

Robinson+Cole

Spectrum

Our Diversity + Inclusion Newsletter



October 2018

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

On behalf of the firm's Women's Committee and Diversity Committee, we are pleased to publish this third edition of Robinson+Cole's *Spectrum*, a joint diversity and inclusion quarterly newsletter. *Spectrum* will continue to highlight the work our lawyers and staff are doing 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 two months, John, Kendra and Dana have been working collaboratively on a section of programming for the all-attorney retreat this November. They also helped organize and facilitate three showings of the *RBG*, featuring U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Three screenings were presented in our Hartford, Boston, and New York offices. The screenings were very successful as client/potential client gatherings and networking events. John, Kendra and Dana are grateful to Cara Vecchione, who brought this opportunity to the Diversity and Women's Committee's attention, and Larry Klein, for his support in helping make this idea a reality.

As always, if you have 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.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Women's Committee followed up on the feedback received in a recent survey of women attorneys at Robinson+Cole by setting up a task force to make recommendations about improving the application of the firm's Parental Leave Policy. Rachel Kushel will present on the topic at the Attorneys' retreat in November.

## **PAST EVENT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **National Filipino American Lawyers Association Mid-Year Summit**

National Filipino American Lawyers Association (NFALA) held its Mid-Year Leadership Summit from July 27 to July 29, 2018, in Seattle, Washington. Real Estate attorney Noel Vales serves as the organization's Northeast Regional Governor and attended the summit. The NFALA Mid-Year Leadership Summit is an annual forum that convenes leaders of the Filipino American legal community to engage in strategic planning sessions, share resources, and strengthen relationships across all the regions that comprise NFALA's national network of attorneys, judges, law students, and legal academics.

### **Robinson+Cole Presents Annual Awards for Outstanding Contributions**

The Pro Bono Award is presented by the firm's Pro Bono Committee and honors individuals for their outstanding commitment to Robinson+Cole's pro bono initiative. This year, Tyler Butts, Jonathan Small, and Elizabeth Wright were recognized. Tyler was honored for his work on a case involving the State of Connecticut's seizure of an inmate's civil rights judgment. His representation resulted in a favorable ruling on behalf of prison inmate Rashad Williams. Jonathan was recognized for his volunteer work with the Center for Children's Advocacy representing immigrant children on a pro bono basis as well as for his coordination of a major training program for lawyers interested in representing immigrant children seeking Special Immigrant Juvenile Status in the United States. Elizabeth was honored for similar volunteer work for Kids In Need of Defense (KIND).

The Robinson+Cole Mentor of the Year Award recognizes and honors lawyers throughout the firm for their outstanding guidance, support, and encouragement of fellow lawyers in their pursuit of professional growth. The honor was presented to four lawyers this year: Chris Kehoe, Rachel Kushel, Keisha Palmer, and Earl Phillips.

Lastly, the Diversity and Inclusion Award was presented to Dave Panico and Mike Wirvin. Dave was honored for his active support of diversity and inclusion efforts through his attendance at many firm-sponsored diversity events and active sponsorship of diverse attorneys. Michael was recognized for his work in support of diversity and inclusion efforts, including mentoring and leadership in the LGBTQ area and the mentoring of women lawyers in Robinson+Cole's Boston and Providence offices. View [press release](#).

### **Connecticut Bar Association and Connecticut Bar Foundation's 2nd Annual Diversity Symposium**

On September 7, 2018, the Connecticut Bar Association and Connecticut Bar Foundation co-sponsored the 2nd Annual Diversity and Inclusion Symposium at UConn Law School. At the event, panelists discussed the obligation to accommodate under state and federal law, strategies for improving accessibility and removing barriers to and within the profession, and resources to help ensure organizations maintain an inclusive environment for lawyers and law students with disabilities. John Lynch represented the firm at the symposium.

### **The South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut's 12th Annual Awards Dinner**

Robinson+Cole supported the South Asian Bar Association of Connecticut's (SABAC) 12th Annual Awards Dinner held on September 20, 2018, at the Hilton Hartford. Firm attorneys Dan Brody, Mike Enright, John Lynch, Lisa Riccio, Je'Quana Orr, Keisha Palmer, Christie Jean, and Abby Warren attended the event.

SABAC serves as a resource to South Asian lawyers, legal professionals, and law students. The dinner featured the Honorable Gurbir S. Grewal as the keynote speaker and recipient of the 2018 Distinguished Legal Professional Award.

### **The George W. Crawford Black Bar Association Fall 2018 Professional Development Panel Discussion**

The George W. Crawford Black Bar Association ("Crawford") held a professional development panel discussion titled "Strategic Success: Working Hard and Working Smart" on September 26, 2018. Attorneys were invited to engage with panelists working in a range of areas within the legal field. Firm attorneys Jason DePatie, Nicole Mulé, James Nault, Je'Quana Orr, and Lisa Riccio attended the panel, along with Denise Jaffe and summer associate Stephani Roman.

Crawford is a volunteer state-wide organization 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.

### **Women's Committee Presents "Lunch and Learn with Jackie Scheib"**

On September 20, 2018, Robinson+Cole's Women's Committee presented a "Lunch and Learn" with Jacqueline Pennino Scheib, chair of the firm's Intellectual Property and Technology Group. Members of the Women's Committee and Women's Initiative were invited to lunch and to learn about Jackie's path to success.

During the event, Jackie described working across a wide range of practice groups after starting with Corporate Mergers & Acquisitions, and the ways in which she helped build the Intellectual Property Group. She shared her insights on useful organizational skills and the importance of having a stable work/life balance. One helpful tool Jackie shared with the attendees is the 1-3-5 rule, which emphasizes tackling one big project, three medium projects, and five small projects every day to work efficiently while creating a sense of accomplishment.

### **RBG Screening**

Over the last month, Robinson+Cole's Women's Committee hosted three screenings of the documentary *RBG* in our New York, Hartford, and Boston offices. Clients joined attorneys in an evening of movie-style food watching the recently released documentary about the life and career of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The first showing in New York took place on September 20, with 55 attendees. Hartford had a total of 35 guests at the viewing on September 27, while 47 attended the final showing in Boston on October 10. Special thanks to Cara Vecchione, Rachel Kushel, and Kendra Berardi for planning these showings in New York, Hartford, and Boston, respectively.

### **USLFG Diversity and Inclusion Group Meeting and Joint Meeting with USLFG Women's Committee at Lane Powell Offices in Seattle**

Finance attorney John Lynch represented the firm at the United States Law Firm Group's Diversity and Inclusion Group annual meeting on October 9, 2018. John will also represent the firm at a joint meeting between the USLFG Diversity and Inclusion Group and the USLFG Women's Committee this

November at the Seattle offices of Lane Powell.

### **Robinson+Cole New York Office Hosts Filipino American Lawyers Association Reception**

The Filipino American Lawyers Association of New York (FALA) hosted a small reception of FALA New York In-House Counsel and Law Firm Partners at Robinson+Cole's New York office on October 17, 2018. The event was titled "FALANY Feud: FALA New York's In-House Counsel/Partners Trivia Competition." Real Estate attorney Noel Vales currently is the President-Elect of FALA New York.

### **RECENT DIVERSITY ACCOLADES**

- Rhonda Tobin Among Benchmark Litigation's Top 250 Women in Litigation
- Amanda Eckhoff Appointed to New England Center and Home for Veterans Board of Directors
- Candace Cunningham Appointed Vice-Chair of ACMA Committee
- Britt-Marie Cole-Johnson Named to Hartford Business Journal's "40 Under Forty"
- Je'Quana Orr and Keisha Palmer featured in UConn Today Article on Summer Mock Trial Program
- Christie Jean presented at the NEBSA Connecticut Academic Retreat
- Christie Jean, as Chair of the Judicial Diversity Committee for George W. Crawford Black Bar Association, planned the Celebration of Ascension event on 10/17, along with the "How to Be a Law Clerk" event on 10/22

### **ATTORNEY SPOTLIGHT**

The Attorney Spotlight highlights members of the firm who are actively engaged in furthering our efforts to strengthen and promote diversity and inclusion.



[Linda L. Morkan](#), chair of the firm's Appellate Practice Team, celebrated her 30th anniversary at Robinson+Cole this month. Linda joined the firm as a summer associate in 1986 and returned after her clerkship in 1988. As an undergraduate majoring in Criminal Justice, she thought she was going to be a police officer, until one of her close friends convinced her she belonged in law school instead of a police cruiser.

Linda has earned a reputation as a strong appellate advocate, which she attributes to working hard at honing her skills and learning persuasive techniques. When asked about a role model, Linda shared that – through her involvement in community and charitable activities – she is forever meeting ordinary people doing extraordinary things, and it is these people who inspire her the most. A longtime fan of Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, Linda has attended well over a hundred concerts, traveling as far as Belfast, Ireland, to catch a show.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October 25** – Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association's 25th Annual Awards Celebration
- **November 5** – Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame Dinner
- **November 6** – Noel Vales and Soo Kim are volunteering for the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund in connection with their Asian American Exit Poll and Poll Monitoring Project on election day. This program is designed to ensure compliance with election laws such as the Voting Rights Act, and to report any cases of voter disenfranchisement, particularly with respect to language rights and bilingual ballot requirements.
- **November 8** – National Filipino American Lawyers Association Annual Installation Gala Dinner in Chicago
  
- **November 8** – Robinson+Cole will host the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association November Membership Meeting in our Hartford office. At the Membership Meeting, there will be a presentation from the Executive Director of Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers-Connecticut, Inc., who will speak on the topic of professional integrity, personal health and life balance. The presentation will be worth one CLE Ethics Credit. Robinson+Cole attorneys are invited to attend the meeting and presentation.

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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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