



BLANKROME

THE 2020 ISSUE

PERSPECTIVES

A Movement, Not a Moment



Contents

Perspectives keeps you informed on Blank Rome's latest diversity, equity, and inclusion news and events as well as provides you with insight on current diversity, equity, and inclusion issues in the legal industry and beyond.

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Grant S. Palmer

A Note from Blank Rome's Managing Partner and CEO

We are pleased to present the 2020 edition of *Perspectives*, Blank Rome's diversity and inclusion newsletter, brought to you by our **Diversity and Inclusion Committee**. This special issue offers a yearlong review of our Firm's initiatives, and takes a close look at the ongoing actions our Firm has taken to work towards racial equality and social justice.

Blank Rome was formed in 1946 by attorneys who sought to create a firm where people of diverse backgrounds could gather together to practice law. In response to the tragic events of this year, and in honoring our founders' vision, we have been committed to making a true movement at our Firm that prioritizes diversity, equity, and inclusion. More than ever, we are dedicated to learning about the experiences of our colleagues and having fulsome discussions about tangible action steps to be taken by our Firm to create a true sense of belonging for all.

In March, we launched our newest affinity group, **BR Parents Forum**, which has taken an active role in helping parents navigate the complex challenges of parenting in the midst of the pandemic and has been a resource on a range of topics, including remote working, parental well-being, and confronting social justice issues. In June, Blank Rome joined the **Law Firm Antiracism Alliance** and our Firm also launched new pro bono working groups created to address these issues. This summer, we developed and began hosting *Open Conversations*—a series of Firm-wide gatherings where we have the opportunity to hear the diverse voices of our colleagues who share their experiences as people of color and discuss their perspectives on racial injustice. This important series will continue throughout 2021 with a variety of topics and speakers.

This year we made it a top priority to remain connected and collaborate with our clients to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion across different industries through forward-thinking programs, including our two-part webinar series,

Diversity, Inclusion, and the Law in the Time of COVID-19, which explored key considerations in this unprecedented time, as well as our annual Women's Leadership Summit, which was held for the fourth time in October and virtually brought together more than 600 leaders in law and business to discuss how we can meet this unique moment in time and lead beyond it.

As a result of our efforts, we were so proud to be honored in Exelon's **D&I Honor Roll**, and once again be named a **Best Law Firm for Women** by *Working Mother* magazine and a **Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality** by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. Furthermore, our Firm achieved **Mansfield Certification Plus** status after successfully completing Diversity Lab's yearlong Mansfield Rule 3.0 program and we are proud to continue our longstanding partnership with Diversity Lab through our participation in **Mansfield Rule 4.0**, which will run through July 2021. Our colleagues have also been recognized as top women and attorneys of color by various legal industry and community organizations.

What you will read in this edition of *Perspectives* is a sampling of initiatives that demonstrate Blank Rome's dedication to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout our Firm, the legal industry, and our communities. We are hard at work planning insightful programming for next year that will expand on the important conversations and work that we engaged in this year, and we look forward to continuing to make progress in 2021 and beyond.

As always, I hope you enjoy our newsletter and welcome your feedback.

Grant S. Palmer
Managing Partner and CEO

Speaking Out against Racial Injustice

A Movement, Not a Moment

By **Sophia Lee**



Sophia Lee

In the aftermath of George Floyd's killing, Blank Rome issued a Firm-wide statement, available on page 4, in response to the events happening in our country denouncing acts of discrimination, harassment, or violence against our communities of color and reaffirming Blank Rome's unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Blank Rome has since welcomed special guest speakers and created additional programs to address these critical issues in racial and social justice, which are described below and in the following pages.

On June 4, we welcomed **Stephanie Jones**, the daughter of the late **Judge Nathaniel R. Jones**, who is memorialized on pages 6 and 7, to address our Firm. She told us to be mindful that we will all not experience the Black Lives Matter protests and what is happening in the same way, and encouraged us to listen to each other and stand up for what is right. She told us that if her dad was still here with us, he would have said, "You know the right thing to do, so just do it."

We convened our first *Open Conversations* Firm-wide meeting the following week, which was attended by 550 people, where we heard the diverse voices of our colleagues who wanted to speak out about recent events, in particular about their experiences as people of color and about their perspectives on racial injustice. We followed up our meeting with the sharing of resources to learn more about racial justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion. We imagined this would be the first of many *Open Conversations* and, at our next Firm-wide meeting scheduled for January 2021, we will discuss the topic of allyship and how we can help support one another to promote community and belonging.

Immediately following our first *Open Conversations* meeting, under the leadership of Blank Rome Partner and Director of Pro Bono Services **Kathy E. Ochroch**, new pro bono working groups were announced to address issues of racial injustice and to help our country move toward greater justice and equality. The specific areas of focus include: discrimination and civil rights; systemic injustices in the criminal justice system; small businesses and microentrepreneurs; housing

and eviction; and election protection. These initiatives continue to have great momentum with numerous volunteers from across our offices.

In recognition of Juneteenth, which is celebrated on June 19 across the nation to commemorate the end of legalized slavery in this country, we invited **David A. Love**, a professor, journalist, and commentator on social justice to educate us about the history and significance of the holiday. Earlier that day, we issued a Firm-wide message about Juneteenth, sharing resources to learn more about and reflect on the holiday. You can learn more about Juneteenth on page 30.

On June 30, we announced that our Firm joined the newly chartered Law Firm Antiracism Alliance ("LFAA"), which is now a coalition of more than 250 firms that will work with other organizations, uniting to identify and dismantle racism in the law and in government institutions. Additional information on the LFAA can be found on page 4.

Throughout the summer and fall, and continuing into next year, our Firm leadership met with our attorneys of color affinity group, BR United, led by Co-Chairs **Cheryl S. Chang** and **Morgan Fraser Mouchette**, to learn about the experiences of our colleagues and discuss tangible action steps to be taken by our Firm to create a true sense of belonging for all our colleagues.

Our LGBTQ+ affinity group, BR Pride, led by Co-Chairs **Beth Bernstein Connors** and **Brett Snyder**, celebrated Pride Month throughout the month of June by highlighting the contributions and achievements of Black LGBTQ+ individuals of the past and present. These spotlights are recapped on page 8.

These are just some of the highlights we wanted to share about our efforts to advance and elevate diversity, equity, and inclusion at our Firm. We are hard at work planning our 2021 programs focused on racial and social justice that will expand on the necessary conversations and work that we engaged in this year, in particular as we recognize the 75th anniversary of our Firm's founding.

We know there is much more to do—that this is a **movement and not a moment**—and we are committed for the long haul towards progress.

Our Clarion Call: Thoughts on Our 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge

By **Dominique L. Casimir** and **Justin A. Chiarodo**

As published in Government Contracts Navigator on September 16, 2020



Dominique L. Casimir



Justin A. Chiarodo

A few weeks ago we **wrote about** our Government Contracts practice group's decision to opt in to the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge (the "Challenge") launched by the American Bar Association ("ABA") Section of Public Contract Law. The 21-Day Challenge was a syllabus of **21 daily assignments**—curated for the ABA by **Dominique L. Casimir**—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.

What We Did: We invited our clients to participate with us in a series of weekly discussion groups to share perspectives on the racial equity movement currently underway in this country, to reflect on how we got here, and to challenge ourselves to consider what we are doing—in our respective workplaces, and as individual lawyers—to work towards racial equality. This experience was unlike anything we have done with our clients before, and admittedly we were not sure how clients would respond when we invited them to engage with us in an ongoing series of small-group, candid discussions about a topic as sensitive as race. We were incredibly humbled that so many of our clients enthusiastically welcomed this opportunity.

What We Learned: First and foremost, through this meaningful engagement with one another, we reaffirmed our common humanity and empathy, which many participants found

particularly welcome 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. We exchanged ideas about how to improve racial diversity in our workplaces, and how clients can help drive such changes in their outside legal providers. In some groups, participants welcomed the chance to speak to fellow parents about how to discuss race with their children.

What's Next: Many who joined us during this Challenge expressed the desire to continue these conversations, and bring the ideas generated within their groups back to their respective workplaces. Most importantly, we felt a collective sense of duty as lawyers to meet this moment head on, and to take steps to achieve lasting change.

At Blank Rome, participating in the 21-Day Challenge is part of a growing collective of actions that attorneys are taking to work toward racial equality. Not only has Blank Rome joined the **Law Firm Anti-Racism Alliance**, but many of our attorneys are also developing plans for further outreach and programming. We are identifying pro bono opportunities directed at racial justice issues; strengthening our own recruiting, mentoring, and retention efforts; and working with clients on their own diversity and inclusion pro bono; and **Environmental, Social, and Governance** initiatives. In short, we learned that working toward racial justice is not a one-time exercise but rather a practice to which we will continue to dedicate ourselves over the long haul.

Thank you to all who joined us in this effort, and please feel free to reach out to **Dominique L. Casimir**, **Justin A. Chiarodo**, or Blank Rome's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** if you have any questions or ideas about how we can continue to advance this critical mission.

A Message from Blank Rome's Leadership

By **Grant S. Palmer**, Managing Partner and CEO, and **Alan J. Hoffman**, Chair

As published on June 1, 2020



Grant S. Palmer



Alan J. Hoffman

Dear Friends,

We hope it never becomes normal to share a message denouncing acts of discrimination, harassment, or violence against our communities of color. But as we watch current events unfold surrounding the killing of African American George Floyd by a white Minneapolis police officer and the protests that have broken out across the country, we are unfortunately reminded this is not a single, isolated incident. This senseless death comes on the heels of yet other recent troubling events, including the shooting of a Black jogger by a white man in Georgia and the calling of police by a white woman who lied about being threatened by a Black man in Central Park.

We have also witnessed a continued rise in discrimination and hateful acts aimed at other communities over the past several months. For instance, the Asian Pacific American community has been unfairly associated with and stigmatized by the coronavirus pandemic, and a record number of anti-Semitic incidents were reported in the United States last year.

Blank Rome was formed in 1946 by attorneys who, because of their religion, were barred from joining many established law firms. Our founders did not stand idly by in the face of discrimination, but instead stood up and took action to create a firm where people of diverse backgrounds could gather together to practice law.

During these upsetting and anguished times, we reaffirm Blank Rome's dedication to our core value and founding principle—an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We must also walk the trail blazed by our own late Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones who answered the call and take action by fully discussing these difficult issues so that we can work toward assuring they do not continue to repeat. To that end, we are working with our **BR United** affinity group and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** to convene programming to discuss these significant issues.

Blank Rome Joins Newly Launched Law Firm Antiracism Alliance

Blank Rome has proudly joined the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance ("LFAA"), a coalition of more than 250 firms to date that will work with other organizations that are uniting to identify and dismantle systemic racism in the law and in government institutions. More information and resource links to the LFAA Charter and participating firms was featured in *The American Lawyer* article, **Over 125 Firms Have Joined the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance** (June 24, 2020).

In joining the LFAA and upholding its Charter, Blank Rome and fellow participating firms commit to leverage the resources of the private bar to amplify the voices of communities and individuals oppressed by racism; better use the law as a vehicle for change to benefit communities of color; and to promote racial equity in the law and in government institutions.

Additionally, law firms acknowledge their ongoing responsibility to increase diversity, equitable access to opportunities and inclusion of people of color within their ranks, and, in tandem with the LFAA's pro bono efforts, the leaders of LFAA law firms are committed to examining and eliminating internal policies and practices that may perpetuate racial inequities within law firm structures and to empowering diversity and inclusion professionals through this process. □



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Services

In today's business world, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ("DEI") principles are integrally intertwined with corporate goals, including Environmental, Social, and Governance ("ESG") priorities.

Even before the global and national disruptions of 2020—from the coronavirus pandemic to a national reckoning on social justice issues—many companies were at inflection points related to their broader roles in the economy and in the communities in which they operate and serve. Driven by changes in culture, generational shifts, and consumer trends, many companies were already considering their ESG impact on investors, consumers, workforce, and leadership and management teams.

The many stakeholders in private and public corporations—including boards of directors, employees, consumers, individual investors, investment companies, global supply chains, and the communities they impact—look to make positive contributions along with delivering strong financial performances.

Research strongly shows companies perform best when they value and promote DEI in their leadership and management teams; in their human capital management; and in their programs, services, and other offerings. Indeed, embracing differences of experience, perspectives, and opinions helps drive company financial outperformance and increased customer and workforce satisfaction. Now is an exciting time to develop proactive strategies to make positive impacts within your companies, in your communities, and to your bottom line.

How We Can Help

Blank Rome is here to help companies of all sizes, for profit and nonprofit, build effective and impactful internal and external-facing DEI and ESG programs and initiatives. Our DEI services are led by a team of individuals with deep experience with these issues and include:

- Developing and presenting DEI education programs for boards, executive leadership, management, and staff on topics such as: inclusive leadership, respectful workplace, implicit bias and harassment, microaggressions, allyship, intergenerational differences, gender identity and expression, and other DEI topics
- Consulting on strategic plan design and implementation around DEI and ESG initiatives
- Developing DEI and ESG best practices and programs across all levels of an organization
- Integrating DEI and ESG principles into codes of conduct, policies, and procedures
- Developing shareholder and other public-facing communications related to DEI and ESG, including assisting with annual ESG reporting
- Assisting with crisis communications strategies related to DEI and ESG issues and social media impacts
- Addressing workplace-related legal and policy issues associated with implementing DEI and ESG programs
- Developing pro bono initiatives that forward corporate DEI and ESG priorities □

KEY CONTACTS

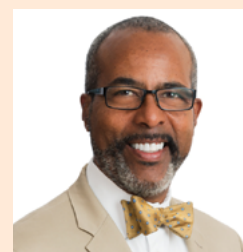


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Remembering Judge Nathaniel R. Jones



Nathaniel R. Jones

“Being a lawyer was my calling, and that calling is the work for equal opportunity and justice for all our nation’s citizens.”

The Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones
1926–2020

It is with great sadness that we share the news that our beloved colleague and friend **Judge Nathaniel R. Jones** passed away on Sunday, January 26, 2020, at age 93. Judge Jones joined Blank Rome in 2002 and served as our first Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. He was integral in helping to foster and promote our rich culture of inclusion throughout our Firm, and selfless in sharing his time and unmatched perspective with so many of us who are better people for having known him.

In collaboration with Christopher A. Lewis and Sophia Lee—his successors in the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer role—we have developed a thriving and nationally recognized **diversity and inclusion program** that reflects his vision and passion. In 2013, we developed the Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones Diversity and Inclusion Award, which is presented annually to a Blank Rome attorney or professional who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in promoting diversity and inclusion. We are grateful to have the opportunity to honor and remember Judge Jones through this important award that will forever bear his name.

In Judge Jones’ **obituary**, our Cincinnati Office Chair Michael L. Cioffi notes, “Nate Jones was the kind of hero America needed that (Martin Luther) King described as ‘an extremist for justice’ in ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail.’ Nate’s unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and the rule of law made him a great lawyer and great man. His genuine humility and everyday kindness made him loved by all, including those on the other side of the political spectrum. His life is an important lesson and model to us all.” We couldn’t agree more. While we have lost one of the brightest legal minds and civil rights advocates of our time, his groundbreaking work, steadfast compassion, and inspirational life and legacy will surely live on through the countless lives he has touched—both at Blank Rome and around the world.

A Life-long Commitment to “Answering the Call”

In 1962, Judge Jones became the first African American to be appointed as Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio in Cleveland. He held that position until his 1967 appointment as Assistant General Counsel to President Lyndon B. Johnson’s National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, also known as the Kerner Commission.

Judge Jones went on to hold the position of general counsel of the NAACP from 1969 to 1979, where he directed all NAACP litigation. In addition to personally arguing several cases in the U.S. Supreme Court, he coordinated national efforts to end northern school segregation, to defend affirmative action, and to inquire into discrimination against Black servicemen in the U.S. military. He also successfully coordinated the NAACP’s defense on First Amendment grounds in the Mississippi Boycott case.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter nominated Judge Jones to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. He served on the court for 23 years, retiring in 2002.

An internationally renowned civil rights activist, Judge Jones played an important role in furthering the abolition of apartheid in South Africa. The drafters of South Africa’s new constitution and laws consulted him, and he conferred with Nelson Mandela upon Mandela’s release from 27 years of imprisonment.

Judge Jones joined Blank Rome in 2002, and we were blessed and lucky to call him our colleague for nearly 18 years. During his time with us, Judge Jones served as our first Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion, creating the strong foundation for our diversity and inclusion program.

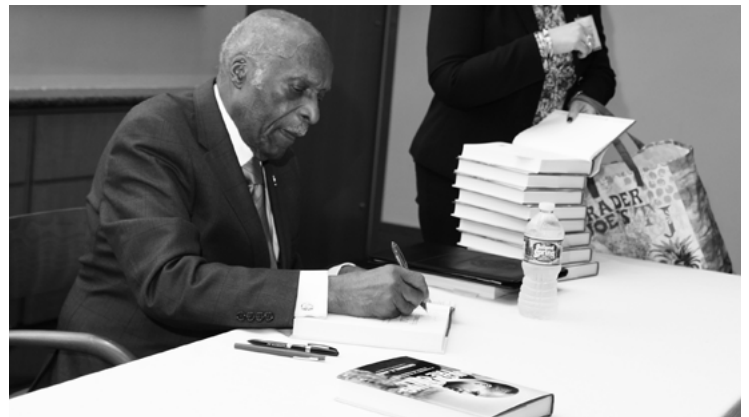
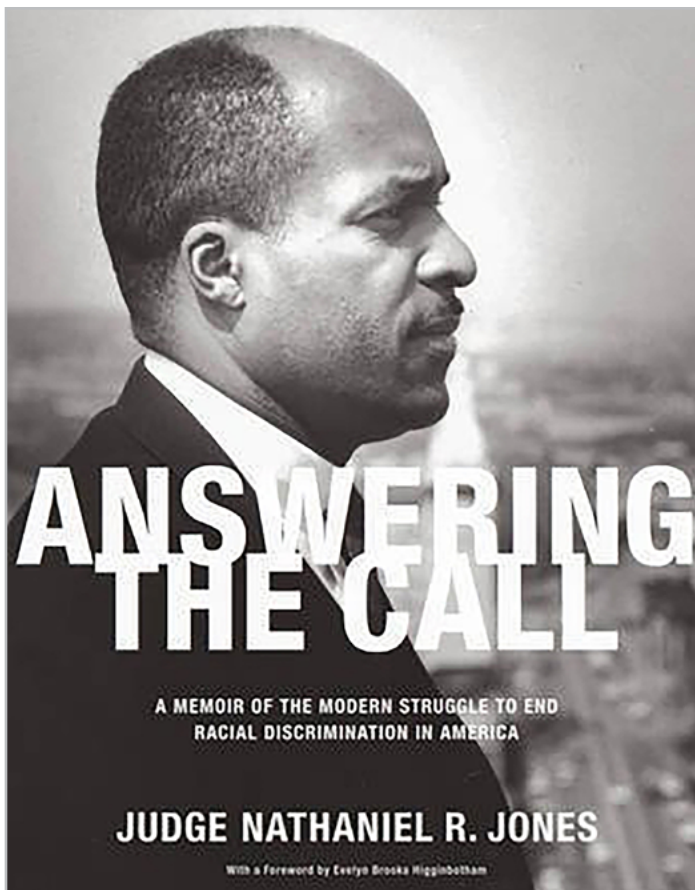
Judge Jones also taught trial advocacy at Harvard Law School and served as an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. He is the holder of 19 honorary degrees.

In 2003, in recognition of his outstanding career as a jurist and civil rights leader, Congress passed H.J. Res. 2, naming the Nathaniel R. Jones Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse in Youngstown, Ohio. In 2019, the University of Cincinnati College of Law renamed its Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice as the Judge Nathaniel R. Jones Center for Race, Gender, and Social Justice (or the Jones Center), in his honor.

In May 2016, his memoir, *Answering the Call: An Autobiography of the Modern Struggle to End Racial Discrimination in America*, was published by The New Press. The book is described by its publishers as “an extraordinary eyewitness account from an unsung hero of the battle for racial equality in America.”

Judge Jones received numerous awards and recognition for his tireless contributions to the civil rights movement and the legal industry, including:

- The NAACP’s highest honor, the Spingarn Medal, 2016
- The International Freedom Conductor Award from the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, 2016
- The Federal Bar Association’s Pillar of Justice Award, 2014
- The Nathaniel R. Jones American Inn of Court, chartered in Youngstown, Ohio, 2014
- The Children’s Defense Fund’s Changing the Odds Award, 2012
- The Charles Hamilton Houston Medallion of Merit from the Washington Bar Association, 2011
- Inducted into the Ohio Civil Rights Hall of Fame, 2010
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.’s Laurel Wreath Award, 2009
- *The American Lawyer’s* Lifetime Achievement Award, 2007
- The Just The Beginning Foundation’s Trailblazer Award, 2006
- The Annual Fellows Award from the American Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Division, 2005
- The Award of Excellence from the Thurgood Marshall Scholarship Fund, 2004
- The Ohio Bar Medal Award from the Ohio State Bar Association, 2003
- Inducted into the National Bar Association Hall of Fame, 2002
- Named a “Great Living Cincinnatian,” 1997 □





Promoting LGBTQ+ Equality



Beth Bernstein Connors



Brett A. Snyder



Alphonso David

Triumphs & Challenges on the Road to Change with HRC President Alphonso David

In celebration of Pride Month, Blank Rome hosted a special virtual fireside chat on July 7, 2020, with Human Rights Campaign (“HRC”) President and Blank Rome Alum **Alphonso David**, who is the first attorney and first person of color to serve as president of the HRC in the organization’s nearly 40-year history.

Blank Rome Partners and **BR Pride** Co-Chairs **Beth Bernstein Connors** and **Brett A. Snyder** led an engaging discussion with Alphonso that covered timely and important topics, including the Supreme Court decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County* and the impact it will have for the LGBTQ community; the HRC’s current priorities and initiatives, including how its goals intersect with those of the Black Lives Matter movement; and Alphonso’s career path advice for attorneys.

Pride Month Spotlights

In honor of Pride Month, BR Pride published a spotlight series highlighting the contributions and achievements of Black LGBTQ+ individuals of the past and present. Read each of the spotlights using the links below:

- **Alvin Ailey** (1931–1989)
- **Lorraine Hansberry** (1930–1965) and **Bayard Rustin** (1912–1987)
- **James Baldwin** (1924–1987) and **Audre Lorde** (1934–1992)
- **Marsha P. Johnson** (1945–1992)

Unite for Equality

Blank Rome was proud to be a sponsor of “Unite for Equality,” a national virtual event hosted by the Human Rights Campaign that was livestreamed on September 24, 2020. In the midst of COVID-19 and the racial justice movement, HRC is committed to the spirit of the movement for equality and brought together its members and supporters for this virtual event to engage with HRC and hear about the critical work ahead. Alphonso David provided remarks and was joined by an exciting lineup of speakers.

Beth Bernstein Connors Recognized as a “Best LGBTQ+ Lawyer Under 40” by the LGBT Bar

Blank Rome Partner and BR Pride Co-Chair **Beth Bernstein Connors** was selected as one of the National LGBT Bar Association’s 2020 “Best LGBTQ+ Lawyers Under 40.” The notable award recognizes LGBTQ+ legal professionals under the age of 40 who have distinguished themselves in their field and have demonstrated a profound commitment to LGBTQ+ equality.

Pathways to Partnership and Beyond

Blank Rome Partner and BR Pride Co-Chair **Beth Bernstein Connors** was a featured speaker for the Pathways to Partnership and Beyond online webinar hosted by the LGBT Committee of the New York Women’s Bar Association and the LGBTQ+ Lawyer Network at Morgan Lewis, on Monday, June 22, 2020. During the program, LGBT law firm partners and in-house counsel discussed their journeys along the path to partnership and beyond as well as some of the complexities of intersectionality and how to leverage LGBT identity and work as an asset; how to foster and encourage a diverse workplace; and how to be successful, appropriately sensitive, and mindful in a variety of workplace settings.

Michael C. Lupton Appointed to AsylumConnect Junior Board



Michael C. Lupton

Blank Rome Associate **Michael C. Lupton** was appointed to the Junior Board of AsylumConnect, a technology nonprofit providing the first and only resource website and mobile app for LGBTQ+ asylum seekers. The Junior Board is a group of young professionals who lend their own resources, networks, and skills to supporting and promoting

AsylumConnect’s mission of using technology to connect persecuted and marginalized LGBTQ+ people with verified safe services and support. As a Junior Board member, Michael will play a critical role in AsylumConnect’s fundraising and development efforts, collaborate with the organization’s leadership, and network with other young professionals who have a passion for LGBTQ+ and immigration issues.

Blank Rome Earns Perfect Score in 2020 Corporate Equality Index



Blank Rome received a perfect score of 100 percent on the 2020 Corporate Equality Index, a national benchmarking survey and report on 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 fifth year in a row as a “Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality” by the HRC, and joins the ranks of major U.S. businesses that earned top marks this year.

2020 Lavender Law® Conference & Career Fair



Sophia Lee



Kathy E. Ochroch

Blank Rome Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** and Partner and Director of Pro Bono Services **Kathy E. Ochroch** were speakers at the National LGBT Bar Association’s 2020 Lavender Law® Conference & Career Fair, which was held virtually August 12 through 14, 2020. Blank Rome is proud to be an annual sponsor of this event. Their workshop, “Changing Names and Changing Lives,” explored the growing need for pro bono legal services to assist transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming clients with legal name and gender marker changes, and described a successful

partnership model that has been developed to meet that need. The panel addressed the importance of providing these legal services and shared a detailed description of how to create a Name and Gender Marker Change Pro Bono Clinic, from start to finish. This discussion included a focus on the need for thoughtful education around transgender cultural competency issues and how to convince leaders of corporate legal departments and law firms to embrace this important pro bono and diversity and inclusion work.

Bostock and Related Cases: A Landmark Decision for the LGBTQ Community and Employment Law Alike

By **Beth Bernstein Connors**

As published on June 23, 2020



Beth Bernstein Connors

On June 15, 2020, the Supreme Court of the United States held in a series of related cases (*Bostock v. Clayton County*; *Altitude Express, Inc. v. Zarda*; *R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes, Inc. v. EEOC*) that Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which makes it unlawful to discriminate “because of [an employee’s] race, color, religion, sex, or national origin,” prohibits employment discrimination against LGBTQ workers. Before the decision, employers in most states could discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

As co-chair of **BR Pride**, Blank Rome’s LGBTQ+ affinity group, I eagerly awaited this decision and hoped that the Supreme Court would bring good news this Pride Month. When the Supreme Court delivered, I turned to **Stephanie Gantman Kaplan**, my friend and partner in Blank Rome’s **Labor & Employment** practice group, to learn more about the decision and what it means for LGBTQ employees and their employers. Our conversation is reproduced below.



Stephanie Gantman Kaplan

Q

The recent Supreme Court ruling in *Bostock* and the related cases is clearly a momentous outcome being celebrated by the LGBTQ community, as it means that employees cannot be fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Is it a significant decision within the landscape of employment law as well?

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Yes, many people were surprised that Justice Gorsuch would author an opinion supporting this result. Can you explain Justice Gorsuch’s reasoning in finding that Title VII protects LGBTQ employees?

The decision is undoubtedly a monumental victory for the LGBTQ community. From the employment law perspective, the holding was not a surprise, particularly after the 2018 Supreme Court decision in *Masterpiece Cakeshop*. We have been discussing with employers for many years now that even if they operate in states that did not legally protect LGBTQ rights in the workplace, companies should not be subjecting employees to differential treatment on that basis. With that said, it provides employers and employees alike with clarity on the issue, which is important. I think for those of us closely following the cases, what was interesting, and perhaps unexpected for many, was that the majority included two conservative justices, with President Trump-appointed Justice Gorsuch authoring the decision.

Justice Gorsuch used a textualist approach to reach the decision. That means, he looked only at the meaning of the words of the law, not the intention of those who drafted the law. Here, Title VII prohibits discrimination “because of...sex.” Justice Gorsuch reasoned that “if changing the employee’s sex would have yielded a different choice by the employer,” then the employer has violated Title VII. He examined a few hypotheticals to support his finding. First, Justice Gorsuch explained that where an employer fires a male employee only because he is attracted to men while retaining an otherwise “materially identical” female employee who is also attracted to men, the employer has made the decision based on the employee being a male and has thus discriminated against him because of his sex. In the second example, if an employer fires a transgender employee who was identified as male at birth but now identifies as female, but retains an otherwise “materially identical employee” who was identified as female at birth, that employer has made a discriminatory decision based on the transgender employee’s sex.

Q

Does the Supreme Court's ruling protect LGBTQ employees from discrimination in other types of employment decisions beyond just being fired?

Yes. While the Supreme Court analyzed a group of three cases where employees were terminated for being LGBTQ, the law protects against discrimination in any adverse action because of a protected characteristic. An adverse action is one that is significant enough to alter an employee's compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment. Certainly, termination would rise to the level of an adverse action, but other acts may as well, such as a demotion, discipline, or pay reduction. Therefore, put simply, as a result of this decision, an employer cannot take any adverse action based on a person's sexual orientation or gender identity.

Q

Less than half of U.S. states already protected LGBTQ employees from discrimination in the workplace under their own state laws. What does this mean for the 26 states that did not already have those protections? Will they need to update their state laws accordingly?

Great question—the short answer is, no. The recent Supreme Court holding is based on Title VII, which is a federal law that applies to U.S. employers with 15 or more employees. It does not speak to state anti-discrimination laws, which importantly often apply to employers with less than 15 employees that would not be subject to the federal law. As a practical matter, however, based on the Supreme Court's decision most employees nationwide are now legally protected from sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination under federal law.

Q

What should employers be doing within their companies to make sure they comply with the new ruling?

First and foremost, employers should review their handbooks to confirm their anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity policies are fully up to date and compliant based on this development in the law.

But there is more for employers to consider. This decision comes at a unique time in the history of the United States, during a pandemic and while the nation is grappling with issues of disparate treatment based on race. With issues of equality at the forefront and when facing unprecedented circumstances, employers can engage with employees on new levels. We have been working with our clients to develop innovative employee training programs addressing these issues, which are uniquely tailored based on each company's culture and business.

Q

Supreme Court decisions can be known to raise more questions than they answer. Are there questions about employment discrimination that the decision raises but does not answer and which will be open for interpretation until addressed by the legislature or the courts going forward?

I think there are a lot of interesting open questions. Still to be decided, for example, is the impact of the ruling on religiously affiliated employers. Also, be on the lookout for the practical impact of this decision on workplace practices, such as gender-based bathrooms and locker rooms and dress codes, and beyond in areas such as public accommodations, service providers, and retail. For now, we will have to stay tuned... □



Supporting Parents at Blank Rome

Blank Rome Launches New Firm-wide Affinity Group, BR Parents Forum

This summer, Blank Rome announced the launch of **BR Parents Forum**, our Firm's newest affinity group focused on supporting parents across our Firm who are striving to manage their professional and parental responsibilities. The BR Parents Forum is committed to ensuring that everyone at Blank Rome has access to support, information, resources, and opportunities, to better navigate the unique and complex demands that parents in the legal industry face, especially now in the midst of the pandemic.

The BR Parents Forum was first formed in March 2020, and has taken a particularly visible and active role in navigating the complex changes, including the transition to a remote work environment, stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. The group periodically has conducted surveys to understand the challenges that parents face and how our Firm can best support them during this difficult time.

Since its formation, the BR Parents Forum has facilitated peer-based support through virtual meetups with colleagues that focus on shared experiences and an array of parent-related topics. Meetups are offered across all of Blank Rome's offices, and are geared toward parents of children of all ages and to parents of children with special needs or challenges. The BR Parents Forum also offers mentorship, in particular to new parents and parents returning from leave, as well as resources covering a wide range of topics such as educational and age-related issues, parental wellness and stress relief, and confronting social justice challenges.

Blank Rome is proud of its longstanding commitment to providing robust alternative work arrangements, telecommuting, and leave policies for its attorneys and professionals. Notably, our Firm has been recognized as a **Best Law Firm for Women** by *Working Mother* as well as honored in Yale Law Women's **Top Ten Firms for Gender Equity and Family Friendliness Report** for its leadership in these areas. □

BR Parents Forum in the News



Ariel S. Glasner



Lauren B. Wilgus

Blank Rome Partners and BR Parents Forum Co-Chairs **Ariel S. Glasner** and **Lauren B. Wilgus** discuss the new Firm-wide affinity group and share strategies for law firms to support parents during this unprecedented school season.

- **Firms Tackle Challenges Facing Atty Parents as School Starts** (*Law360*, August 19, 2020)
- **Remote School Is Now a Marathon, Not a Sprint. How Will Firms Support Parents?** (*The American Lawyer*, August 19, 2020)

Advancing Women in the Legal Profession

Blank Rome Recognized as a 2020 Best Law Firm for Women by *Working Mother*

Blank Rome was named one of the “2020 Best Law Firms for Women” by *Working Mother* magazine, marking the fourth time that our Firm has been recognized for its leadership in promoting family-friendly policies and initiatives aimed at advancing women attorneys. *Working Mother*’s annual list ranks 60 law firms based on key factors such as women representation, schedule flexibility, paid-time off and parental leaves, compensation and advancement, and the development and retention of women.



Blank Rome Recognized in 2020 Yale Law Women's Top Firms for Gender Equity & Family Friendliness Report

Blank Rome was honored in the Yale Law Women's *Top Firms for Gender Equity & Family Friendliness Report 2020* as a Top Firm for Promotion Practices. This is Yale Law Women's 15th annual *Top Firms Report*, produced each year to raise awareness of inequities within the legal profession, highlight progress being made in the industry, and identify areas for improvement. Blank Rome was also recognized in Yale Law Women's 2018 and 2019 *Top Firms Reports* for our commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion within our Firm and throughout the legal industry.

Shawn M. Wright Receives Blank Rome's Inaugural Bonnie Glantz Fatell Women's Advocacy and Leadership Award



Shawn M. Wright

Blank Rome Partner **Shawn M. Wright**, who serves as co-chair of the Firm's Washington, D.C. office, has been named the inaugural recipient of the Firm's Bonnie Glantz Fatell Women's Advocacy and Leadership Award. Presented by Blank Rome's **Women's Forum**, the award was created to recognize attorneys and professionals for their significant contributions to women's advocacy and leadership, both at the Firm and in their communities.

A nationally recognized attorney, mentor, community leader, and fierce supporter of women, Shawn previously led the Firm's **White Collar Defense & Investigations** practice group and has served on numerous Firm-wide leadership committees over the past five years alone. Outside of our Firm, Shawn serves as vice chair of the board of directors of My Sister's Place, one of the oldest domestic violence shelters in the District of Columbia, and is a member of the Women President's Organization—Greenbelt Chapter, which supports and promotes women-owned companies.

The Women's Advocacy and Leadership Award is named in honor of our late colleague, **Bonnie Glantz Fatell**, and is a lasting tribute to Bonnie's legacy and contributions to Blank Rome and the countless lives she touched during her nearly 35 years with our Firm. Bonnie was a true trailblazer: she served as chair of our Business Restructuring and Bankruptcy group (one of the first female attorneys in the country to chair a national bankruptcy group), was the recipient of dozens of recognitions for her incredible professional and personal accomplishments, and committed significant time and effort to mentoring attorneys throughout their careers.



Bonnie Glantz Fatell

Sophia Lee Recognized as Take the Lead Honoree by the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania



Sophia Lee

Blank Rome Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** was honored by the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania (“GSEP”) at their signature Take the Lead event. The notable awards program recognizes the community’s most distinguished women whose leadership and professional achievements “make the world a better place.” As a Take the Lead honoree, Sophia and her Girl Scout mentee, Rachael Thornton, were interviewed by NBC 10’s Rosemary Connors where they discussed the Take the Lead event and the Girl Scouts program as well as the importance of mentoring, paying it forward, and building the next generation of female leaders. Watch the full interview [here](#).



Pictured top left: **Sophia Lee**, mentee **Rachael Thornton**, and NBC 10’s **Rosemary Connors** discuss Take the Lead fundraising and mentoring program. Pictured bottom: Honoree **Sophia Lee** with her Blank Rome colleagues **Christopher A. Lewis**, **Stephanie C. Chomentowski**, **Donna Branca**, **Grant S. Palmer**, and **Mark M. Lee** at the 2020 Take the Lead event on March 3, 2020.

Linda Kornfeld and Stacy D. Phillips Recognized as “Top Women Lawyers” by *Los Angeles Business Journal* and *Daily Journal*



Linda Kornfeld



Stacy D. Phillips

Blank Rome Partners **Linda Kornfeld** and **Stacy D. Phillips** were selected to *Los Angeles Business Journal*’s annual list honoring 75 of the region’s most influential women attorneys. Linda and Stacy were also named to the *Daily Journal*’s 2020 list of Top Women Lawyers in California, which recognizes regional women attorneys who have made a difference to their clients, their firms, and their profession.

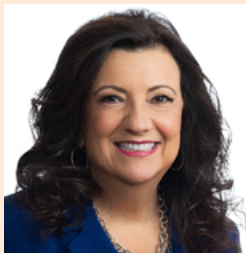
Linda Kornfeld Named “Top Woman in Litigation” by *Benchmark Litigation* and a “Woman of Business” by Comerica Bank Women’s Business Awards Program

Blank Rome Partner **Linda Kornfeld** was recognized in *Benchmark Litigation*’s list of Top 250 Women in Litigation for 2020. According to *Benchmark*, the attorneys on this list “have earned their place amongst the leading women litigators by participating in some of the most impactful litigation matters in recent history as well as by earning the hard-won respect of their peers and clients.” Linda was also recognized as a “Woman of Business” by the Comerica Bank Women’s Business Awards Program, which recognizes top women in leadership, and is a tribute to their professional and community contributions.



Linda Kornfeld receives the “Woman of Business” award by the Comerica Bank Women’s Business Awards Program, presented at a Los Angeles Lakers game on January 16, 2020.





Regina Stango Kelbon

Regina Stango Kelbon Named a 2020 Woman in Commercial Finance by *The Secured Lender*

Blank Rome Partner **Regina Stango Kelbon** was recognized in *The Secured Lender's* 2020 Women in Commercial Finance issue, which profiled more than 50 inspiring women leaders from an array of institutions, including banks, law firms, appraisal and consulting firms, FinTech companies, and institutional capital providers, who “exemplify excellence and have distinguished themselves within the secured finance industry” and are making a unique impact not only in their organizations, but also within the secured finance industry at large.



Shawn M. Wright

Shawn M. Wright Named a 2020 Emerging Woman Leader in Private Practice by DCA Live

Blank Rome Partner **Shawn M. Wright** was named among DCA Live’s 2020 Emerging Women Leaders in Private Practice, which recognizes “great women lawyers in the Washington region who are emerging as leaders within their firms and the broader legal community.” Earlier in the year, Shawn was also named to Lawyers of Color’s Power List 2020, which recognizes the most influential minority attorneys and allies in the nation.



Jeanne M. Grasso

Jeanne M. Grasso Named among “Top 100 Women in Shipping for 2019” by *All About Shipping*

Blank Rome Partner **Jeanne M. Grasso** was named among *All About Shipping's* Top 100 Women in Shipping for 2019, notably ranking in the top 50. To determine the top 100 honorees, *All About Shipping* collected data and notes on the leading women in the industry who have “offered and influenced our shipping world and the wider female community to all intents and purposes.”



Mary Craig Calkins

Mary Craig Calkins Recognized among ABA Section of Litigation’s 100 Women Who Inspire Us

Blank Rome Partner **Mary Craig Calkins** was named one of the American Bar Association (“ABA”) Section of Litigation’s 100 Women Who Inspire Us, which celebrates women leaders for their success in the courtroom, the judiciary, and the profession. She was recognized at the 2019 Women in Litigation Joint CLE Conference, which kicked off the ABA Section of Litigation’s yearlong celebration of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing women’s constitutional right to vote.



Emery Gullickson Richards

Emery Gullickson Richards Honored with Houston Bar Association President’s Award on Behalf of Gender Fairness Committee

Blank Rome Associate **Emery Gullickson Richards** was honored together with the Gender Fairness Committee of the Houston Bar Association with the President’s Award for Committees. Emery served as co-chair of the Gender Fairness Committee for the 2019–2020 term, along with Kristin Kruse Lotz and Marissa Marquez, leading the Committee’s mission of empowering women and making the bar more equitable.



Blank Rome Attorneys Discuss Topics on Women in Law and Business

- Blank Rome co-sponsored the Houston Bar Association Gender Fairness Committee's webinar, "Business Development for Women: How to Overcome Obstacles and Thrive." (September 2020)
- Partner **Sophia Lee** presented on the "Creating Allies—Strategies from the Best of the Best" panel at *Working Mother* magazine's Women Winning in a Virtual World online event. (September 2020)
- Partner **Regina Stango Kelbon** presented on the "What Is Your Strategy?" educational webinar hosted by the Turnaround Management Association Philadelphia Wilmington Chapter's Network of Women and the Secured Finance Network Philadelphia Chapter's Women in Secured Finance. (August 2020)
- Partner **Regina Stango Kelbon** presented on the "Congrats, You're the Boss! Now What?" panel for Secured Finance Network's Women in Secured Finance Conference. (July 2020)
- Partner **Stacy D. Phillips** presented on the "Women & Money" panel at the Sustainable Family Wealth Summit. (June 2020)
- Partner **Stacy D. Phillips** moderated the "COVID-19 and the Courthouse" panel at *Daily Journal's* virtual Happy Hour with Women Legal Pioneers. (May 2020)
- Partner **Susan L. Bickley** presented on the "Promoting Diversity & Inclusion in Law Firms & Corporations: Disrupting Old Models & Lowering Attrition" panel at the Women in Legal & Corporate Leadership Summit: Houston, as part of CenterForce USA's Women in Law Summit Series. (March 2020)
- Partner **Dominique L. Casimir** presented on the "Leadership 2.0: How to Boost Your Leadership Skills and Manage Upward" panel at American Conference Institute's 5th Networking Forum on Women Leaders in Defense and Aerospace Law & Compliance. (February 2020)
- Partner **Amy Joseph Coles** served as a mentor at the *Pittsburgh Business Times* Bizwomen Mentoring Monday 2020 event. (February 2020)
- Partner **Katherine Franco** presented on the "10th Annual Women in IP Law: A Look into Diversity and Inventorship" panel at TexasBarCLE's 33rd Annual Course – Advanced Intellectual Property Law. (February 2020)
- Partner **Katherine Franco** and Associate **Anastasia Dodd** presented a one-hour Blank Rome-hosted webinar on "Gender Parity in Inventorship—Improving Diverse Representation on U.S. Patents." (January 2020)
- Partner **Sophia Lee** presented on the "Negotiation and Persuasive Conversation" panel at the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania Women's Leadership Summit. (January 2020) □

Blank Rome's Fourth Annual



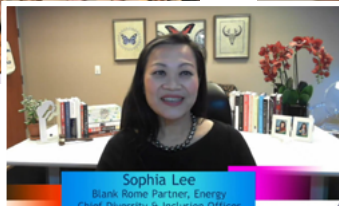
Amber Morrison

Didn't expect to cry today! That was amazing!



WELCOME

The Summit kicked off on October 8, 2020, with a special introduction video and performance of "A Million Dreams" by the **Philadelphia Girls Choir**.



EMCEE

The Summit was emceed by Blank Rome Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee**.

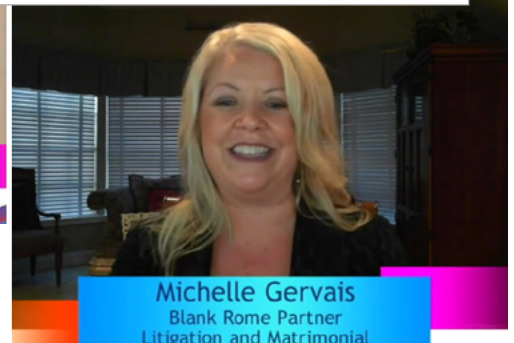


Mori Taheripour
Negotiation Expert and Author



Meghan Horner

Thank you Mori and Michelle! So grateful to have been privy to your conversation!



Michelle Gervais
Blank Rome Partner
Litigation and Matrimonial

BRING YOURSELF: HOW TO HARNESS THE POWER OF CONNECTION TO NEGOTIATE FEARLESSLY

Blank Rome Partner **Michelle Gervais** joined author and negotiation expert **Mori Taheripour** for an important fireside chat on the art of negotiation. Mori shared with us that empathy is our superpower and that staying curious and learning the experiences of others is what makes exceptional negotiators.

RESILIENCE AND REINVENTION

In her opening keynote address, **Angélica Fuentes**, international businesswoman, author, and impact investor, shared her powerful personal story of resilience and reinvention and encouraged us to embrace the challenging moments in life, because they empower us to learn and grow.



Sonia Galindo

I LOVE that this my only professional event that includes dancing every year!!



Sarah Fisher

Thank you so much for sharing your story, Anjelica! You are so inspiring.



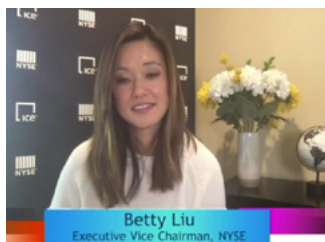
Angélica Fuentes
Entrepreneur and Author



ENTERTAINMENT

Summit attendees enjoyed a fun and interactive dance break intermission brought to us by the talents of nationally recognized twin duo **DJs Amira and Kayla**.

Women's Leadership Summit



Betty Liu
Executive Vice Chairman, NYSE



Carole Laible
CEO, Domini Impact Investments



Deborah Skakel

This content is spot on--practical, helpful, and specific.



Shawn Wright
Blank Rome Partner
White Collar Defense & Investigations



Nancy Smith
SVP & Corporate Secretary
Lincoln Financial Group



Katherine Franco
Blank Rome Partner
Intellectual Property & Technology



Shawn Wright
Blank Rome Partner
White Collar Defense & Investigations

DOING WELL AND DOING GOOD: THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ESG

Blank Rome Partners **Yelena M. Barychev** and **Stacy H. Louizos** gave an update on Blank Rome's new Environment, Social, and Governance ("ESG") Team and introduced our ESG session. Panelists **Betty Liu**, Executive Vice President of NYSE; **Carole Laible**, CEO of Domini Impact Investments; **Nancy Smith**, Senior Vice President and Corporate Secretary at Lincoln Financial Group; and **Shawn M. Wright**, Partner at Blank Rome, engaged us in a timely discussion on ESG issues and strategies for businesses.

THE 19TH AMENDMENT CENTENNIAL

Blank Rome Partner **Katherine Franco** honored the 19th Amendment Centennial and extended an exclusive exhibit invitation to guests.

MY SISTER'S PLACE

Blank Rome Partner **Shawn M. Wright** discussed her work with, and encouraged guests to give back to, My Sister's Place, an organization that shelters, supports, and empowers survivors of domestic violence and their children in Washington, D.C.



Soledad O'Brien
Journalist and Author



Sophia Lee

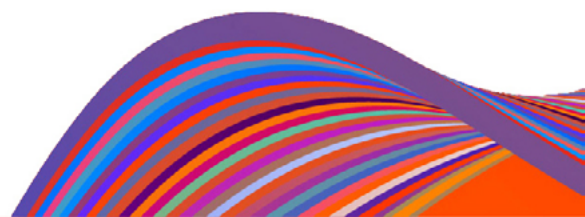
Opportunity in chaos. We're all ears, Soledad!!

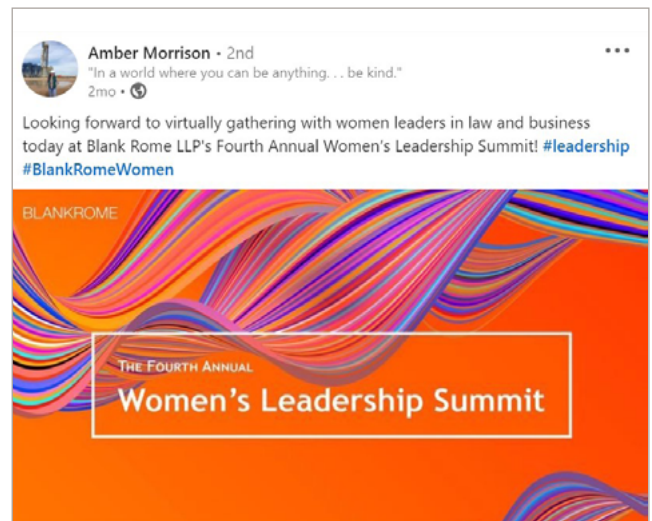
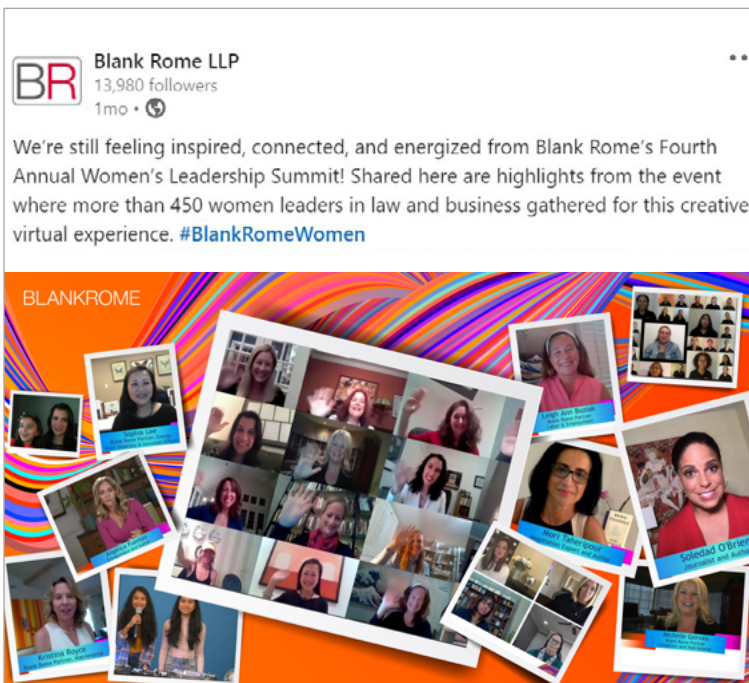
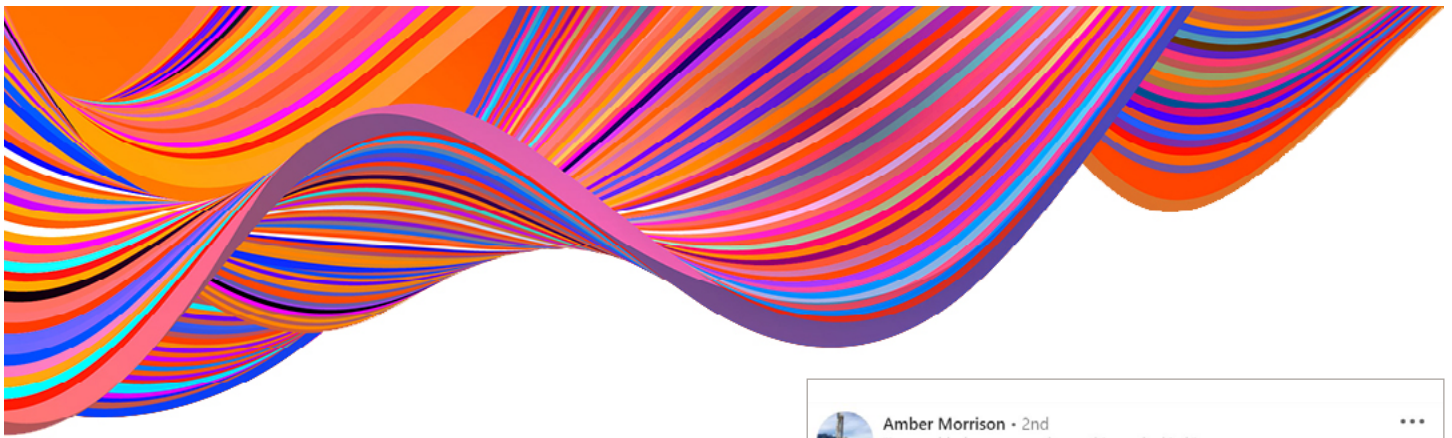
LEADING AND COMMUNICATING DURING CRISES

In her empowering closing keynote address, **Soledad O'Brien**, award-winning journalist, author, and philanthropist, shared how we can stand up, lean in, and lead bravely during a challenge or crisis. She reminded us that there's always an opportunity for leadership in chaos if we opt-in to find a solution.

CLOSING AND SPEED NETWORKING

Following closing remarks from the women of Blank Rome, Summit attendees participated in a live chat with guest speaker **Mori Taheripour** and in interactive speed video network sessions.





Shalu Rastogi • 2nd
Assistant General Counsel at Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) 2mo ...

I am so grateful that I was able to attend the Blank Rome 4th Annual Women's Leadership Summit today. This afternoon hundreds of women are reflecting on the proverb recited by one of the amazing speakers, Angelica Fuentes, as she said "they tried to bury me, but they did not know that I was a seed."

Monika L. McCarthy • 2nd
Managing Director & General Counsel 1mo ...

Excellent speakers and fun networking events - thank you Blank Rome leadership! M



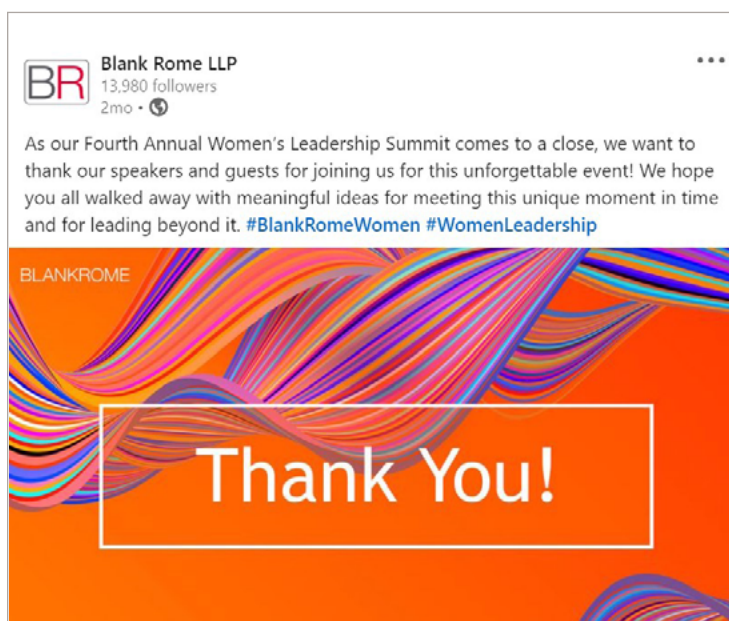
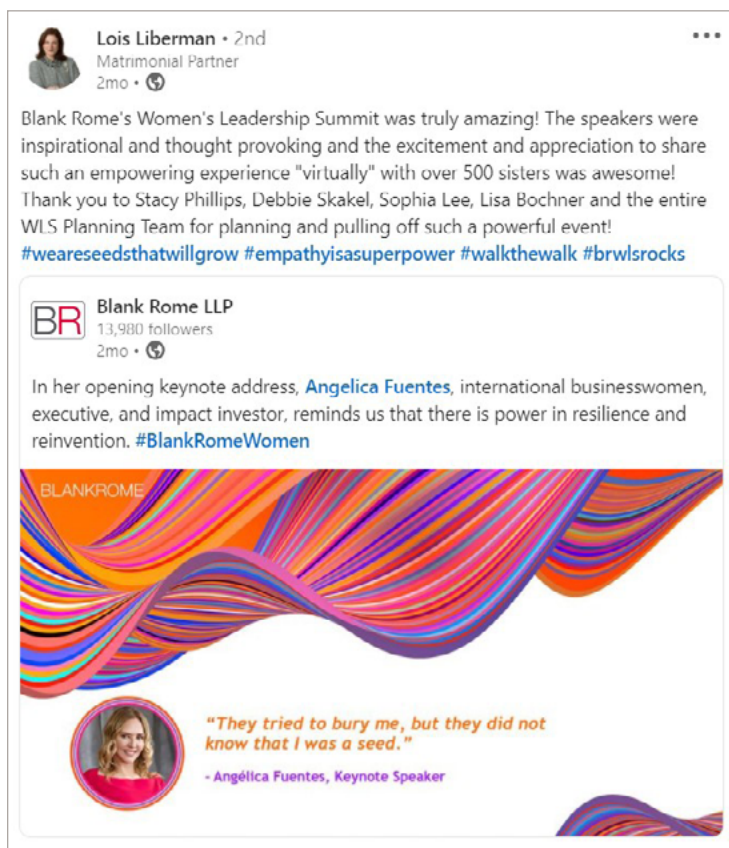
Whitney Holtzman • 2nd
CEO of Social Victories; CMO for NFL, MLB and NHL Athletes; Social Medi... 2mo ...

It was such an amazing and inspirational afternoon. The spirits of all the attendees were greatly lifted. One of the biggest highlights of 2020. I felt lucky to be part of the event, and your conversation was so awesome!

#BlankRomeWomen

Seen and Heard around the Summit

Attendees participated in a live chat during the Summit, which garnered more than 1,000 inspiring and encouraging messages. They also took to social media to discuss the program, creating a strong sense of community during and after the virtual event.



Women's Leadership Summit Chat

Michaela Cronin

This is the best Thursday afternoon I've had in forever!!!

Caroline Donelan

Also, this WLS playlist is 100%

Nina Faber

Thank you to Blank Rome. The sisterhood is re-fueled. While this was wonderful, I hope to see all of you IN PERSON next year. Cheers!

Inbal Garrity

There should be dance breaks during all Teams and Zoom meetings!

Sophia Lee

Empathy = Superpower. LOVE THAT!!

Amy Phillips

Very grateful for being included in today's summit. Incredible energy and thoughtful discourse.

Cheryl Elliott Thornton

How cool is this. I'll never miss another Summit!

Type message here



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Amid COVID-19

Diversity, Inclusion, and the Law in the Time of COVID-19: A Two-Part Webinar Series



Sophia Lee



Christopher A. Lewis



Asima J. Ahmad



Shaila Ohri

Blank Rome Partners **Sophia Lee** and **Christopher A. Lewis** and Associate **Asima J. Ahmad** were joined by Exelon Corporation Assistant General Counsel **Shaila Ohri** to present the two-part webinar series “Diversity, Inclusion, and the Law in the Time of COVID-19” on May 14 and May 21, 2020.

During the webinar, speakers explored diversity and inclusion considerations in this unprecedented time, including the history of racist tropes related to disease and infection and the history of exclusion laws; overcoming implicit and explicit bias; anti-discrimination laws and their applicability to circumstances involving COVID-19; the pandemic’s impact on retention and advancement of diverse attorneys in law firms; and understanding the continuing business case for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion during—and after—the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Watch Part One](#)

[Watch Part Two](#)

The Virus of Hate: Coronavirus and the Local Asian American Community

Blank Rome Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** participated in 6abc’s special virtual Town Hall, “The Virus of Hate: Coronavirus and the Local Asian American Community,” moderated by reporter and anchor **Nydia Han** on May 14, 2020. Held in recognition of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the important roundtable discussion explored practical strategies to overcome bias and hate, to address our own mental health, and to help our children during these challenging times.

[Watch Town Hall](#)

Blank Rome’s Coronavirus (“COVID-19”) Task Force

Blank Rome’s Coronavirus Task Force is monitoring the ever-changing pandemic and is here to help. The Task Force is an interdisciplinary group of our Firm’s attorneys with decades of experience helping companies and individuals respond to the legal fallout from disruptive crises and disasters. Our multifaceted team includes insurance recovery, labor & employment, maritime, litigation, corporate, real estate, and cybersecurity & data privacy attorneys prepared to analyze your issues from every conceivable angle to ensure a holistic, complete, and comprehensive approach to your specific needs and issues. With offices across the United States and in China, we are ready to assist businesses that must respond and prepare for an evolving public health emergency.

[View COVID-19 Resources](#)

Meet Blank Rome's 2020 LCLD Fellow and Pathfinders

Rither Alabre Named 2020 Fellow and Munira Jesani and Huaou Yan Named 2020 Pathfinders to the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity

Earlier this year, Blank Rome nominated and the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity ("LCLD") selected Partner **Rither Alabre** to join the 2020 LCLD Fellows Program and Associates **Munira Jesani** and **Huaou Yan** to join the 2020 LCLD Pathfinder Program. The hallmark programs are 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 the profession at large.

The LCLD **Fellows Program** was created to identify high-potential attorneys from diverse backgrounds and set them on the path to leadership at their organizations. During their fellowship, each honoree embarks on a learning program that includes conferences, training in the fine points of legal practice, peer-group projects to foster collaboration and build relationships, and extensive contact with LCLD's top leadership.

The LCLD **Pathfinder Program** was designed to provide diverse, early-career attorneys with practical tools for developing and leveraging professional networks through relationship building skills, foundational leadership skills, and an understanding of career development strategies applicable to both in-house and law firm practice. For more information on these programs, please visit lclldnet.org.

To learn more about our LCLD Fellow and Pathfinders, please read their Proust Questionnaires on pages 24 and 25.



The Blank Rome Proust Questionnaire

Made popular by *Vanity Fair*, The Proust Questionnaire was created to help readers learn all the fascinating ins and outs of a featured personality. With the purpose of spotlighting and getting to know Blank Rome professionals who are leaders in advancing diversity and inclusion at our Firm, Blank Rome Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** produced an adapted Proust Questionnaire for our attorneys. In this edition of *Perspectives*, Blank Rome's 2020 LCLD Fellow and Pathfinders are featured.



Rither Alabre

Rither Alabre is based in our Firm's New York office. He concentrates his practice in the areas of white collar defense and investigations and complex commercial and corporate litigation, handling high-profile cases throughout the country. Prior to joining Blank Rome, Rither served as a law clerk to federal Judge Kenneth M. Hoyt of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Texas (Houston Division). Rither also served as a prosecutor in New York City for eight years. He is an active member of the District Attorneys Association of the State of New York, the New York State Bar Association, and the Guild of Catholic Lawyers.

What is your favorite holiday?

Christmas.

What is your favorite journey?

The road trip with my wife from New York to my federal clerkship in Houston, despite encountering a major storm when we reached Knoxville, Tennessee, which required us to stay there for several days and cancel our planned stay in New Orleans.

What is your greatest extravagance?

Hugo Boss suits and Charvet silk ties.

What is your greatest joy in life and why?

Spending time with my family because that's when I am the happiest.

What is your most treasured possession?

A personal letter from then Pope (and now Saint) John Paul II.

What items do you carry with you at all times?

A rosary, credit cards, some cash, and (lately) hand sanitizer.

Where would you most like to live?

Where I currently live, but also Nice, or anywhere close to the beach.

Which living person do you most admire?

My father.

Who are your favorite writers?

Nathaniel Hawthorne and John Grisham.

Who are your heroes in real life?

My parents, who raised nine kids (all two years apart) and managed to stay sane.



Munira Jesani

Munira Jesani is based in our Firm's Houston office. She concentrates her practice on patent, trademark, and copyright litigation, as well as intellectual property licensing and trademark prosecution. Prior to joining Blank Rome, Munira served as a public interest fellow at the

Tahirih Justice Center and a judicial intern to the Honorable Judge Lynn N. Hughes of the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of Texas. She is a member of the American Bar Association.



Huaou Han

Huaou Yan is based in our Firm's Philadelphia office. He concentrates his practice on complex commercial litigation and white collar defense and investigations. Prior to joining Blank Rome, Huaou served as a law clerk for the Honorable James Knoll Gardner of the U.S. District Court for

the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. He is also a member of the Temple American Inn of Court.

What do you most value in your friends?

Loyalty.

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Lack of empathy.

What is your favorite holiday?

Halloween.

What is your favorite movie from childhood?

The Green Mile.

What is your greatest fear?

Not having family or friends.

What is your greatest joy in life and why?

I really love fostering dogs who are scared of the world and watching them learn to trust it.

What is your motto?

If something scares you or makes you uncomfortable, you should probably do it.

What items do you carry with you at all times?

Phone, wallet, keys, hand sanitizer, and reusable straws and utensils.

Which talent would you most like to have?

To sing well.

Who are your heroes in real life?

My female role models, like my mom and close friends, who inspire and teach me to be better and live meaningfully.

What is your favorite journey?

My favorite journey (so far) was hiking the Pennsylvania section of the Appalachian Trail. My goal is to thru-hike the whole thing one day.

What is your favorite occupation?

Being absorbed in a good book with a warm drink in a cozy room.

What is your favorite quote?

It changes frequently, but right now, this comes to mind: "Tyranny is fiercer than a tiger."

What is your greatest extravagance?

Good charcuterie.

What is your greatest regret?

Not venturing out of my comfort zone more when I was younger.

What is your motto?

You can't go back, only forward.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?

That's easy! My wife, Caitlin, and my daughter, Marceline!

Where would you most like to live?

My overly romantic, impractical dreams would be: Mount Desert Island, Maine (or thereabouts), Tuscany, the Hebrides.

Which talent would you most like to have?

A facility for learning and speaking languages.

Who are your favorite writers?

John Steinbeck, Douglas Hofstadter, Philip K. Dick.

Celebrating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion across our Firm



Blank Rome Hosts Private Film Screenings of *Just Mercy*

Blank Rome was proud to host a series of private film screenings of *Just Mercy*, which tells the true story of young defense attorney Bryan Stevenson and his fight for the life of Walter McMillian after he was sentenced to death for murder despite evidence proving his innocence. The exclusive events were held in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Houston between January 28 and January 30, 2020.

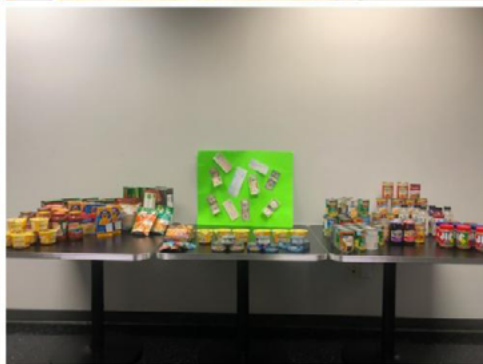
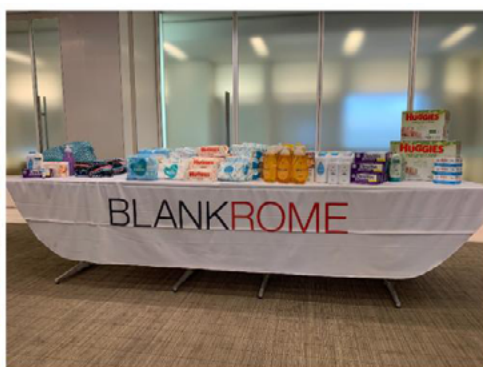
This inspirational film starring Michael B. Jordan, Jamie Foxx, and Brie Larson sparked important conversation around shifting the narrative on race in America,

reexamining and understanding the systems of inequality and injustice in our country, and paving the way toward justice and healing. As part of Blank Rome's ongoing commitment to **pro bono** and **diversity and inclusion** initiatives, our Firm was honored to share such a special experience with our clients and friends and to engage in a meaningful dialogue on a topic about which we all care deeply. Our Firm was also honored to dedicate the screenings in memory of the inspiring life and legacy of our late colleague **Judge Nathaniel R. Jones**, who was one of the brightest legal minds and civil rights advocates of our time.

Blank Rome MLK Day Service Projects

In celebration of the 25th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Blank Rome was proud to continue our longstanding tradition of supporting our communities through a series of thoughtful service projects, held in our offices across the country over the last two weeks of January.

Through our various drives, fundraisers, clinics, and events, our Firm was able to partner with and support numerous community organizations, including: **Cradles to Crayons** in Chicago; **Welcome House** in Cincinnati; **Poverello Center** in Ft. Lauderdale; **Interfaith Ministries** and **Star of Hope** in Houston; **Neighborhood Council of Westchester/Playa** and **L.A. Works** in Los Angeles; **City Harvest** in New York; **SeniorLAW Center**, **Support Center for Child Advocates**, and **Homeless Advocacy Project** in Philadelphia; **Batch Foundation** in Pittsburgh; **Vietnam Veterans of America** in Princeton; **Metropolitan Ministries** in Tampa; **Ayuda** and **Damien Ministries** in Washington, D.C., and **Read Aloud Delaware** in Wilmington.





APABA-PA Lunar New Year Banquet

Attorneys from Blank Rome's Philadelphia office attended the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania's ("APABA-PA") 2020 Lunar New Year Banquet, which was held at the Ocean Harbor Restaurant on February 6, 2020. The banquet celebrated the "Year of the Rat" and featured 10 delicious courses accompanied by a traditional Lion Dance performance by the Philadelphia Suns.

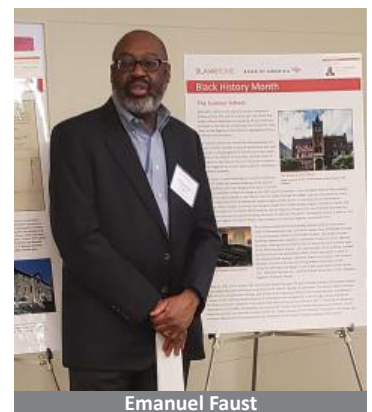


A Celebration of D.C. Black History

Blank Rome's Washington, D.C., office held a gathering of Blank Rome colleagues, clients, and friends on February 6, 2020, for a celebration of D.C. Black History to honor Black History Month through an inspiring celebration and educational discussion about the historic places and events that helped shape Washington, D.C.'s remarkable Black history. This year, we partnered with Bank of America to organize an exciting event, including a presentation by Blank Rome personnel who researched and prepared easels on historic places and events that helped shape the city's rich Black history; a slide show and presentation by David Haberstich, the Curator of Photography for the Archives Center at the National Museum of American History; and a private screening of the short film *Black Broadway on U Street*, which sheds light on the under-told story of African American life within Washington, D.C.'s U Street Corridor from the early 1910s to late 1950, and remarks from the film's creator, Emmy Award-winning multimedia producer Shellée Haynesworth.



Lamiya N. Rahman



Emanuel Faust



Dominique L. Casimir



Steven J. Roman

Blank Rome's Houston Office Hosts Black History Month Luncheon

Blank Rome's Houston office welcomed **Travis Torrence** as its special guest speaker at our Firm's Black History Month luncheon on February 20, 2020. Speaking to a full house over lunch, Travis generously shared personal insights as an African American gay attorney and professional. Emphasizing his parents' advice to always stand tall, he encouraged us all to be comfortable with who we are and embrace our identity. Mixing humor and personal stories, Travis exemplified Blank Rome's value of encouraging everyone to "bring their 'whole selves' to work."



Diversity on the Bench: A Roundtable Discussion with Philadelphia Judges

Blank Rome hosted a special Black History Month event on February 25, 2020, at our Firm's Philadelphia office. Reviewing the legal career and legacy of the Honorable **William H. Hastie**, the first Black federal district court judge and first Black federal appellate court judge, the panel reflected on Judge Hastie's Owen J. Roberts memorial lecture, "Judicial Role and Judicial Image." The esteemed panel featured **James T. Giles**, Blank

Rome Of Counsel and former Chief Judge, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania; **Frederica Massiah-Jackson**, Judge and former President Judge, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas; **Timika Lane**, Judge, Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas; **Charles Hayden**, Judge, Philadelphia Municipal Court; and **Robert Reinstein**, former Dean, Temple Beasley School of Law.



Journey to the Bench: A Conversation with Judges

The **BR United** members in Blank Rome's New York office hosted a special Black History Month event featuring a thoughtful conversation with a panel of New York state and federal judges on February 27, 2020. The esteemed panel discussed their respective paths to the bench, challenges they have faced along the way, and their views on diversity on the bench. Speakers included the **Hon. Cheryl E. Chambers**, Associate Justice of the New York State Appellate Division, Second Judicial Department; the **Hon. George B. Daniels**, District Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York; and the **Hon. John W. Carter**, Justice of the Supreme Court of the Bronx, New York.



BR United members and panelists at Blank Rome's New York office Black History Month event.

Recognizing Juneteenth

Juneteenth, also known as "Freedom Day," is celebrated on June 19 across the nation to commemorate the end of legalized slavery in this country. The holiday received its name by combining "June" and "nineteenth." Juneteenth recognizes the date of June 19, 1865, when Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas to inform slaves of their freedom and that the Civil War had ended. This date is profoundly significant because the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln two and a half years earlier, on January 1, 1863. Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865—just over two months prior to the Galveston announcement, known as General Orders, No. 3.

In honor of Juneteenth, Blank Rome invited **David A. Love**, a professor, journalist, and commentator on social justice, to educate our attorneys about the history and significance of the Juneteenth holiday. David wrote about Juneteenth in an article titled **6 Important Things You May Not Know About Juneteenth—But Should** (*Atlanta Black Star*, June 19, 2019). Our Firm also shared insightful resources, including articles, books, and events, to learn more about and celebrate Juneteenth. We encouraged our colleagues and friends to review these resources, which are available [here](#), and reflect on the ongoing history of systemic racial injustice and how it continues to manifest in our society.

More Blank Rome in the News

In addition to the accolades and stories featured throughout this edition of *Perspectives*, below are some recent articles, recognitions, and events that our attorneys have made headlines with throughout the year. For a full list of recent news items, visit blankrome.com/diversity-inclusion.

BYLINES

A Contractor's Guide to Trump's Diversity Training Order

By **Dominique L. Casimir**, **Brooke T. Iley**, and **Tjasse L. Fritz**

As published in Law360 on October 2, 2020



Dominique L. Casimir



Brooke T. Iley



Tjasse L. Fritz

Federal contractors have long provided various types of anti-harassment, nondiscrimination, and diversity and inclusion, or D&I, training to their employees. After the death of George Floyd and the nationwide protests that followed, D&I training has proliferated in workplaces across the country, including within federal agencies and in the contractor community.

To read the full article, please click [here](#).

A Path Forward for Eliminating Structural Bias in AI Tech



Brian Wm. Higgins

By **Brian Wm. Higgins**

As published in Law360 on September 2, 2020

As national protests over systemic and structural racism in America continue, community organizers, Black scholars, and others fighting injustice and unequal treatment are once again raising awareness of a long-standing problem lurking within artificial intelligence data-based technologies: bias. **To read the full article, please click [here](#).**

Employer Considerations after Justices' LGBTQ Rights Ruling

By **Stephanie Gantman Kaplan**, **Beth Bernstein Connors**, and **Natalie Alameddine**

As published in Law360 on July 14, 2020



Stephanie Gantman Kaplan



Beth Bernstein Connors



Natalie Alameddine

On June 15, the U.S. Supreme Court held, in a historic 6-3 decision, that gay, lesbian, and transgender employees are protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. Justice Neil Gorsuch penned a decision in *Bostock v. Clayton County, Georgia*—and related cases *Altitude Express Inc. v. Zarda* and

R.G. & G.R. Harris Funeral Homes Inc. v. U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission—holding that employers are prohibited from discriminating against gay and transgender workers on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity.

To read the full article, please click [here](#).



Blank Rome Achieves Certification Plus for Mansfield Rule 3.0 and Pilots Mansfield Rule 4.0

Blank Rome achieved **Mansfield Certification Plus** status after successfully completing Diversity Lab's yearlong Mansfield Rule 3.0 program. As a pilot member of the inaugural Mansfield Rule, our Firm has received Mansfield Certification for each iteration of the program and also earned the Mansfield Certification Plus designation last year. Our Firm will continue its longstanding partnership with Diversity Lab through its participation in **Mansfield Rule 4.0**, which will run through July 2021.

Morgan Fraser Mouchette Named 2020 "Rising Star" by *New York Law Journal*



Morgan Fraser Mouchette

Blank Rome Partner **Morgan Fraser Mouchette** was recognized as one of the *New York Law Journal's* 2020 Rising Stars. The competitive award recognizes "the region's most promising attorneys," ages 40 and under, who have established a record of notable accomplishments and demonstrated that they are top contributors to the practice of law and their communities.

Blank Rome Named to Exelon's 2020 D&I Honor Roll

Blank Rome was named to Exelon's 2020 D&I Honor Roll, which recognizes business partners in banking, insurance, information technology, legal, professional services, and investments for their work to include women and people of color in key roles on Exelon's account teams as well as additional efforts that highlight the value of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Blank Rome was notably one of four law firms honored in this year's select list of 34 companies.

Asima J. Ahmad and Joel Michel Named *The Legal Intelligencer's* 2020 Lawyers on the Fast Track



Asima J. Ahmad



Joel Michel

Blank Rome Associates **Asima J. Ahmad** and **Joel Michel** have been named "Lawyers on the Fast Track" by *The Legal Intelligencer*, as part of its 2020 Professional Excellence Awards. Asima and Joel are among 25 attorneys who were selected for this notable recognition by a judging panel composed of evaluators from all corners of the legal profession and the state.

Shawn M. Wright Named to Lawyers of Color Power List 2020



Shawn M. Wright

Blank Rome Partner **Shawn M. Wright** has been named to the Lawyers of Color's Power List 2020, which recognizes the most influential minority attorneys and allies in the nation. Presented with the support of the Diverse Partners Network, the annual list is now in its fifth year and includes *Fortune* 1000 general counsel and law school deans as well as legal media and nonprofit leaders.

Samir Ahuja Named 2020 Secured Finance Network 40 Under 40 Award Winner



Samir Ahuja

Blank Rome Associate **Samir Ahuja** was named a winner of the Secured Finance Network's 2020 40 Under 40 Awards in the Legal Services category. Recipients of this notable honor are recognized as the "future of the secured finance community" and were selected based on excellence in their careers, strong voice and commitment to their profession and the industry at large, and participation in community service and trade groups.

Linda Kornfeld Recognized in *Los Angeles Business Journal's* List of Top Minority Attorneys



Linda Kornfeld

Blank Rome Partner **Linda Kornfeld** was named to the *Los Angeles Business Journal's* annual Top Minority Attorneys in Los Angeles supplement, which recognizes the region's most influential minority attorneys who have experienced much success in their careers, made a substantial impact in their practice and communities, and maintained the highest professional and ethical standards.

D'Juan A. Neal Joins the National Black Lawyers' Top 40 Under 40



D'Juan A. Neal

Blank Rome Associate **D'Juan A. Neal** was named to the National Black Lawyers' 2019 class of Top 40 Under 40, an invitation-only network of African American attorneys from each state who are rising stars in their respective areas of law.

Top 40 Under 40 candidates were evaluated on various factors, including notable achievements, settlements, and verdicts as a lawyer; leadership and membership in other national and state specialty lawyer organizations; and rankings and ratings by leading national evaluation organizations.





Pictured right are **Mark Leeker** (left) and **Mike Santoni** (right) of Harbour Group with **Saminaz Akhter** of Blank Rome.



Pictured above are **Sophia Lee**, **Christopher A. Lewis**, **Saminaz Akhter**, **Shawn Wright**, and **Grant S. Palmer** of Blank Rome.

Saminaz Akhter Receives the 2019 Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones Diversity and Inclusion Award



Saminaz Akhter

Blank Rome Partner **Saminaz Akhter** was presented with the Fifth Annual Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones Diversity and Inclusion Award at an award reception held on November 21, 2019, in our Washington, D.C., office. Inaugurated in 2013, the

Honorable Nathaniel R. Jones Diversity and Inclusion Award is presented annually to a Blank Rome attorney or professional who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in promoting diversity and inclusion within our Firm. The award is named in honor of civil rights leader, activist, and retired judge, the late **Nathaniel R. Jones**, who joined Blank Rome in 2002 and served as our Firm's first Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion.

APPOINTMENTS

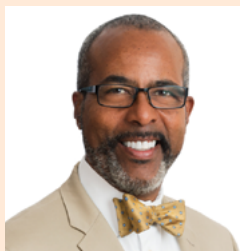
Sophia Lee to Teach Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Legal Profession at Temple University Beasley School of Law

Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** will serve as an adjunct professor at the Temple University Beasley School of Law in Philadelphia where she will teach "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Legal Profession." The new course will begin in Spring 2021 and will explore why diversity, equity, and inclusion are core competencies in the practice of law and in the administration of justice.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Roundtable



Sophia Lee



Christopher A. Lewis



Dominique L. Casimir

Blank Rome Partners **Sophia Lee**, **Christopher A. Lewis**, and **Dominique L. Casimir** presented a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Roundtable on December 8, 2020, as part of Blank Rome's week-long CLE event, "Emerging Litigation and Employment Law Issues for In-House Counsel: The New World of Law and Business." Together, they discussed the implications and future of board diversity lawsuits in the George Floyd era, the Trump administration's executive order on diversity trainings, and the ABA Model Rule of Professional Conduct addressing anti-discrimination.

Black Lawyers Matter: Strategies to Enhance Diversity and Inclusion

Blank Rome was proud to be a sponsor of "Black Lawyers Matter: Strategies to Enhance Diversity and Inclusion," a virtual conference hosted by the University of Houston Law Center and Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law, on October 30, 2020. The conference featured Keynote Speaker **David B. Wilkins**, Lester Kissel Professor of Law at Harvard Law School, and explored important issues surrounding Black representation in the legal profession.

What Can the Inns of Court Do about the Peril of Racial Injustice to the Rule of Law?



Anthony B. Haller



Joel Michel

The Temple American Inn of Court in conjunction with Gray's Inn, London presented a virtual TED® Talk-style debate, "The Great Transatlantic Debates in a Virtual World," on October 22, 2020. Blank Rome Partner **Anthony B. Haller** served as co-chair of the Temple American Inn of Court Debate Planning Committee for the debate and Associate **Joel Michel** presented the United States' perspective in debating "What Can the Inns of Court Do About the Peril of Racial Injustice to the Rule of Law?"

A Movement, Not a Moment—Chief Diversity Officers Discuss Sustainable Action

Blank Rome Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** presented at the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance's ("LFAA") Moving the Work Forward Summit, on October 6, 2020. During her session, Sophia joined other leaders from LFAA firms in a virtual fireside chat to discuss key approaches to addressing the global outcry for racial equity and social justice and the role of diversity, equity, and inclusion in LFAA's work.

Women, Diversity & Change Virtual Summit



Shawn M. Wright

Blank Rome was proud to sponsor the Women, Diversity & Change Virtual Summit on September 23, 2020, where Blank Rome Partner **Shawn M. Wright** presented on the “The Time for Change Is Now: Developing & Promoting Leaders of Color” panel. The Summit explored the obstacles, risks, and rewards on

the path to a fulfilling and productive career for women and minority leaders, including the best strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse talent even in the face of a pandemic, whether companies are doing enough to create a culture of inclusion that goes beyond metrics, and more.

Creating Allies—Strategies from the Best of the Best and Ethical Considerations in the Diversity and Inclusion Space

Blank Rome Partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Sophia Lee** presented on the “Creating Allies—Strategies from the Best of the Best” panel at *Working Mother* magazine’s Women Winning in a Virtual World online event on September 22, 2020. The panel discussed creating strong allies to advance gender and racial diversity, including a candid conversation on confronting racial issues in the workplace. Sophia was also a panelist at the 11th Law of Shale Plays Conference, presented on September 9 and 10, 2020. Sophia’s panel, “Ethical Considerations in the Diversity and Inclusion Space,” addressed the crossroads of ethics and diversity and ethical responsibilities as members of the bar, considering hypothetical scenarios that explore existing rules of professional conduct and how those rules relate to diversity.

New Revenue Generating for Diverse Attorneys through Dispute Resolution



Ernestine J. Mings

Blank Rome Associate **Ernestine J. Mings** hosted the Metropolitan Black Bar Association program, “New Revenue Generating for Diverse Attorneys through Dispute Resolution,” on January 9, 2020, at

the Firm’s New York office. Co-sponsored by Metropolitan Black Bar Association, New York Women’s Bar Association, and New York State Bar Association Dispute Resolution Section, the program featured a panel that presented a crash course on “Alternative Dispute Resolution 101.” □



Pictured back row left to right: **Amit Kumar**, **Lauren A. Jones**, **Lisa Pilgrim**, **Jason Clark**, **Hon. Ariel E. Belen (ret.)** Front row left to right: **Luwick Francois**, **Alfreida Kenny**, **Ernestine J. Mings**, and **Lisa M. Denig**.

Environmental, Social, and Governance Services

More than ever, investors, the media, and boards are focused on the importance of Environmental, Social, and Governance (“ESG”) issues. ESG issues not only impact social discourse, they influence investor decisions as well as the way boards steward corporate values and oversee risk management.

As ESG issues and strategies continue to shape boardroom agendas, shareholder priorities, and employee values, Blank Rome’s cross-disciplinary team of attorneys works with boards of directors and management to provide guidance on ESG frameworks, standards, and rating systems, and to help boards oversee ESG strategies, reporting, and disclosure.

How We Can Help

Our capabilities include advising clients on:

- ESG strategy, design, and implementation
- Board ESG agenda
- ESG reports
- ESG disclosures in SEC filings
- ESG due diligence
- Sustainable and impact investing
- Virtual power purchase agreements (“PPAs”)
- Compliance with climate change-related protocols
- Insurance coverage related to climate events
- Due diligence for brownfields and advice on land use restrictions
- Environmental liability in mergers and acquisitions
- International trade, sanctions, and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (“FCPA”) compliance counseling
- Data privacy and stewardship
- Investment management and ESG strategies
- Investor engagement
- Creation and operation of ESG funds and special purpose acquisition companies (“SPACs”)
- ESG considerations for specific industries, including:
 - Oil and gas
 - Renewable energy
 - Financial services
 - Life sciences
- Human capital considerations, including:
 - Human capital management disclosures in SEC filings
 - Diversity, equity, and inclusion, including employment law updates and mandatory training programs
 - Reporting and procedures related to #MeToo
 - Adapting workforce policies and programs
 - Legal and regulatory oversight to recruit and retain the best talent
 - Protection of corporate assets and trade secrets
 - Remote workforce data vulnerabilities
 - Evolving role of artificial intelligence
 - Gig-economy workforce management

[View Service Page](#)

KEY CONTACTS



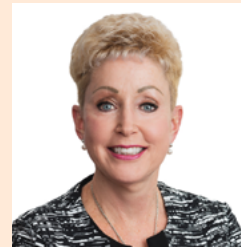
CO-LEAD
Yelena M. Barychev



CO-LEAD
Stacy H. Louizos



Deborah Greenspan



Margaret Anne Hill



Brooke T. Iley



Sophia Lee



Shawn M. Wright



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Chair: Sophia Lee

Chicago: Paige Barr Tinkham

Houston: Jeremy A. Herschaft • Domingo M. Llagostera

Los Angeles: Shadi Enos Jahangir • Linda Kornfeld

New York: Diana M. Eng • Norman S. Heller

Philadelphia: Mark M. Lee

Pittsburgh: Edwin L. Edwards Jr.

Princeton: Adrienne C. Rogove

Tampa: Michelle M. Gervais

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Ex-Officio: Alan J. Hoffman • Grant S. Palmer

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Donna Branca • Lisa Bochner •
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DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION MISSION STATEMENT

Blank Rome is committed to excellence in our fields of endeavor. We recognize that a diversity of ideas, backgrounds, and experiences is crucial to fulfilling this commitment. We endeavor to recruit, hire, promote, and retain—on the basis of demonstrated talent and initiative—individuals throughout our Firm representing, among other things, different races, genders, ethnic groups, religions, sexual orientation, and national origin. We also endeavor to be inclusive of individuals with disabilities. □

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blankrome.com/diversity-inclusion

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