Robinson+Cole

2019 Spectrum Year-In-Review

Our Commitment to Diversity + Inclusion
Dear friends,

As the Chair of the firm’s Diversity + Inclusion Committee, I am pleased to share this year-in-review edition of Robinson+Cole’s Spectrum, our diversity and inclusion newsletter. As the firm marks and celebrates its 175th anniversary in 2020, a rare and exceptional accomplishment for any organization, Spectrum continues to highlight the work our lawyers and staff are doing to ensure that Robinson+Cole remains a community and professional leader as a diverse, inclusive and welcoming firm.

Our firm adopted a strategic plan in 2019 that affirms collaboration, inclusion and civility as core values of the firm. I want to thank my fellow committee members and firm leadership for their efforts in carrying out their individual roles and increasing awareness, both internally and externally, of the diversity issues we must face and address as a firm as well as within the larger legal community. We can’t cover all the great events and initiatives of 2019, but this provides offers a good overview of activities.

Robinson+Cole continues to be a leader in “Pipeline Programs” that are committed to enhancing diversity in the legal profession by cultivating exceptional talent, supporting and nurturing diverse law students and early-career lawyers. R+C is an engaged supporter of numerous “pipeline” initiatives.

Robinson+Cole is pleased to provide office space for the office of the Executive Director of the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity (LCD), an organization formed to answer the call and challenge for greater diversity in the legal profession. R+C is one of LCD’s 40 core organizations and I am honored to currently serve as LCD’s President.

As always, if you have any thoughts or ideas on how our Diversity + Inclusion Committee and Women’s Committee can better serve the needs of the firm, please to contact me or another member of the committee.

John B. Lynch Jr.
Partner, Diversity + Inclusion Committee Chair
Robinson+Cole has signed on to participate in the Diversity Lab’s Mansfield Rule 3.0, a year-long certification process developed to increase and measure the representation of diverse lawyers in leadership positions by broadening the pool of women, lawyers of color, lawyers with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ lawyers who are considered for significant governance roles, partner promotions, lateral partner and senior associate hiring and inclusion in business development initiatives. The tools and resources provided by Diversity Lab will allow the firm to continue to build on the initiative started several years ago with the Diversity Action Plan. The timing of this initiative is especially meaningful as we begin the 175th year of service to our clients and the community.

The Mansfield Rule was one of the winning ideas from the 2016 Women in Law Hackathon hosted by Diversity Lab, an incubator for innovative ideas and solutions that boost diversity and inclusion in law, in collaboration with Bloomberg Law and Stanford Law School. The certification is named after Arabella Mansfield, who in 1869 became the first woman to be admitted to practice law in the United States.

**R+C’s Diversity Action Plan Underscores Inclusive Recruiting and Promotion Opportunities**

In keeping with the spirit of the Mansfield Rule, our Diversity Action Plan affirms our commitment to creating equal opportunities for recognition and advancement, with a renewed focus on recruiting, hiring and promoting a diverse workforce, and special emphasis on our corps of lawyers. Additionally, the membership of our Diversity & Inclusion Committee and Women’s Committee is comprised of lawyers and staff from a cross-section of the firm to ensure a spectrum of perspectives and ideas.

The Diversity Action Plan sets forth our priorities, which include:

- Create equal opportunity for meaningful work and client and professional development for all attorneys, with special attention to assisting diverse lawyers in receiving a fair share of such opportunities. Educate and train our lawyers and staff to understand, respect and appreciate our differences and similarities.
- Set standards for promoting diversity and hold ourselves accountable for achieving our diversity goals.
- Increase the diversity within our partner ranks.
A Trio of Presidents:
Firm Lawyers Assume Leadership Roles in Nonprofit Organizations

Underscoring Robinson+Cole’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, Dan Brody, John Lynch and Noel Vales each head prominent, diversity-oriented professional organizations.

Dan Brody (Hartford) serves as president of the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CAPABA) for the 2019-2020 term. Dan was installed during the CAPABA Annual Gala Dinner on October 16, 2019 in New Haven, Connecticut. He is the youngest lawyer to assume the role of CAPABA President. An affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, CAPABA’s mission is to support Asian Pacific American attorneys and communities and those interested in Asian Pacific American legal issues throughout the state of Connecticut.

Noel Vales (New York) is currently serving his second term as Northeast Regional Governor of the National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA). According to the group’s website, NFALA is “the national voice” for the Filipino American legal profession” and “advocates for justice, civil rights, and equal opportunity for the Filipino American community.”

John Lynch (Hartford), chair of the firm’s Diversity + Inclusion Committee, currently serves as chair of the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity (LCD), an organization formed by lawyers to answer the call for greater diversity in the legal profession. Robinson+Cole holds membership in the LCD and is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive work environment. 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.

Robinson+Cole hosted a reception sponsored by the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CAPABA) honoring newly-elected Connecticut Attorney General, William Tong, on Thursday evening, March 14, 2019. Business Litigation Group lawyer Dan Brody, President and member of the board of directors of CAPABA, welcomed some 50 attendees, including judges, general counsels, in-house counsels, members of the Attorney General’s office, and attorneys from across the state, offering a few remarks about the historic nature of the evening.

Attorney General Tong is the first Asian-American elected to the office in Connecticut, and only the second in the nation. He spoke about his background as an immigrant, sharing his thoughts on the importance of diversity and his hopes for his work in the office. CAPABA is the Connecticut affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), an organization that is the voice of more than 40,000 Asian Pacific American attorneys nationwide through over 45 chapters and affiliates.
Miami Office Supports the Posse Foundation’s Work

R+C’s Miami office sponsored the Posse Foundation’s “Power of 10 event,” a fundraising evening attended by Jeannine Jacobson (Miami), Gene Murphy (Miami), Latanae Parker (Miami) and Stephanie Williams (Miami). The nationwide, nonprofit Posse Foundation organizes volunteers to mentor and coach nominated high school students who have demonstrated leadership and academic potential and achievement. Jeannine has been involved since 2010, as both a resumé coach and Dynamic Assessment Process volunteer, helping Posse staff cull the hundreds of hopeful applicants down to the 60 or so who will be accepted into the rigorous local program. Latanae served last year as a writing coach, working one-on-one with a Posse scholar on writing skills to help bolster college application essays and other assignments.

One such former Posse Foundation scholar and alumna is Stephani Roman (Hartford), a graduate of UConn Law and now an Insurance + Reinsurance associate in the Hartford office. Stephani graduated from high school in Manhattan and then matriculated to Trinity College. She was one of the ten people in her local New York City Posse to attend Trinity on a full, four-year Foundation scholarship. She describes coming to Hartford as a “huge culture shock,” and credits the mentoring and her network of Posse friends, coming as they did from her same urban background and experience in the program, as being a beneficial support system. “I would not be here today without Posse,” she says. “It was a very influential part of my development.”

YWCA “Stand Against Racism”

In 2019, the firm was pleased to support once again the YWCA’s “Stand Against Racism” campaign, which emphasizes the importance of civic engagement. The YWCA’s focus in this campaign is to eliminate racism, empower women, stand for social justice, help families, and build stronger communities.

The 14th Annual “Stand Against Racism” will take place April 23-26, 2020, raising awareness about the impact of institutional and structural racism. YWCA associations and allied groups are encouraged to focus their events and organizing on the myriad of racial justice issues that pose barriers to civic engagement for communities of color. Voting rights, census participation, and civic engagement are, and have always been, core components of racial justice. As civil rights continue to be eroded for communities of color, it is more important than ever to support full access and engagement in the political process. Most important, they invite local supporters to explore how the tools of civic engagement can advance the work of justice in their own communities and empower people of color.

Across the country, “Stand Against Racism” provides the opportunity to unite behind an issue that inspires activism and building community among those who work to educate, advocate and promote racial justice. Labor, Employment, Benefits + Immigration partner, Britt-Marie Cole-Johnson, currently serves on the YWCA Hartford Region Board of Directors.
Robinson+Cole
Women of Distinction

Robinson+Cole's Women's Committee is dedicated to the promotion, retention and recruitment of women lawyers. We strive to maintain an environment that encourages mentoring and networking. The Committee proudly supports women lawyers in pursuing and accomplishing their professional goals, and becoming leaders in a changing legal landscape.

The firm's women lawyers continue to distinguish themselves both as industry leaders and in the legal community. Here is a brief overview of some recent accomplishments and awards.

Litigation Section co-chair Rhonda Tobin (Hartford) earned Benchmark Litigation’s “Local Litigation Star” honor and was also named one of the publication’s “Top 250 Women in Litigation for 2019” for the fifth consecutive year. Rhonda was also the only female litigator chosen in the state of Connecticut for 2019. Local litigation stars reflect lawyers who are consistently recommended as reputable and effective litigators by peers and clients.

Intellectual Property + Technology Group chair Jackie Scheib (Hartford) has been named an IP Star in the 2019/20 edition of “IP STARS,” published by Managing Intellectual Property, one of the industry's leading publications. Honorees are recognized as “the top practitioners in private practice who have performed exceptionally well for their clients and firms in the past year.” Jackie was highlighted for her work in the area of IP transactions as well as several Trade Mark categories, including strategy and counseling as well as litigation. The IP Stars were selected through a rigorous process and weighted review of information that included interviews and surveys of partners and law firms across the country.

Kendra Berardi
Co-chair

Dana Horton
Co-chair

Megan Baroni
Vice co-chair

Rachel Kushel
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Data Privacy + Cybersecurity Team lawyer **Linn Freedman** (Providence) was honored by Roger Williams University School of Law (RWU Law) with a classroom dedication on November 1, 2019. Seminar Room 279 in Bristol was named the Linn Foster Freedman Esq. Classroom in recognition of Linn’s longtime commitment to RWU Law as a member of the board of directors and a philanthropist. She is one of just four lawyers to receive a classroom dedication. In a recent article published by the Law School, titled “Among the Trailblazers,” RWU Law School Dean, Michael J. Yelnosky, writes that he is thrilled to name the classroom in Linn’s honor and that he hopes “students will draw some inspiration from her work and appreciate all that she has done for our law school.”

Real Estate + Development Group lawyers **Candace Cunningham** (Hartford) and **Mandy Eckhoff** (Boston) attended the American College of Mortgage Attorneys (ACMA) Annual Meeting in September in Monterey, California. At the meeting, Candace was appointed co-chair of the ACMA Title Insurance Committee. She also served as the moderator and a panelist for a program titled “The New (and Improved?) ALTA Title Policies: Are You Ready for Them?” Mandy was installed as an ACMA Fellow.

Business Litigation Group lawyer **Kate Dion** (Hartford) was presented with the Ascending Alumni Award and the Distinguished Law Review Alumni Award from Western New England University (WNE) School of Law during the Annual Alumni Recognition Reception in Springfield, Massachusetts on October 4, 2019. The Ascending Alumni Award spotlights the achievements of new alumni who graduated from the WNE School of Law within the past 10 years. Honorees have demonstrated leadership in their chosen field and/or in the community, and stand out from their peers in the drive and potential they have shown. The Distinguished Law Review Alumni Award is presented annually to a Law Review alumnus/na in recognition of outstanding professional accomplishments and/or contributions to the Western New England University School of Law.

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Environmental, Energy + Telecommunications Group lawyer **Megan E. Baroni** (Stamford) was among the “100 Women Who Inspire Us” recognized during the 2019 Women in Litigation Joint CLE Conference held in Chicago, Illinois from November 13-15, 2019. Presented by the American Bar Association Section of Litigation, the conference commenced the Section’s year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, which guarantees and protects women’s constitutional right to vote. The event highlighted women successfully leading in the courtroom, in the judiciary, and in their profession. Megan is co-chair of the Section’s Environmental & Energy Litigation Committee.
Labor and Employment Group lawyer, Abby Warren (Hartford), was named a New Leader in the Law at the Connecticut Law Tribune’s 2019 Connecticut Legal Awards “Professional Excellence” event on May 16, 2019 at the Bond Ballroom in Hartford. This distinction spotlights lawyers under the age of 40 who have excelled in the courtroom, in client service and cultivation, in service to bar associations, and/or in performing pro bono work or community service in a volunteer capacity.

2019 NAPABA Northeast Conference

Real Estate + Development Group member Noel B. Vales (New York) and Business Transactions Group member Anna Jinhua Wang (New York) attended the 2019 NAPABA Northeast Regional/AABANY Fall Conference at Fordham University Law School on September 21, 2019. The conference, “United in Action and Vision: Towards 2020 Together,” marked the 10th anniversary of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association’s (NAPABA) Fall Conference as well as Asian American Bar Association of New York’s (AABANY) 30th anniversary. 450 professionals attended the conference, which offered a full day of CLE and non-CLE programs on a wide range of cutting-edge topics, as well as special programs including a Diversity Career Fair & Expo, an In-House Counsel Forum, and Pitch Sessions.

Highlights of the conference included a special screening of the award-winning documentary, “And Then They Came for Us.” The film examines the story of Executive Order 9066 and the internment of 120,000 Japanese-Americans during World War II, highlighting the landmark Korematsu v. United States case and its relation to the civil rights issues that people of color and under-represented communities face today. Noel and Anna had the opportunity to meet Dale Minami, Fred Korematsu’s lawyer, and Abby Ginzberg, the director of the documentary.

The conference concluded with a reception and the presentation of the Norman Lau Kee Trailblazer Award, given to Parkin Lee, Senior Vice President and Chief Legal Officer of Rockefeller Group, who has made a lasting impact on the Asian Pacific American community through his dedication and commitment.
Anna Jinhua Wang Is Recognized for Pro Bono Activities

Business Transactions Group member Anna Jinhua Wang (New York) was highlighted as a September Pro Bono Clinic Volunteer by the Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY). Anna was among 31 volunteer lawyers and interpreters who gave their time to the monthly pro bono clinic offered by its Pro Bono & Community Service Committee, and which was designed to help expand access to justice for underserved Asian American New Yorkers. The volunteers gave 23 clients legal advice and referrals to high-quality, culturally sensitive, and linguistically competent legal services. Since the monthly clinics began in 2015, hundreds of low-income community members have received thoughtful advice and appropriate legal referral from AABANY members, helping to expand access to justice for underserved Asian American New Yorkers.

Britt-Marie Cole-Johnson Selected as a Nation’s Best Honoree by Lawyers of Color

Labor, Employment, Benefits + Immigration Group partner Britt-Marie Cole-Johnson (Hartford) was selected for inclusion among the Lawyers of Color’s inaugural Nation’s Best in the Eastern Region. Honorees were selected for their prominence and distinction in their field, their noteworthy accomplishments, and their commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Lawyers of Color is a nonprofit organization devoted to promoting diversity in the legal profession and advancing democracy and equality in marginalized communities.

Britt-Marie focuses her practice on counseling private sector employers, ranging from Fortune 500 and NYSE companies, multi-national corporations and nonprofit organizations to educational institutions and manufacturers, in all areas of employment law, with an emphasis on handling high-risk personnel issues and managing and conducting highly sensitive workplace investigations as well as compliance and training.
New Fall Class

R+C's 2019 Fall Associate Class is comprised of five outstanding women. They are Kristen Elia (Boston University), part of the Real Estate and Development Group in the Boston office; Kayla O'Leary (Boston University), a member of the Business Transactions Group in Hartford; Stephani Roman (University of Connecticut), in the Insurance + Reinsurance Group in Hartford; Jenna Scoville (Cornell University), a member of the Business Litigation Group in Hartford; and Emily Zaklukiewicz (Stetson University), in the Labor, Employment, Benefits + Immigration Group. We are pleased to welcome them to the firm!

George C. Hastings Community Service Award

The 4th Annual George C. Hastings Community Service Award was presented to Harc, a nonprofit agency dedicated to helping people with intellectual disability and their families enjoy lives of quality, inclusion and dignity by providing support, education and advocacy. Harc was founded in 1951, and today provides a lifetime of special needs support through an array of programs, services and respite care for individuals throughout North Central Connecticut.

The George C. Hastings Community Service Award bears the name of the firm’s former partner, George Hastings, who practiced here from 1957 until his retirement in 1995, and was a prolific community leader for more than 60 years. The award is presented to a community service organization that has made an outstanding contribution to serving Greater Hartford.

In 1985, Robinson+Cole's Hartford office became the first professional site in Hartford to welcome and host a Harc supported-employment program, initiating an ongoing, mutually beneficial relationship that underscores the firm's commitment to the important role Harc plays in the community.
Sharone Kornman speaks about her journey to her parents’ pre-World War II homes.

Insurance + Reinsurance Group lawyer Sharone Kornman (Hartford) offered a lunchtime presentation, “Journey Back in Time,” on September 25, 2019. She recounted her July 2019 journey with her husband, Paul, and brother, Randy Frisch, to her parents’ pre-World War II homes in Drohobycz and Kolomyia, Poland. (Following the geo-political realignments after the war, both cities are now part of Ukraine.) Sharone was joined in this moving hour by her mother, Irene (Bienstock) Frisch, who shared some of her experiences growing up and surviving the Holocaust in Poland, and her eventual immigration to the United States, where she met and married Sharone’s father, Eugene Frisch, also a Holocaust survivor, in 1962. Also joining them was family friend and fellow survivor, Dr. Leon Chameides. Irene and Leon (and their families) are alive today thanks to very kind and courageous people.

Sharone is a founding member and Secretary of Voices of Hope (VOH), a group of children of Holocaust survivors dedicated to preserving their families’ stories and educating about genocide.
Our Involvement

Massachusetts Conference for Women
12/11/19  15th Annual Massachusetts Conference for Women

South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut (SABAC)
11/21/19  13th Annual Awards Dinner

Women’s Bar Association Law Student Committee
11/14/19  “Welcome Back” Event

National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ)
11/13/19  “Brotherhood/Sisterhood Citation” Award Dinner

American Bar Association (ABA) Women in Litigation
11/13/19  2019 Women in Litigation Joint CLE Conference

Westchester Women’s Bar Association (WWBA)
11/4/19  “What’s It Worth To You: Valuation of Businesses in Divorce and Commercial Settings”

Connecticut Women’s Hall of Fame
11/4/19  26th Annual Induction Ceremony and Celebration

Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association
10/24/19  2019 Annual Awards & Dinner

Connecticut Women’s Education and Legal Fund
10/1/19  “One Woman Makes a Difference” Annual Awards Dinner

New England Women in Energy and the Environments
7/24/19  2019 “Women Shaping the Agenda”

Florida Association for Women Lawyers (MDFAWL)
6/4/19  39th Annual Installation & Awards Dinner

The Filipino American Lawyers Association
5/30/19  Annual Awards & Dinner & Conference

The Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity (LCD)
5/23/19  15th Anniversary Celebration

Red Cross New York
5/19/19  “Women Who Lead” Luncheon

American Bar Association (ABA) Young Lawyer’s Section
5/14/19  “Hot Topics in Employment: Discrimination and Harassment”

George W. Crawford Black Bar Association
5/8/19  Crawford Annual Dinner 2019

Robinson+Cole’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee
5/6/19  Firm-wide Viewing of: “A Class Divided”

Women’s Fund of Rhode Island
5/1/19  “Women Leading Change: Women in STEAM”

YWCA Hartford Region
4/17/19  “24th Annual in the Company of Women” Luncheon

Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CAPABA)
3/14/19  Reception with Attorney General Tong
Robinson+Cole is committed to fostering a welcoming and inclusive work environment in which the diverse backgrounds of all of our lawyers and other professionals are respected and each individual is empowered to succeed. For Robinson+Cole, diversity means embracing the full spectrum of perspectives, ideas and lifestyles of the people who make up our firm, our clients, and the communities we serve.

Our culture of collaboration, civility and inclusion is the foundation of our ability to learn from the past and embrace changes as new opportunities.