfield Rule 4.0 program. As a pilot member of the inaugural Mansfield Rule, we have received Mansfield Certification for each subsequent iteration of the program and earned the Mansfield Certification Plus designation for Mansfield Rule 2.0 through 4.0. Blank Rome will continue our longstanding partnership with Diversity Lab by participating in Mansfield Rule 5.0, which will run through July 2022. ■

Making Meaningful Impact by Building Community

BR Women



Deborah A. Skakel



Linsey B. Bozzelli



Elaine H. Scivetti

Our affinity groups continue to lead the way in building strategic and impactful communities across our firm, and we are proud of their unwavering commitment to DEI. We sat down with some of our affinity group chairs to discuss significant highlights from 2021.

Launched in 2008, BR Women provides our women colleagues with valuable networking, educational, and mentoring opportunities that support and promote career advancement, relationship development, leadership development, and overall strategies to succeed—both inside and outside of our firm. Below are 2021 highlights from group leaders Debbie Skakel, Linsey Bozzelli, and Elaine Scivetti.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

1) What were core focus areas for BR Women in 2021?

Collaborating on the Fifth Annual Women’s Leadership Summit, self-advocacy, and engaging and supporting our women in a virtual setting.

2) Lessons learned in 2021?

We need to double down on our efforts to support our women colleagues who were impacted by the pandemic. We are monitoring this closely and focused on continued professional development.

3) What are BR Women’s most significant accomplishments in 2021?

Hosting another tremendously successful Women’s Leadership Summit and the self-advocacy workshop.

4) How do you collaborate with other departments, strategic partners, and/or external organizations?

Communication is key. Our Women’s Liaison Network also assists in the collaborative effort because the liaisons (women attorneys and professional staff across our offices) function as our boots on the ground in each of the offices, localizing and accelerating our efforts.

5) How do you work to advance the firm’s strategy?

We are well positioned at various levels across the firm, which helps us to align our goals with the firm and implement the firm’s strategy in a holistic way.

6) What are you looking forward to in 2022?

In-person events! We love connecting with our clients and friends of the firm. We also hope to offer an accelerated women’s leadership program in 2022.

BR United



Cheryl S. Chang



Morgan Fraser Mouchette

Launched in 2008, BR United provides a forum for mentorship, professional development, and networking, and a hub to support our attorneys and professionals of color. Below are 2021 highlights from group leaders Cheryl Chang and Morgan Mouchette.

2021 HIGHLIGHTS

1) What were core focus areas for BR United in 2021?

Recruiting and retention with the creation of internal professional development programs and events in various offices. Also business development, including preparation, planning, and outreach for the launch of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Summit in October 2022.

2) Lessons learned in 2021?

The benefit of having one another as resources and a strong support system in this affinity group cannot be overstated. In what turned out in many ways to be an even tougher year than 2020, we turned to each other. This community provided a safe and secure space to share ideas and aspirations openly; to candidly discuss worries about life, work, and everything in between; and to receive genuine support in our time of need.

3) What are BR United’s most significant accomplishments in 2021?

There were a lot of events that were so memorable and meaningful this year. The National Immigrant Heritage Month event where our summer associates, associates, and partners learned a lot about what connects each of us; the Juneteenth event with African American Studies Professor Shennette Garrett-Scott, who spoke about the day’s origins; hard and thoughtful discussions about the George Floyd verdict; and transparent discussions about anti-Asian violence and harassment around the country. But, hands down, the event that made us laugh the hardest and forget everything that was going on in the world for a few hours was our Black History Month Zoom event where we shared cocktails and played the interactive game “Two Truths and a Lie,” moderated by Dalila Best.

4) How do you work to advance the firm’s strategy?

We are, at the core, just a microcosm of the larger firm and a vehicle to achieve the firm’s goals. All the things the firm wants for its members—engagement in work, retention of talent, supporting our clients at the highest levels, and community engagement—we want for our BR United members.

5) What are you looking forward to in 2022?

A year in which we can come together in person and really build on the close ties we have developed in the BR United community virtually that were different from any other time in the history of this affinity group.



Fifth Annual Women's Leadership Summit Urges Women to Define "Success on Their Terms"



History

In 2016, Stacy D. Phillips, a partner in our Los Angeles office, and Lisa

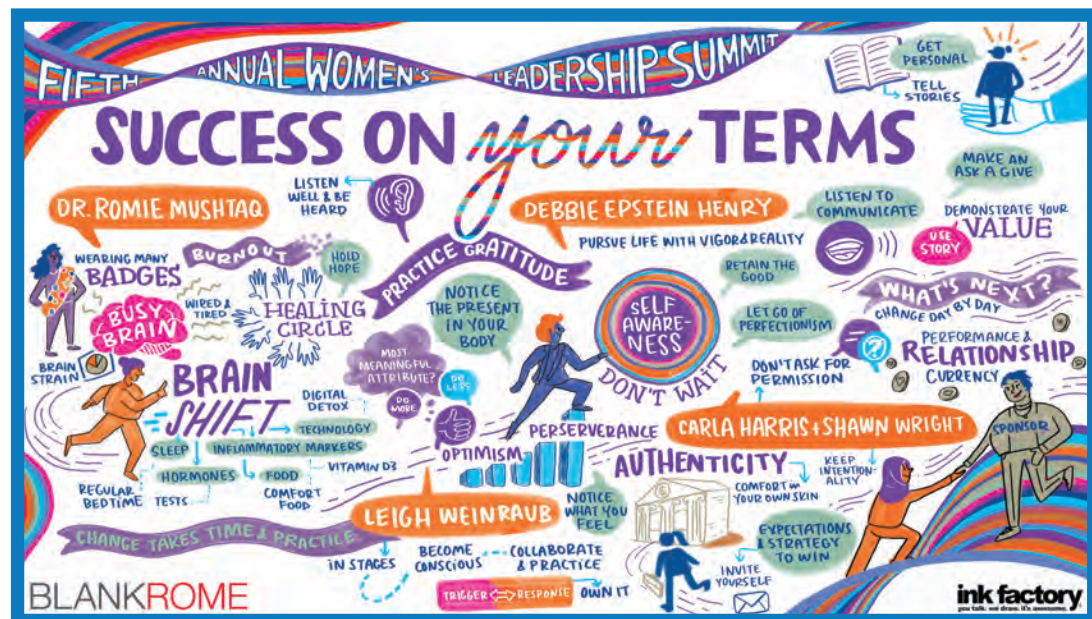
Bochner, Director of Business Development, introduced an event for the firm's women partners to connect beyond their practice groups and local offices, deepen their leadership skills, and polish their relationship-building acumen. Seeing how the event benefitted our women lawyers over the year, we expanded the scope of our program to include women general counsels and friends of the firm, creating a unique opportunity for women to connect outside of the office, brainstorm on innovative ideas, and

create meaningful relationships that continue to grow year after year.

Fifth Annual Women's Leadership Summit Theme

The theme of our Fifth Annual Women's Leadership Summit, held in October 2021, was "Success on *Your* Terms." This was fitting with the current disruption caused by shifts and changes in society and in business, with women re-evaluating what is important to them, personally and professionally, and taking actions to align with their values.

We are delighted to share highlights from our inspiring and well-attended 2021 Women's Leadership Summit. ■



FIFTH ANNUAL WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

- Opening and Welcome with Blank Rome Partners, Managing Partner and CEO Grant Palmer, and Co-Hosts Sophia Lee and Caroline Donelan
- brainSHIFT at Work with Dr. Romie Mushtaq
- Mind in Motion with Leigh Weinraub
- Hey Superwoman, What's Next? with Debbie Epstein Henry
- Women Giving Back with Dominique Casimir and Kathy Ochroch
- Success on My Terms with Carla Harris and Shawn Wright

Women's Leadership Summit Chat

Kathy Mojibi, Signal Brands

The summit is always so inspirational. Thanks for creating this platform to promote women in leadership.

Susan Bickley, Blank Rome

High achieving professional women like our guest speaker don't often acknowledge "losing it" (which I have) and I appreciate her vulnerability.

Tamika Johnson, Johns Hopkins University #SHEcovery, love that! Thank you Dr. Romie!!

Sophia Lee, Blank Rome

What a powerful circle of women this is!!

Kathleen Auda, Great Rock Capital Partners

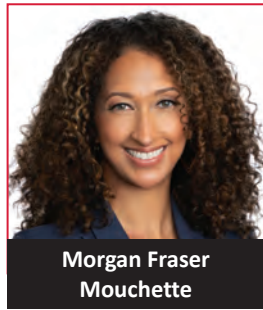
Thank you Blank Rome for arranging such a wonderful set of inspirational, educational speakers!!

Krystal Studavent Ramsey, Blank Rome

Love that, Marilyn! Vulnerability is a superpower.

Type message here





The Power of Authentic Relationships, Allyship, and Sponsorship

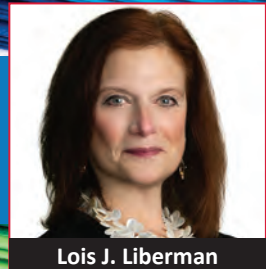
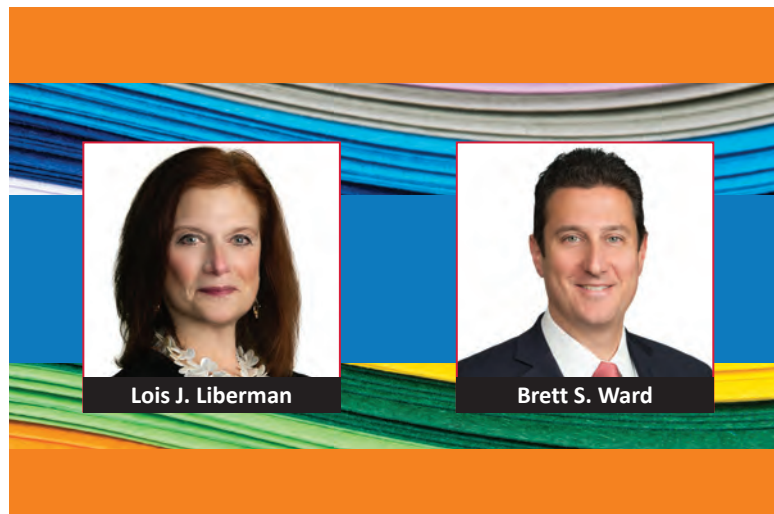
BY MORGAN FRASER MOUCHETTE

Through my role as a firmwide co-chair of the multicultural affinity group, BR United, and my long-term involvement in professional development groups for diverse attorneys in BigLaw such as the Black BigLaw Pipeline and My Brother’s Keeper | My Sister’s Keeper, I often think critically about how to promote the development and success of diverse attorneys, especially those disproportionately underrepresented in the legal industry. When doing so, I am reminded of the powerful and genuine relationships that have guided me throughout my career and how I would not be where I am today without them.

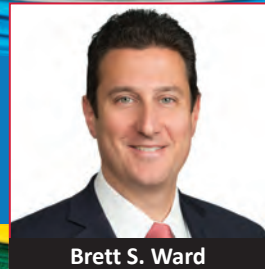
When I first began my legal career in 2009 as a first-year summer associate in the Blank Rome Diversity Scholars Program, I was introduced to the brilliant, passionate, caring, and hilarious attorneys in the Matrimonial and Family Law practice group, which has become my practice group. While all of the attorneys in the group have played a part in my development and advancement, Lois Liberman and Brett Ward in particular, who serve in various capacities and have contributed to my growth in multiple ways—as my allies, sponsors, and mentors—have indelibly shaped my trajectory and helped me succeed. Their mentorship and investment in my career development can serve as a blueprint for how to encourage, support, and retain attorneys and foster a sense of inclusion.

When I was a first-year associate in 2011, Lois Liberman was co-chair of the Matrimonial and Family Law practice group in our New York office. Our offices were quite close in proximity and Lois always made a point of starting casual conversations with me, making it obvious that she was interested in getting to know me on a personal level. Instantly, she staffed me on significant

matters for important clients, entrusting me with complicated financial matters and emotionally fraught clients. She took the time to give me ongoing and valuable feedback on my work, related to big and small matters, constantly helping to improve my technical and professional/soft skills. Even though she was (and remains) incredibly busy, Lois always made time to support my career development and nurture our relationship.



Lois J. Liberman



Brett S. Ward

Brett Ward, another Matrimonial and Family Law partner based in the New York office, and currently a co-chair of the Matrimonial and Family Law practice group, was assigned as my career development adviser on my first day as an associate. I still remember our first meeting where Brett told me, in a very frank manner, that he took the role of mentor extremely seriously and that he intended to be an asset and resource

for me, with the focus on pushing me to achieve and do my absolute best. Over the coming years, he did just that. Brett was a daily resource to help me figure out novel legal issues, answer questions, and give me practical and valuable advice.

Over the years, Lois and Brett have taken their time to get to know my family, introduce me to their families, and invite me to participate in their individual business development pursuits. While their actions with respect to me and my career may be expected as part of their roles as partners and assigned advisers, the reality is that not all young attorneys receive the guidance and mentorship, or form the personal bonds, that I was lucky enough to have with Brett and Lois. Their authenticity and support gave me a platform from which I was able to grow my own successful practice. As a result of their efforts, I never underestimate the power of true relationship building in creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace for all of my colleagues. ■

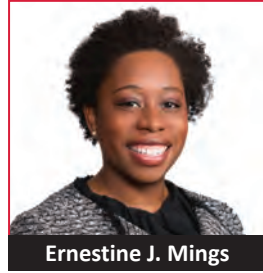


Human Connection Is Mission Critical

We find new and creative ways to connect in a virtual environment.



Shawn M. Wright



Ernestine J. Mings

Lifting from Within: BR United’s Mentoring & Sponsoring Program

BY SHAWN M. WRIGHT AND ERNESTINE J. MINGS

**“A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself and helps bring it out of you.”
Bob Proctor, Author**

Shawn M. Wright, partner and co-head of the Litigation Department, has mentored many young lawyers at the firm. Below are Shawn’s and her mentee, Associate Ernestine J. Mings’, accounts of their mentoring experience within BR United’s Mentorship and Sponsorship program, BR Belonging.

Shawn M. Wright:

Being the only, no matter the good intentions of others, gets lonely. Always feeling different when you know there is much more that binds you than separates you is exhausting. Having the opportunity to connect with someone who not only hears you, but really sees you, is the stuff that drives success.

BR United, our firm’s multicultural affinity group, has embraced the adage that we must lift while we climb, and in this regard created BR Belonging. This mentoring and sponsorship program embraces and allows associates to show up unapologetically and authentically, helping them to more seamlessly navigate legal practice every day. As someone who has sought diverse mentors throughout my life, and especially in the legal profession, I know firsthand how important it is to give back to my colleagues who look like me. Most importantly, I want them to know that I understand what it feels like to be “an only” and that feeling of loneliness.

I happily accepted the role of mentor to an associate, Ernestine Mings, who isn’t in my practice group nor in my office, but I knew when we met that we had so much more in common than we would even realize. I had a feeling that we would forge a relationship that was not just about me providing words of wisdom to her, but about Ernestine providing me with inspiration and hope, and that we understood that we were stronger together than apart.

When Ernestine and I began our mentoring relationship, amid the pandemic, our monthly discussions focused on how to stay

productive in the law firm environment as the world as we knew it was shutting down. As the pandemic continued, and then the murder of George Floyd during an already challenging time, we began discussing the despair, frustration, and anger that we both felt as Black women, wives, mothers, and then attorneys. Our calls subsequently became sources of inspiration, strategy, success, and admiration. We began to send each other Monday morning affirmations to ensure that we stayed positive and productive during the week. Here are some of the affirmations we shared:

- “You will be amazed by what you attract when you start believing what you deserve.”
- “Your mistakes may remind you of where you have been, but don’t let them direct you from where you are going.”
- “I embrace my full potential even if it makes others feel uncomfortable. I refuse to play small. I’m meant to do big things.”

Little did I know that sending these affirmations to Ernestine on a weekly basis was not just helpful to her, but they also inspired me and allowed us to connect and support each other in a way that no other mentor-mentee relationship has done in the past. BR United has created an opportunity for us to build a much deeper relationship and has taught me lessons that I thought I had learned. It is truly a mutually beneficial relationship.

Ernestine J. Mings:

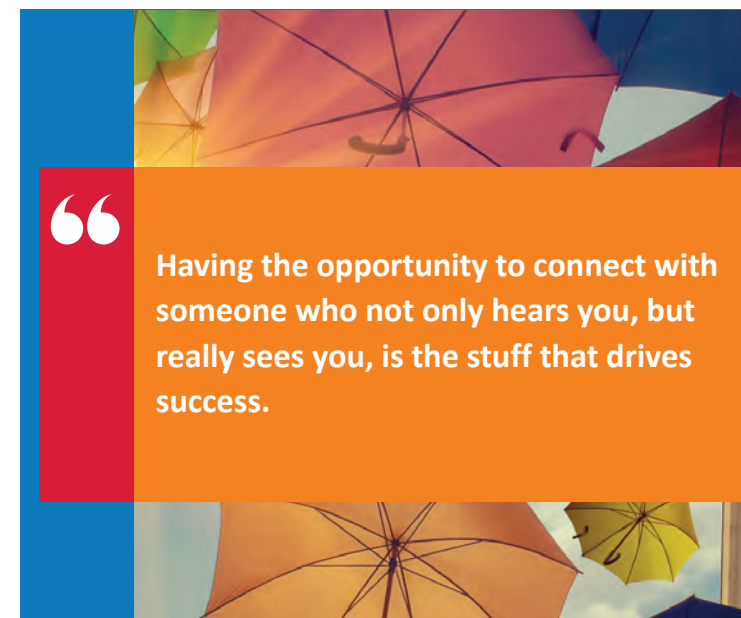
Mentors can have varying roles in your career and personal development. I have benefitted tremendously from having several mentors at Blank Rome but being paired with Shawn Wright as a mentor through BR Belonging was truly a game-changer for me. Having support from someone whom I admire and have had so many shared experiences has meant that the things that have gone unsaid between us are just as important as the things that we have actually said.

It all started with a very simple request from Shawn: “Let’s exchange affirmations on a weekly basis. It will help me get to know you and how I can support your development.” Although

I have incorporated affirmations into my daily rituals with my children, I had never thought of the benefits of applying this positive reinforcement to my own adult life.

When I look back on those initial affirmations that I sent to Shawn—the insecurities about being productive from home with two young children; deepening doubt about the future in response to the tumult of a global pandemic, political unrest, and protest over racial injustices throughout the country; and overall lack of confidence in the face of these seemingly insurmountable personal and professional challenges—I can see just how much I have grown throughout the past year. Not only has BR Belonging allowed me to build a deeper connection with Shawn, but it has caused me to be more introspective and, in turn, truly deepen my relationship with myself. Through the weekly affirmations that we share, I have become more aware of my strengths, both personally and professionally. I have also found a way to merge the different parts of my personal and professional identities while activating my confidence. Without Shawn’s support, my journey to meet this version of myself would have taken much longer and surely would have been more harrowing.

Shawn typically ends our weekly e-mail exchanges with these thoughtful words, “Have a great week, on purpose,” which serves as a helpful reminder that you have to continuously make the conscious choice to be great in the face of adversity. I am so appreciative to be part of the BR Belonging program, being paired by Diana Eng, for all that Morgan Mouchette and Cheryl Chang do to support us as the leaders of BR United, and, most of all, Shawn Wright, who consistently reminds me to make the choice to be great, every week, on purpose. ■



“

Having the opportunity to connect with someone who not only hears you, but really sees you, is the stuff that drives success.

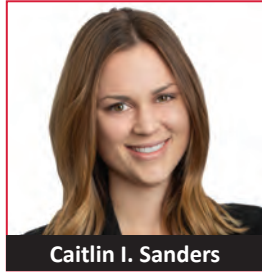


Blank Rome’s Diversity Scholars Program



“One of the best experiences I had as a participant in Blank Rome’s 2021 Diversity Scholars Program was learning more about trial work and seeing how quickly things change in litigation firsthand.” Asia Livingstone, 2021 BR Scholar

We established the Blank Rome Diversity Scholars Program in 2006 as a part of our steadfast commitment to recruit, retain, and promote attorneys who add to our overall diversity, with a focus on creating a pipeline of diverse talent and increasing representation of attorneys from historically underrepresented groups in the legal industry. The ultimate goal is to have them join and grow within our firm upon completion of law school. Through this program, we recruit high-performing, diverse, first-year law students who are passionate about promoting diversity and inclusion in the legal profession and in the community. They participate in our high-ranking, 10-week summer associate program and receive a \$25,000 scholarship, as well as mentoring, coaching, professional development programs, social networking events, and involvement with DEI strategy implementation. In 2021, we had five Scholars participating in our Summer Associate Program: four first-years and one returning second-year.



How Blank Rome Invests in DEI: 2021 Summer Associate Perspectives

BY CAITLIN I. SANDERS

On June 1, 2021, we welcomed 26 summer associates from 16 different law schools across the country for our firm’s second virtual Summer Associate Program. This exceptional group of law students worked alongside our attorneys and professionals during an in-depth, nine-week summer program. Caitlin Sanders, an associate in our firm’s Labor and Employment practice group, had an opportunity to sit down with some of our 2021 summer associates to discuss Blank Rome’s investment in DEI.



Amanda Davis is a third-year law student at Northwestern Pritzker School of Law.

“In a general sense, it has been great to see so many diverse voices at all levels—law school students, new lawyers, and experienced lawyers. I would love to see a proactive approach toward increasing representation. When conversations are going well, I believe it’s because there are so many different voices and perspectives at the table.”



John Paul (JP) Dominguez is a fourth-year evening law student at New York Law School.

“One takeaway from the summer program is that DEI is taken very seriously at Blank Rome. At every town hall, the firm’s leaders—Alan and Grant—made it a point to recognize the importance of DEI and reaffirm the firm’s values. It was nice to see people from the top down taking these issues seriously.”



Abigail Evans is a third-year law student at Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law.

“Blank Rome’s commitment to DEI is not just a marketing tool. Diversity is deeply ingrained in the firm’s history and from day one it was clear to me that DEI is valued. There were several DEI programs this summer and the attendance—at all levels—at each of these programs stood out to me. We are all so busy and it was important to me to see the commitment at all levels of the firm.”



Nicolas (Nic) Harris is a third-year law student at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School.

“It was clear that the firm is dedicating a lot of resources to DEI. I believe we cannot think that there will be true change by looking at our past initiatives. We need to see sustained effort with regular, honest reflection. This means asking ourselves what has (and hasn’t) worked. How can we do better? Diverse voices need to be included in these conversations. I think that we are already doing this at Blank Rome. I hope to see sustained and continued efforts in this regard.”



Tianmei Ann Huang is a third-year law student at University of California, Irvine School of Law.

“As a first-generation law student and the first of my family to be born in the United States, mentorship opportunities that facilitate sincere discussions are very important to me. The fact that Krystal Studavent Ramsey took the time to check in with me spoke volumes. Krystal helped me connect with diverse attorneys at the firm who were also open and willing to talk to me about their experiences. Having candid one-on-one discussions meant a lot to me. It seemed like everyone was open to fostering these relationships.”



Scarlett Montenegro is a third-year law student at American University Washington College of Law.

“One of the things that drew me to Blank Rome was that it had an established Diversity and Inclusion Committee, while many other firms did not. I had a candid conversation with Jim Kelly, the co-chair of the Washington, D.C., office and a co-chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, about diversity and what it meant to him. It was important to me to have someone committed to diversity efforts leading the firm. Shawn Wright, the other co-chair of the Washington, D.C., office, and I went out to dinner during the summer and we had an honest and motivating conversation. Being able to have that intimate moment with a woman of color and someone whom I deeply admire was so special to me.”



Celebrating Differences Is Drawing Us Closer and Making Us Better

By uplifting each other, we collectively are able to grow and create a better society and world.

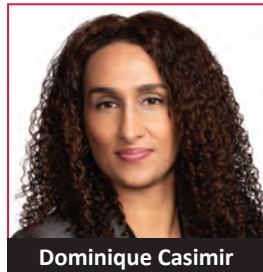
Project Pronoun Initiative Fights LGBTQ+ Bias



Lawyers who identify as having disabilities or as LGBTQ+ report experiencing both subtle and overt forms of discrimination at their workplaces, according to a first-of-its-kind 2020 study by the American Bar Association in collaboration with the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University.

In commemoration of Pride month, BR Pride, our LGBTQ+ affinity group, launched our Project Pronoun internal initiative to promote authenticity and gender identity firm-wide, educate on gender inclusivity and fluidity, and mitigate bias. Co-chairs Beth Bernstein Connors, a partner in our New York office, and Brett Snyder, a partner in our Washington, D.C., office, led the initiative.

Beth moderated a conversation with Shell Roth of Diversity Crew who spoke about gender sensitivity and inclusivity, transgender and non-binary inclusivity, and best corporate practices for addressing these areas. Following the presentation, colleagues were encouraged to add their pronouns to their e-mail signature blocks, and many responded by adding their pronouns to their signatures and other communication platforms. We are exploring ways to expand self-identification options and add pronoun selections to our internal HR systems. ■



Dominique Casimir

Blank Rome's 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Leadership Challenge

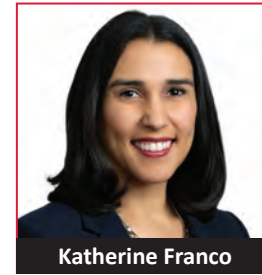
BY DOMINIQUE CASIMIR

“First and foremost, through this meaningful engagement with one another, we reaffirmed our common humanity and empathy, which many participants found particularly welcoming after working remotely for so many months. We learned that, in fact, we are capable of discussing race in the workplace in a manner that is both professional and constructive, even if perspectives differ. - *Dominique L. Casimir*”

Modeled after the American Bar Association (“ABA”) Section of Public Contract Law’s 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge, which our government contracts attorneys participated in along with several clients, our firm implemented its own 21-Day Leadership Challenge for senior leaders in 2021. The ABA program was introduced to the firm in 2020 by Blank Rome Partner Dominique Casimir and included a syllabus of 21 daily assignments and small group discussions focusing on the Black American experience, including Black history, identity and culture, the experience of anti-Black racism in America, and the intersection between systemic racism and the legal profession.

Our 21-Day Leadership Challenge was piloted with a diverse group of the firm’s most senior leaders, including our managing partner and chair. Our goals were to raise personal awareness about anti-racism, promote self-education, enable difficult conversations, bolster empathy, gain insight into thinking differently, and, in turn, to be more proactive and inclusive leaders. The pilot group completed 21 daily assignments and participated in five discussion group meetings led by an outside facilitator who helped create a safe space for participants to be vulnerable, open minded, and authentic as they discussed issues on racial equity and social justice with a particular focus on the legal profession.

Following the success of our pilot program, the firm provided opportunities for additional groups of Blank Rome colleagues to undertake the 21-Day Leadership Challenge. To date, six cohorts of our partners, leaders, and senior professional staff have participated in the program. Our 21-Day Leadership Challenge has generated very positive feedback, internally and externally, with participants indicating that the program was remarkably impactful to them, both personally and professionally. We believe that the 21-Day Leadership Challenge has enhanced our leadership competencies around diversity in a substantial way. ■



Katherine Franco

Inclusive Inventorship Initiative

BY KATHERINE FRANCO

Blank Rome understands the value of diverse teams, not only among our attorneys but also among our clients. In 2019, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office released an article titled “Progress and Potential: A Profile of Women Inventors on U.S. Patents” to report on statistics regarding women inventors on patents granted between 1976 and 2016 and to analyze entry by women into the patent system. As a woman engineer, the article resonated with my own experiences, from being the lone female in the classroom, to the undeniably disproportionate representation of men among the many inventors I have worked with as a patent attorney.

I felt compelled to capitalize on my unique opportunity to speak directly to decision makers at technology companies where equitable gender representation remains a challenge and help our clients achieve gender parity. Thus, I and my former colleague Anastasia Dodd began the Inclusive Inventorship Initiative in 2019.

We started by following the issue and trends closely and sharing educational resources with our clients. Through the Initiative, we have held webinars and written articles for our clients and colleagues regarding the equity challenges and opportunities in reaching gender parity in inventorship. We have performed audits of patent submission processes to identify unconscious bias and barriers to entry for diverse inventors in order to build more inclusive patent portfolios. We also led inclusive brainstorming sessions with our clients’ engineers, sharing gender parity best practices with in-house counsel, and benchmarking gender statistics against other large corporations. Importantly, this initiative strives to ensure not only that women have a seat at the table during patent disclosures, but that women’s ideas are treated with thoughtful consideration and evaluated through an inclusive lens.

I am so fortunate to work with many clients that are innovating the technology of the future. By facilitating participation of diverse inventors, we ensure that tomorrow’s technology is captured in patents today by addressing bias and fostering inclusivity in the inventorship process.



By facilitating participation of diverse inventors, we ensure that tomorrow’s technology is captured in patents today by addressing bias and fostering inclusivity in the inventorship process.



Standing with Our Asian American Pacific Islander Communities: Recognizing America’s Long History of Anti-Asian Racism



The organization Stop AAPI Hate has collected more than 3,800 reports of verbal abuse, harassment, and physical assaults against Asians and Asian Americans since March 2020, 68 percent of which were directed at Asian American women. With the increase in violent events against Asians and Asian Americans, we raised awareness across our firm by having a transparent conversation moderated by Sophia Lee, our chief diversity and inclusion officer emeritus, co-chair of our diversity and inclusion committee, and partner in our Philadelphia office, and sharing resources to help our colleagues learn more about the Asian and Asian American experience in the United States. Panelists who participated in the conversation included Rosaline M. Chow, Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior and Therapy, Carnegie Mellon University; Nydia Han, 6abc Consumer Investigative Reporter, Troubleshooter, and Co-Anchor of Action News Sunday Mornings; Tsiwen M. Law, Adjunct Instructor at Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law; Janet Lee, Vice President, General Counsel & Secretary of Ansys; Victor Mendoza, Associate Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies and English Language and Literature, University of Michigan; and Melissa Pang, Assistant General Counsel at The School District of Philadelphia.

We stand in solidarity and allyship with our Asian and Asian American colleagues and communities, and will continue to have dialogue, share resources, provide support by actively listening, empathizing, and learning so that we can collectively create a stronger sense of belonging within our Blank Rome community and beyond. We will continue to condemn and advocate against anti-Asian racism and other forms of discrimination, hate, and violence. ■

Champions of Social Justice: A Discussion at the Intersection of Professional Sports, Law, Business, and Education

Earlier in 2021, we curated a roundtable discussion to learn how prominent figures in sports have used their voices effectively to promote anti-racism and allyship and identify ways that the legal industry and corporate America can do the same.

Our diverse and esteemed panelists generously provided valuable insights and shared their own personal experiences, deeply touching the audience. This unique event was moderated by Blank Rome Partner Michelle Gervais and firm alumnus Eddie Edwards, and featured the following thought leaders at the intersection of professional sports, law, business, and education:



- Lameck “Humble” Lukanga, founder of Life Line Financial Group, wealth manager and financial adviser servicing world-class athletes and entertainers, philanthropist, educator, and self-proclaimed ambassador of hope.
- Chasity Melvin, assistant coach of the Phoenix Mercury, former WNBA All Star, author, and speaker.
- Kenneth Shropshire, Esq., CEO of Global Sports Institute, Adidas Distinguished Professor of Global Sports at Arizona State University, and professor emeritus of the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.
- Charles “Scooter” Vaughan, managing partner of Roman Homes LLC, co-founder of Isospec LLC, founder of Kids for Camps, former AHL ice hockey player, and a 2018 Dan Snyder Man of the Year Award recipient.

Remembering Our Roots: Commemorating Our 75th Anniversary with a Conversation on Antisemitism

In May 2021, the firm gathered for a virtual town hall to commemorate its 75th anniversary and foundational principles centered around diversity and inclusion. In a uniquely Blank Rome fashion, the event began with several firm members sharing their memories of “growing up Jewish,” followed by three firm members sharing the legacy of former Blank Rome attorneys of Jewish descent who contributed greatly to the firm, the legal industry, and their communities:

- Matthew J. Comisky remembering his father and early Blank Rome partner Marvin Comisky
- James D. Kelly remembering Sid Dickstein
- Martin Luskin remembering Herb Tenzer

The program continued with an eye-opening presentation by Holly Huffnagle, U.S. director for combatting antisemitism at the American Jewish Committee, on the state of antisemitism in America. Less than two percent of the American population is Jewish while the Jewish community is the target of the majority of domestic anti-religious hate crimes. Among her insightful comments, she shared these thoughts on why antisemitism in America is rising and what we can do about it, noting that it is not a Jewish problem, but a societal problem.

Why is antisemitism in America rising?

- Rising economic uncertainty. The Jewish community is often a scapegoat for economic woes.
- Increased emphasis on race and national identity, not just from white supremacists.
- Fading confidence in government and democracy.
- Fading legacy of the Holocaust as a reminder of what can happen if left unchecked.

How can we push back against domestic antisemitism?

- Increase security and hostage training, as many Jewish synagogues and institutions have done.
- Education, including helping people understand what antisemitism is.
- Build coalitions across ethnic, religious, and political lines and invest in human relationships.
- A legal system that takes antisemitism seriously, including legislation and resources, law enforcement education, and data collection and sharing.
- Highlight the positive: heritage and contributions, Americans uniting to support the Jewish community, and what the community is doing to combat discrimination against other groups and help strengthen America. ■



An Open Conversation on Latinx/Hispanic Representation in the Legal Industry



“Open Conversations” is our firm’s dialogue series created in 2020 to promote intentional, transparent, and enlightening conversations about timely DEI issues in the legal industry, in our communities, and beyond. Our goal with this series is for all members of the firm to learn and grow together.

In September 2021, in commemoration of Hispanic Heritage Month, we hosted an Open Conversation on the societal structural barriers and legal industry challenges that have resulted in disparity in representation and advancement for Latinx or Hispanic attorneys. Our panelists, from both within and outside the firm, shared practical solutions and guidance around their implementation.

Our esteemed panel included:

- **Domingo Manuel Llagostera**, chair of Blank Rome's Intellectual Property Litigation practice group and co-chair of the newly created affinity sub-group BR Latinx;
- **Cecilia Ibarra-Van Oostenrijk**, who serves as Blank Rome’s Mexican counsel and co-chair of the newly created affinity sub-group BR Latinx;
- **Alba Cruz-Hacker**, chief operations officer and executive director of the Hispanic National Bar Association; and
- **Rudy Sustatia**, regional attorney for the Houston District EEOC Office.

The foundational message of this Open Conversation was that there is a moral and business imperative to recognize and address the needs of the Latinx/Hispanic constituency. From the moral standpoint, diversity makes for a more fulfilling work and life experience, aligns us with the communities we serve, and supports global connectivity. From the business standpoint, data shows that diversity increases productivity, activates innovation,

attracts new business opportunities, elevates a brand’s competitive edge, and helps with talent retention.

Cultural identity is not a monolith. There is a large swath of people that fall under the umbrella of Latinx/Hispanic, including four regions that many in this constituency are connected to: Latin America, South America, Central America, and the Caribbean. This is the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States, with 62.1 million people and 119 million anticipated by 2060. Worldwide, in terms of GDP, Latinx/Hispanics would be the seventh largest economy.

Per the 2020 ABA Legal Industry Report, five percent of all lawyers are Hispanic—up from four percent a decade ago—while the U.S. Hispanic population is 18.5 percent. And only 1.47 percent of Latinx attorneys are women. Latina women are disproportionately affected by the structural barriers, stereotypes, false tropes, and other nuanced challenges, resulting in slower advancement and pay and opportunity inequities.

To foster change in this area, we need to work together to address the needs of this constituency, which will take an open mind that challenges the status quo; a systematic and proactive approach; and valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion. ■



Per the 2020 ABA Legal Industry Report, five percent of all lawyers are Hispanic—up from four percent a decade ago—while the U.S. Hispanic population is 18.5 percent.

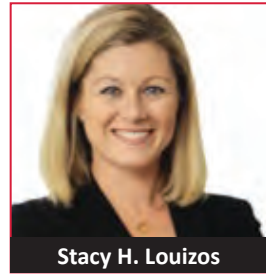


Holistic Focus Yields High Social Return (Corporate Social Responsibility)

As we expand our Corporate Social Responsibility journey, we are collaborating across departments and with clients to implement best practices.



Yelena M. Barychev



Stacy H. Louizos

ESG Team Helps Clients Navigate Growing Legal and Reputational Stakeholder Concerns

Our firm was delighted to formally announce its national Environmental, Social, and Governance (“ESG”) team in March 2021. This multi-disciplinary group is comprised of attorneys from across the firm’s offices and practices who have been advising clients for decades in the areas of environmental compliance and management; natural resources and responsible energy development; human capital management; socially responsible, sustainable, and impact investing; capital markets; and corporate governance best practices. The collective ESG Team officially launched in 2020.

“Over the past nearly two years, the convergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, historical social injustices, and an ever-changing regulatory landscape has focused investors, boards of directors, and management on the importance of ESG matters, which play a significant role in investor decisions as well as in the way boards oversee risk management,” said Corporate Partner Yelena M. Barychev, co-lead of the ESG team. “Having represented both operating company and investor clients, our ESG team draws upon our unique perspectives and deep experience to provide collaborative, creative, and practical advice on ESG issues and trends.”

Our multi-service ESG team practices in the corporate and securities, mergers and acquisitions, investment management, energy, environmental, labor and employment, maritime, privacy and data security, real estate, and regulatory and litigation areas, advising our clients on a broad range of ESG-related matters, including:

- Program strategy, design, and implementation
- Investor engagement, shareholder communications, and reporting
- Corporate governance best practices, board of directors’ agenda, and oversight of risk management
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion leadership and competency
- Disclosures and enforcement actions
- Environmental management and compliance
- Climate change, including regulations, disclosures, protocols, and insurance coverage
- Renewable energy, including energy consumption, power purchase agreements, and leases

- Investment management and ESG, sustainable and impact investing
- Considerations for specific industries, including oil and gas, chemicals, financial services, and life sciences
- Creation and operation of ESG funds and special purpose acquisition companies (“SPACs”)
- Mergers and acquisitions, including environmental compliance and liability and transactional due diligence
- Human capital management
- Remote workplace considerations

“Sustainability, value, and success are often evaluated by how well a company manages its ESG program and policies,” said Sophia Lee, an energy partner and chief diversity and inclusion officer emeritus. “The travails of the past two years have heightened our collective consciousness about longstanding and significant economic and social justice issues. This movement became increasingly important for our clients to address, as they turned to us for guidance in navigating legal and reputational concerns from their many stakeholders.”

“ESG is at an inflection point as it moves increasingly into the mainstream both here in the U.S. and globally, and companies should be considering how this could impact their own business models,” added Corporate Partner Stacy H. Louizos, co-lead of the ESG team and co-chair of our firm’s Investment Management group. “In addition, studies have shown that companies that adopt ESG mandates tend to perform better over the long term.” ■

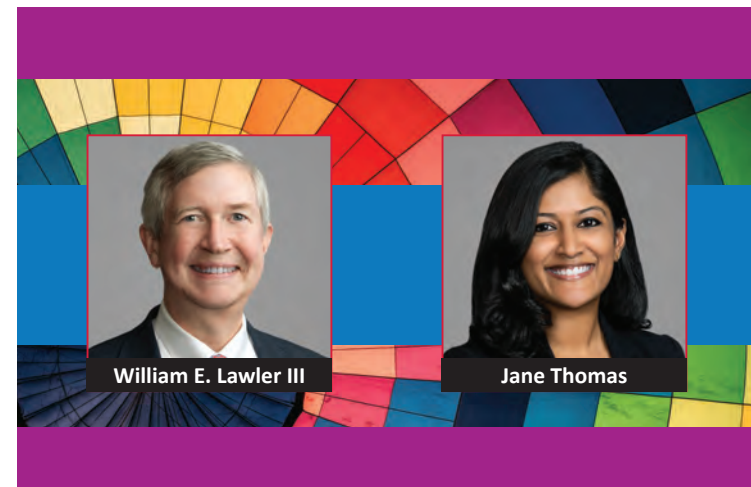
“Sustainability, value, and success are often evaluated by how well a company manages its ESG program and policies.”

Pro Bono Highlights

We remain committed to taking concrete steps to combat racial inequity and social injustice through pro bono service. As a firm, we are dedicated to doing pro bono legal work and using the power and the privilege that we have as lawyers to serve vulnerable members of our communities—many of which are communities of color. In 2021—our firm’s 75th anniversary—we challenged our attorneys and paralegals with the aspirational goal of each providing at least 75 hours of pro bono service. Many rose to the challenge.

Combating Racial Injustice through Our Pro Bono Work

Led by Partner William E. Lawler III and Associate Jane Thomas, our firm’s Criminal Justice Reform working group has focused its efforts on addressing racial injustices in our criminal justice system through bail reform, funding for indigent criminal defense, and helping those who have been wrongfully convicted. Since its formation, the attorneys in this working group have partnered with organizations such as the Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity, which provides free legal advice and representation to low-income residents whose criminal records are holding them back from achieving their social and career potentials, to host pardon clinics and other programming. Many of our attorneys have also engaged in compassionate release work, assisting COVID-19-vulnerable incarcerated individuals seeking compassionate release and sentence reduction. ■



William E. Lawler III

Jane Thomas

Advocating for LGBTQ+ Equality through Pro Bono Service



We are proud to participate in numerous pro bono legal projects that support the LGBTQ+ community. Notably, in 2021, our firm continued to partner with the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (“TLDEF”) and longtime corporate pro bono partners PNC Bank and PECO/Exelon to host firm-wide virtual name change clinics. Prior to the clinics, volunteers were provided with an important trans cultural competency training from TLDEF staff. As a result, our volunteers completed more than 60 legal name changes throughout the year.

For many in the transgender community, securing a legal name change is a critical step to ensure their legal identities match their lived experience. A lack of appropriate identity documents can deter people from applying for jobs, school, and public benefits, and can lead to discrimination. This work has a truly life-changing impact on our clients. ■



Blank Rome's Diversity and Inclusion Committee

CHAIRS

Sophia Lee | Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Emeritus
James D. Kelly | Partner and Co-Chair, Washington, D.C., Office
James J. Barnes | Partner

DIRECTOR

Krystal Studavent Ramsey | Director of Diversity & Inclusion

CHICAGO

Paige Barr Tinkham | Partner

HOUSTON

Jeremy A. Herschaft | Partner
Domingo Manuel Llagostera | Partner

LOS ANGELES

Shadi Enos Jahangir | Partner
Linda Kornfeld | Partner
Jason Kim | Partner

NEW YORK

Will Anthony | Partner
Diana M. Eng | Partner
Norman S. Heller | Partner

PHILADELPHIA

Melanie Carter | Partner

PITTSBURGH

Jayne Butcher | Partner

TAMPA

Michelle M. Gervais | Partner

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Dominique L. Casimir | Partner
Brett Snyder | Partner

WILMINGTON

Victoria A. Guilfoyle | Partner

EX OFFICIO

Alan J. Hoffman | Chair
Grant S. Palmer | Managing Partner and CEO

EMERITUS

Sophia Lee | Partner

STRATEGIC ADVISERS

Lisa Bochner | Director of Business Development
Donna Branca | Director of Strategic Leadership
Beth A. Friel | Chief Human Resources Officer
Shonette Gaston | Chief Operating Officer
Ori Portnoy | Chief Legal Talent Officer
James Stapleton | Chief Business Development
and Marketing Officer
Kathryn L. Tavella | Senior Director of Communications
Josh Troy | Director of Attorney Professional Development
Cassandra Walker | Senior Graphic Design Specialist

BLANKROME

blankrome.com/diversity-inclusion