

Diversity Committee

Newsletter

1st Quarter 2013

A Word from Our Diversity Committee Chair...



Weldon H. Latham
Diversity Committee Chair

As the firm continues to grow, we remain committed to placing minorities and women in leadership positions. As you know, Jackson Lewis recently opened its 51st (San Juan, Puerto Rico) and 52nd (Tampa, FL) offices. On behalf of the Diversity Committee, I would like to welcome **Sara Colón-Acevedo** and **Juan Felipe Santos** to the firm as Partner and Of Counsel, respectively.

Sara focuses her practice on employment discrimination and wage and hour counseling and litigation. Juan Felipe focuses his practice on collective actions involving wage and hour disputes, employment discrimination and harassment, retaliation, wrongful discharge, statutory leaves of absence, welfare benefits (ERISA), Railway Labor Act, defamation, non-compete covenants and other employment-related torts.



S. Colón-Acevedo



J. F. Santos

Barnett Brooks is Managing Partner in Tampa. A former Baltimore City police detective, he has been a AAA Arbitrator for over 10 years and has served as a court appointed mediator in over 75 cases. He has investigated and favorably resolved over 2,000 discrimination charges at the EEOC and state or local Fair Employment Practice Agencies in Maryland, Pennsylvania and Florida. Barnett is joined by:



B. Brooks



Jay Lechner
Partner



Karen Morinelli
Partner



Monica Williams
Of Counsel



Amanda Ballard
Associate

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Congratulations to **Ruthie White** for being tapped to lead the Houston office as Managing Partner, **Sarah Ryan** for being named Managing Partner of the Portland office, and **Tammy Baker** who will assume the role of Managing Partner for the Birmingham office.



R. White



S. Ryan



T. Baker



J. Ackerstein

Last, but certainly not least, Management Committee Liaison to the Diversity Committee, **Joan Ackerstein (BOS)**, has been appointed the firm's National Director of Litigation.

These appointments affirm Jackson Lewis' commitment to ensuring that minorities and women hold important leadership roles at our firm.

Featured Events

The **D.C. Region** office kicked off the new year by hosting its second Women's Interest Network ("WIN") event for clients on January 30th at the elite Tower Club in Tysons Corner. The event, "An Evening with Judy Smith," featured—you guessed it—Judy Smith, who is a crisis management expert. Her professional life is the inspiration for Olivia Pope, the character played by Kerry Washington on the ABC show, *Scandal*. Judy is a co-Executive Producer of the show. She has provided crisis management support during some of the most significant events of our time, including the Monica Lewinsky affair, the Iran-Contra investigation and the United Nations Foundation's and World Health Organization's response to the SARS epidemic. Most recently, she was an advisor to a key player in the General Petraeus resignation. The Tower Club event was a huge hit, with about 50 clients and prospects in attendance. Guests started the evening with a cocktail hour, followed by a dinner, during which **Misti Mukherjee (DC)** did a wonderful job facilitating the conversation with Judy.



As a direct result of the event, we have introduced our Puerto Rico office to a hotel chain client; received requests for handbook and policy reviews from a health care client; discussed our immigration services with two staffing company clients; scheduled training for a cable network client; and sent a university client information on new regulations facing universities' athletic programs, at its request. Attendees raved about the event, saying things like: "Judy is a great role model for how to be a successful woman and I found her refreshingly grounded and realistic." "Thank you so much for the invitation to last night's event. I enjoyed the chance to meet so many other professional women and Judy Smith was awesome!" "What a great group of women you've pulled together!" "The event was so well organized – from the initial invitation to including the book [upon registration, attendees were sent a copy of Judy's book, which she signed at the event] and the delicious meal – you made it effortless to get excited and to get there! The networking and the program were wonderful. Judy was warm and easily engaged the crowd." Pictures from the event are below.



D.C. Region Office's 2nd WIN Event:



L-R: **Amanda Vaccaro**, Associate, JL; **Judy Smith**; **Sandra Eberhard**, Executive Director, Women Presidents' Educational Organization; **Candace Waterman**, Chief of Staff, Women Presidents' Educational Organization.



Judy Smith mingles with our guests.



Misti Mukherjee and **Judy Smith**.



Judy signed copies of her book for **Margaret Davis**, President & CEO, Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation; and **Courtney Banks Spaeth**, CEO, National Security Associates Worldwide.



Group shot of most of the JL team with Judy. From L-R: **Leslie Stout-Tabackman**, **Jennifer Harper**, **Meredith Bergeson**, **Misti Mukherjee**, **Judy Smith**, **Minnie Fu**, **Robin Terry**, **Teresa Wright**, **Amanda Vaccaro**.



Awards/Honors

Our diverse attorneys regularly receive accolades for their professional and community activities. The awards below specifically pertain to diversity-related honors.

The firm was honored by *The American Lawyer* and *Corporate Counsel* magazines on December 12th in New York City for being named one of “The Top Firms for Diversity.” **LeRoy Watkins (MOR)**, **Kimberly Dobson (LI)**, **Margaret Kaye (PHL)**, and **Nicole Saldana (NYC)** represented the firm.

The firm was also honored on March 8th during the Louisiana State Bar Association’s Sixth Annual Conclave on Diversity. The LSBA recognized the New Orleans office for its outstanding efforts and advancements that are producing significant improvements in diversity and inclusion in the Louisiana legal community. **Jason Stein (NOLA)** represented the firm.

Sponsorships

The firm is a sponsor of the National Employment Law Council’s Annual Conference, which takes place April 24th–26th in Houston. **Ruthie White (HOU)** will participate in a panel discussion, “They’re Not Our Employees. Really! Legal Compliance in the Age of the Contingent Workforce.” For more information on this sponsorship, contact Ruthie.

The firm has also signed on as a “Silver Sponsor” of the upcoming Corporate Counsel Women of Color Conference (CCWCC), which takes place September 25th–27th in Washington, D.C. For more information on this sponsorship, contact **Ruthie White (HOU)**.

As a benefit of our sponsorship of the CCWC Conference, the firm receives eight registrations for the “Career Strategies Conference for Law Firm Associates,” taking place April 25th in New York City. For more information, contact **Ruthie White (HOU)** or **Natalie Norfus (MIA)**.



Attorney Resource Group Updates

African American ARG

Led by LeRoy Watkins (MOR) and Dave Sukhdeo (MIA)

The African American Attorney Resource Group has had an eventful first quarter. We continue to network and actively participate with the National Bar Association, the oldest African American bar association in the nation. In February, **Natalie Norfus (MIA)** was selected to speak on an employment law panel at the NBA’s Mid-Winter meeting in Nassau, Bahamas and in April, **Tim Moppin (SF)** will be a multi-plaintiff litigation CLE panelist at the NBA’s Mid-Year conference in Dana Point, CA. We are also in



the process of coordinating a lunch series webinar through the NBA which will present a tremendous branding and marketing opportunity.

In March, JL sponsored the 2013 National Employment Law Council (“NELC”) Regional Reception in Los Angeles, CA where diverse management-side labor and employment lawyers and senior HR professionals gathered for an evening of hosted drinks, appetizers, and networking with NELC members which included in-house counsel from major corporate law departments and local government agencies, as well as leading outside counsel.

Also in April, **Ruthie White (HOU)** will participate as a member and speaker at the NELC annual conference (scheduled for April 24-26) in Houston, TX. Ruthie and other African American JL attorneys have been involved in this organization and benefited from client relationships initiated at the conferences.

Again in April, the African American ARG will be actively sponsoring and participating in the Corporate Counsel Women of Color Law Firm Associates Conference in New York. **Misti Mukherjee (DC)** and **LeRoy Watkins (MOR)** will be panelists.

Among the African American ARG’s 2013 initiatives are a mentoring program and a focus on developing objective metrics to measure productivity and business development goals, including return on investment with regard to sponsorships.

Asian American ARG

Led by Tanya Bovée (HFD) and Nicky Jatana (LA)

The Asian American Attorney Resource Group has started the new year with a bang:

Sujata Ajmera (AUS) is the Chair and representative of the South Asian Bar Association of Austin and in that capacity attended the Austin Joint Minority Bar Committee’s annual meeting regarding the release of Austin’s Diversity Report Card Results for 2012. This committee is represented by Chairs of the Austin Black Lawyers Association, the Austin LGBT Bar Association, the Austin Asian American Bar Association, and the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin. Every year the Joint Committee releases the Diversity Hiring Report Card which shows the hiring, retention, and promotion of minority attorneys at the largest law firms in Austin, Texas. Sujata also organized the South Asian Bar Association’s quarterly networking event with local attorneys and bar members.

Cara Ching-Senaha (SF) spoke on a multi-disciplinary panel to nearly 100 new employment attorneys at the State Bar of California’s day-long workshop on employment law basics and trends—this encore presentation repeated a Fall 2012 presentation and due to popular demand, will likely be repeated at least once a year. Cara was also honored again this year as a Northern California Super Lawyer.

Victor Corpuz (DAL) was elected to the Dallas Asian American Bar Association’s Board of Directors as an Advisory Director (photos below).

KoKo Huang (SEA) is chair of the Washington State Bar Association International Practice Section and the Asian Bar Association of Washington’s Representative to the Minority Bar Associations’ Diversity Survey.



Along with all of the good news above, we are in the process of compiling a list of our group's language capabilities so as to be an internal resource for the firm. Thanks to the **Hispanic ARG** for the great idea!

Keller Bae was born to **Davis Bae (SEA)** and his wife Carlie Jae Bae on March 6, 2013. Keller and mom are healthy and we wish them the best!

The Asian American Attorney Resource group currently has 36 active attorneys and we welcome all new members. If you are interested in joining, please let **Nicky Jatana (LA)** or **Tanya Bovée (HFD)** know.

Victor Corpuz with Tom Mielke, Senior Vice President of Law, Government Affairs, and Chief Compliance Officer for Kimberly-Clark Corporation.



Victor Corpuz with Tom Evans, Vice President and General Counsel of Wal-Mart (Merchandising, Marketing and Supply Chain).



Victor Corpuz with the majority of the 2012 DAABA Board of Directors, plus the MC for the event.



Hispanic Attorney Resource Group

Led by James Botana (CHI) and Pedro Torres-Diaz (MIA)

The Hispanic Attorney Resource Group held a telephone conference on March 12th. The group will soon distribute its attorney survey to help determine the firm's resources for providing Spanish language legal services, including translating documents from English to Spanish and vice versa, interviewing witness, training managers in Spanish, or conducting workplace investigations. These services are one of the features that will help us distinguish us from our competitors and frequently allow us to further solidify relationships with existing clients such as Publicis and Barcel USA, or to get our "foot in the door" with organizations such as U.S. Foods. The focus for this year will be on publicizing the group's capabilities for these services both internally and externally.

In addition, the group will be coordinating activities to partner with local Hispanic bar associations and similar Hispanic professional groups to showcase our firm with companies that have large Spanish speaking workforces or with Hispanic owned companies. **James Botana (CHI)**, **David Jones (MEM)**, and **James Mulroy (MEM)** will be making a presentation to a group of Hispanic business owners on issues of workplace law in Memphis this coming April. Jackson Lewis is partnering with the National Hispanic Professional Organization to put together this presentation, which will be conducted in both English and Spanish. We hope to replicate these types of efforts in several offices during the coming year.

In addition, the group is continuing its long-standing relationship with the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA). **Pedro Torres-Diaz (MIA)** was re-appointed as General Counsel of the HNBA and **Veronica Arechederra Hall (LV)** continued her role as an active member of the HNBA's Latina Commission. We look forward to Jackson Lewis continuing to be a presence with HNBA and other local organizations.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender ARG

Led by Michelle Phillips (WP) and Pedro Forment (MIA)

Michelle Phillips (WP) was quoted on March 12th in the Westchester and Fairfield County Business Journals, "[Corporations join legal challenge to Defense of Marriage Act.](#)"

Ryan Nelson (LI), **David Islinger (MOR)**, and Michelle co-authored a chapter on Labor Arbitration Awards regarding sexual orientation, gender identity and expression in a BNA book entitled "Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation in the Workplace: A Practical Guide."

Michelle was a presenter on a panel seminar entitled "Out at Work" on March 7th at Adelphi University.

Ryan's article was published in the Hofstra Journal of Labor & Employment Law: Affirmative Action for LGBT Applicants & Employees: A Proposed Regulatory Scheme, 30 HOFSTRA J. LAB. & EMP. LAW 179 (2012).



Women's Interest Network

Led by Susan Corcoran (WP), Peggy Strange (HFD), and Samantha Hoffman (OC)

The first quarter of 2013 has proven to be an exciting time for WIN, with several great events.

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, kudos to the entire **D.C. Region office** on their successful January WIN event featuring Judy Smith. The whole office really rallied behind WIN and this event to make it an enormous success!

JL was in full force at this year's National Association of Women Lawyers ("NAWL") Mid-Year Meeting held at the Grand Floridian from February 14th to the 16th. **Stephanie Adler-Paindiris (ORL)** and **Lilly Moon (ORL)** were both on the planning committee for this event with Stephanie on the sponsorship committee and Lilly contributing to logistics. The theme was "Stretched and Balanced" and combined great educational CLE programs with helpful seminars on topics related to the stressful careers of lawyers. Jackson Lewis was a "Partner" sponsor and was prominently recognized in the program and on various signage during the meeting. Stephanie spoke as a panelist at the "Circuit Training" session which consisted of 10 lawyers each giving an update on a hot topic. JL attendees were Stephanie and Lilly as well as, **Jenna Rasif (MIA)**, **Zahira Diaz-Vazquez (ORL)** and **Amanda Ballard (TPA)**. There were over 200 lawyers in attendance, both from private practice and in house. The Mid-Year Meeting is just one example of the professional development opportunities NAWL presents for our attorneys. If you are interested in getting involved with NAWL, please reach out to **Kristin Bauer (DAL)**.



Stephanie, **Deverie Christensen (SF)**, and **Stephanie Lewis (GRE)** also kicked off JL's Master Series, where the firm can listen to the successes, what worked and didn't work for some of the firm's key rainmakers. First up was **Joan Ackerstein (BOS)** on February 21st who was fantastic, as was **Kevin Lauri (NYC)** on March 19th. We are looking forward to the remaining sessions as follows: **Mia Farber (LA)** on April 18th and **Felice Ekelman (NYC)** on May 16th.

On the awards and achievement front, **Misti Mukherjee (DC)** was featured in *Virginia Business* magazine as a "2012 Virginia Legal Elite" in the Labor and Employment category; Felice was named the recipient of 2013 Client Choice awards in both U.S. Employment and Labor and Employment and Labor, New York, and she was recognized at a reception in London hosted by the International Law Office (ILO) and Lexology. Congrats ladies!

And, Feliz dia de las mujeres! On March 8th, we all celebrated [International Women's Day](#), which has been observed (in some form at least) since 1909.



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