

Robinson+Cole

Spectrum

Our Diversity + Inclusion Newsletter



July 2018

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### MESSAGE FROM JOHN B. LYNCH, JR., KENDRA L. BERARDI, AND DANA M. HORTON

On behalf of the Firm's Diversity Committee and Women's Committee, we are pleased to publish this second edition of Robinson+Cole's *Spectrum*, a joint diversity and inclusion quarterly newsletter. *Spectrum* will continue to highlight the work that the firm's lawyers and staff do to make sure Robinson+Cole is a diverse, inclusive and welcoming firm. The Robinson+Cole community continues to work to strengthen the firm through our diversity and inclusion efforts.

During the past quarter, the former chair of our Women's Committee, Nuala E. Droney, received an appointment to serve as a Connecticut Superior Court Judge. This appointment is a great honor for both Nuala and the firm, and a very positive development for the State of Connecticut. As you likely know, Dana and Kendra have stepped up to serve as co-chairs of the Women's Committee. We want to thank Dana and Kendra and all of our fellow committee members for their efforts in carrying out their individual roles and increasing awareness, both internally and externally, of the diversity issues we face as a firm, as well as within the legal community at large.

As always, if you have any thoughts or ideas on how our Women's Committee and Diversity Committee can better serve the needs of the firm, please do not hesitate to contact us or another member of the committee.

## PAST EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



### **Robinson+Cole Lawyer Honored During 100 Women of Color Gala**

Robinson+Cole Business Litigation Group lawyer Kelly Frye Barnett was among the 2018 “100 Women of Color” recognized during an annual gala held at The Bushnell Center for Performing Arts in Hartford, Connecticut on March 16, 2018. The event recognizes the contributions made by women of color in business, education, entrepreneurship, entertainment, government, and public service and the impact they have made on the lives of people throughout the State of Connecticut and Western Massachusetts communities. [Read more](#)

### **Robinson+Cole Hosted Presentation on Female Education and Workplace Preparation**

Through the efforts of Robinson+Cole Public Finance Group lawyer Keisha S. Palmer, Dr. Meera Viswanathan gave a presentation titled “The Changing 21st Century Workplace and How the Ethel Walker School is Preparing Girls Today to Enter that Workplace,” on April 19, 2018, to members of the firm. Dr. Meera Viswanathan is Head of School at The Ethel Walker School. In addition to discussing the topic of women entering the workforce, Dr. Viswanathan discussed female education around the world, and specifically in Asia and the Middle East. After the presentation, Robinson+Cole members were encouraged to take part in a Q&A session regarding female education and workplace preparation.

### **Robinson+Cole Supports NCCJ Annual Human Relations Award Banquet**

Robinson+Cole supported the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) at its Annual Human Relation Award Banquet on April 25, 2018, at the Hartford Marriott Downtown. In attendance were firm attorneys John B. Lynch Jr., Stephen E. Goldman, Matthew J. Guanci Jr., James P. Ray, Christine E. Bromberg, Taylor A. Shea, and Patrick M. Birney, and our Chief Operating Officer, Howard K. Shafer.

The NCCJ is a human relations organization promoting inclusion and acceptance by providing education and advocacy while building communities that are respectful and just for all. The Annual Human Relations Award Banquet honors individuals and corporations for their high standard of responsible leadership and their contributions to help promote understanding, respect and cooperation in our increasingly diverse communities.

Mr. Shafer's daughter, Devon Shafer, was recognized as one of the two NCCJ Youth Honorees at the banquet.

### **Robinson+Cole Supports George W. Crawford Black Bar Association Annual Dinner**

Robinson+Cole was a sponsor of The George W. Crawford Black Bar Association Annual Dinner on May 3, 2018 at the Connecticut Convention Center. Sixteen Robinson+Cole attorneys attended the dinner.

Robinson+Cole Public Finance Group lawyer Christie D. Jean was installed on The George W. Crawford Black Bar Association's Executive Board during the dinner.

The George W. Crawford Black Bar Association (“Crawford”) is a volunteer organization comprised of

attorneys, judges, and law students in the State of Connecticut. Crawford represents the collective body of Black attorneys in Connecticut, including both the criminal and civil bar, public and private sector employees, and spanning across law firm, corporate and nonprofit affiliations.

### **Robinson+Cole Recognized for Significant and Longstanding Dedication to Pro Bono Work**



The Hartford County Bar Association (HCBA) presented Robinson+Cole with its 2018 Pro Bono Award during the organization's annual Law Day Ceremony at Hartford Superior Court on May 4, 2018. The firm was nominated for the distinction by Statewide Legal Services (SLS) of Connecticut.

"Robinson+Cole continually demonstrates significant and longstanding dedication to the delivery of pro bono legal services," said SLS Pro Bono Attorney Manager Ashleigh M. Backman. "The law firm has

shown distinguished leadership in its efforts to bridge Connecticut's access to civil justice gap affecting low-income men, women, and children in Connecticut." [Read more](#)

### **Robinson+Cole Supports LCD 2018 Edwin Archer Randolph Diversity Awards Dinner**

Robinson+Cole was a proud sponsor of the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity's (LCD) 2018 Edwin Archer Randolph Diversity Awards Dinner on May 17, 2018. At the dinner, Robinson+Cole Finance Group lawyer John B. Lynch Jr. was introduced as President-Elect of LCD. Mr. Lynch was accompanied at the Awards Dinner by fellow firm attorneys Eric D. Daniels and Peter R. Knight.

The mission of the LCD is to unite the resources, energy and commitment of the State's leading law firms, corporations, public sector entities, law schools, state and county bar associations, and affinity bar organizations in the joint mission of making Connecticut a more attractive place for attorneys of color, minorities, and women to practice law and find satisfying professional opportunities. The Awards Dinner honors community leaders who promote professional opportunities for lawyers of color.

### **Robinson+Cole Honored by Greater Hartford Legal Aid Foundation as a "Leader for Justice"**



The Greater Hartford Legal Aid Foundation (GHLAF) honored Robinson+Cole during its Celebrating Leaders for Justice event at the Pond House Café in West Hartford on May 30, 2018. The event honors leaders in the legal industry who have dedicated their time, expertise, and financial resources to help Greater Hartford Legal Aid (GHLA) end poverty and fight for justice in the Greater Hartford area. Stephen E. Goldman, Norman H. Roos, and Edward J. Heath are pictured on the left accepting the "Leader for Justice" recognition from GHLAF on behalf of

Robinson+Cole. Mr. Goldman and Mr. Roos serve on the GHLAF Board of Directors, while Mr. Heath serves as Vice President of the GHLA Board of Directors.

"Robinson+Cole has been an estimable partner to GHLA since its inception in 1958, helping GHLA to provide core legal aid to hundreds of thousands of clients over those decades," said GHLAF President Ricardo Anzaldúa. "Since The Foundation's incorporation, Robinson+Cole has been a

generous and consistent supporter, singlehandedly contributing over \$559,000 to support GHLA's work." [Read more](#)

### **Robinson+Cole Attorneys Present During NAPABA 2018 Northeast Regional Conference**

Business Litigation Group lawyers Dan A. Brody and Edward J. Heath were among the panelists that presented during a session entitled "When the Government Knocks On Your Door: Best Practices For Corporate Counsel When Responding to Grand Jury Subpoenas " as part of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) 2018 Northeast Regional Conference at Mohegan Sun Convention Center in Uncasville, Connecticut from June 8 to June 10, 2018. This year's conference was hosted by the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CAPABA) and brings together Asian Pacific American lawyers, judges, law professors, law students, and individuals interested in Asian Pacific American legal issues throughout the Northeast Region and other regions of the United States. The panel focused on the Grand Jury process, including rules surrounding Grand Jury secrecy; differentiating Grand Jury Subpoena compliance from traditional civil discovery, the potential criminal implications involved in the underlying charges, as well as potential pitfalls in compliance; and covered the compliance process, including the initial conversation with the prosecutor, the production of documents, and witness interviews. Mr. Brody currently serves on the CAPABA Board of Directors in the role of secretary.

### **RECENT DIVERSITY ACCOLADES**

- Meaghan Mary Cooper Named New Leader in the Law by the Connecticut Law Tribune
- Kendra L. Berardi Recognized by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly as an "Up and Coming Lawyer"
- Christine E. Bromberg Appointed to Connecticut Children's Medical Center Foundation Board of Directors
- Amanda Gordon Schreiber and Alisha N. Sullivan Appointed to Connecticut Bar Association Young Lawyers Section Leadership Roles
- Dana M. Horton Reappointed Chair of RIBA's Superior Court Bench/Bar Committee
- Jessica A.R. Hamilton and Jonathan E. Small Recognized by the Center for Children's Advocacy
- Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson Serves as Faculty Member at Association of Workplace Investigators Training Institute
- Nicole S. Mule Appointed to Hartford Marathon Foundation Board of Directors
- Kelly Frye Barnett and Dan A. Brody Present Training for Attorneys Looking to Assist Victims of Domestic Violence
- Christie D. Jean Elected to George W. Crawford Black Bar Association Executive Board
- Brian D. Nichols Elected to Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford Board of Trustees
- Noel B. Vales Elected Vice President / President-Elect of Filipino American Lawyers Association of New York
- John B. Lynch Jr. Elected President-Elect of Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity
- Abby M. Warren Elected to Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame Board of Trustees
- Kathleen E. Dion Named to BusinessWest's "40 Under Forty"

### **ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT**

In this edition of *Spectrum*, we are pleased to introduce a new feature, the Attorney Spotlight, which will highlight members of the firm who are actively engaged in furthering our efforts to strengthen and promote diversity and inclusion.



[Jeannine C. Jacobson](#), a resident in our Miami office, joined the firm in August 2017, along with eleven other attorneys formerly with Sedgwick LLP. She focuses her practice on litigation related to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA); managed care; insurance coverage; and life, health, disability, and accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefits. She is an experienced trial and appellate lawyer who has achieved favorable results for clients through alternative dispute resolution and in state and federal courts. Jeannine is a member of the firm's Health + Benefits Litigation Team. In her free time, she volunteers at The Posse Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preparing students from diverse backgrounds for leadership. Jeannine also led the firm's sponsorship of Kozyak Minority Mentoring Foundation's Passport To Success event on February 3, 2018, which provided a setting for students, lawyers, and judges to connect with a mentor or mentee. Jeannine recently joined the Diversity Committee.

Jeannine was motivated to attend law school after participating on the Cornell University's Speech and Debate team, and began her legal career as an appellate law clerk for Judge Martha Warner of Florida's Fourth District Court of Appeal. Her next position was focused on ERISA litigation, which she found combined her interest in the factual backgrounds of life, health, and disability cases with the research and brief-writing she enjoyed while clerking. She says the biggest lesson she's learned in her career is building positive relationships with everyone she encounters on the professional ladder, from judicial assistants to opposing counsel. When not working, Jeannine enjoys spending time with her husband and daughters, traveling as much as she can, and catching up on her (non-legal) book club reading.



[Noel B. Vales](#) joined the firm in May 2017 as a resident in our New York City office. Noel recently joined the firm's Diversity Committee. His practice is focused on real estate finance and affordable housing finance. He is a member of the firm's Real Estate + Development Group, and also serves as a Board Member for Filipino American Lawyers Association of New York.

Noel immigrated with his family to the United States from the Philippines when he was only two years old. He grew up in California and moved to New York City after college to begin his legal career. He says his professional motto is "treat people with respect," as he believes rudeness is both unnecessary and unproductive. His role models are too numerous to name, including lawyers, community leaders, philanthropists and entrepreneurs, but he notes that many were trailblazers in their discipline and all exemplified excellence in their field. Noel describes himself as a "foodie," who shares a passion with his wife for visiting restaurants, from hole-in-the-wall types all the way up to 3-Star Michelin fine dining in New York City. Just as in life, there's never a shortage of new places to explore.

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For additional information, please contact a chair or another member of the Diversity Committee or Women's Committee.



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