

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

RICHARDS
LAYTON &
FINGER
125 YEARS



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT — *Lisa A. Schmidt*



We are very pleased to share with you this summary report of activities of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee. Our committee's charge is to assist the firm as it works to increase diversity among its employees and to promote inclusive policies and practices within the firm. This means that the committee works to help the firm identify its policies and goals and then realize them. At the same time, the committee also works more broadly to support the firm and its people as they engage in activities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession and in our communities.

This report discusses several facets of the firm's and the committee's work. And as you will see, that work is based on our people, and the tremendous dedication and leadership our colleagues have demonstrated as they engage, volunteer, and inspire. We are so thankful for all of their efforts, and we are very proud to share them with you in this report.

Doneene Keemer Damon
Chair of Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2024-25

Marcos A. Ramos
Chair of Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2023-24

Katharine Lester Mowery
Vice Chair of Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2024-25

Monica M. Ayres
Vice Chair of Diversity and Inclusion Committee, 2023-24

Danielle A. Nowaczyk
Director of Attorney Development

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHIEF DIVERSITY DIRECTOR — *Doneene Keemer Damon*



Diversity, equity, and inclusion are core commitments at Richards, Layton & Finger. These commitments have been there from the start: we were the first major Delaware law firm with a female partner, the first with an African American partner, the first with a South Asian partner, and one of the first with a Hispanic partner. I am proud to have served as the firm's first woman president and as the first African American to lead a major Delaware law firm. And it has been my honor to serve as the firm's first Chief Diversity Director.

Our firm remains focused on broadening and deepening our DE&I strategy. The strategy includes (1) ensuring we cast a wide net to increase our opportunity to recruit qualified law students; (2) creating a professional development plan to improve retention and upward mobility within the firm;

(3) creating a pipeline of diverse talent throughout our firm; and (4) working with the broader legal community to increase diversity in the Delaware bar. But within all of this, we continue to prioritize the "I" in our DE&I strategy.

The "I" in our DE&I strategy is our driver and the metric we measure. Inclusion is foundational to an effective DE&I strategy. At its core, inclusion is about removing barriers and giving equal access and opportunities to all. An inclusive workplace is one in which the working culture and environment recognizes, appreciates, and effectively utilizes the talents, skills, and perspectives of every employee to achieve the organization's objectives and mission, and, in doing so, connects each employee to the organization. In essence, we prioritize a culture of belonging. We will continue to focus on and prioritize employee well-being, supporting each person to be the best versions of themselves. We will also continue to support and highlight the development and enhanced career achievements and progression of every member of the firm.

An effective DE&I strategy requires a collective effort from us all. It will require us to trust one another, to be empathetic with one another, to learn from one another, and to grow with one another. I am excited about what the future holds for us as a firm and the role Richards, Layton & Finger will play to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. Thank you for your partnership in this important work.

OUR COMMITTEE CHAIRS

For this year's annual report, we have moved from a fiscal year to a calendar year. Therefore, this report encompasses D&I events from July 2023 through December 2024.



Thank you for taking a few moments to review our most recent report on committee and firm activities related to diversity and inclusion at Richards Layton. As a committee, we support the firm as it supports others, both within and outside the firm. Our work is longstanding, multi-faceted, and ever-evolving, as we engage to identify ways to positively impact our firm and community. Hopefully, this report will give you a good sense of the breadth of our firm's activities and, as importantly, the involvement in these activities of so many people here at the firm, for which we are deeply grateful. We would be happy to speak with you about our firm's activities, and until such time, we wish each of you the best.

Doneene Keemer Damon
— Chair, 2024-25

Marcos A. Ramos
— Chair, 2023-24

Katharine Lester Mowery
— Vice Chair, 2024-25

Monica M. Ayres
— Vice Chair, 2023-24



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

— *Firm's Mission*

The firm's mission is to recruit the finest available talent and then focus on their development, so that each person can share the best of what they are for the benefit of our firm, our clients, and our community. Diversity and inclusion are core institutional commitments. They reflect our conviction that talent comes in every form and everyone benefits when we work in an inclusive manner as we continuously develop our firm into what it will be in the future.

— *Diversity and Inclusion Committee's Focus*

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is dedicated to promoting a workplace that embraces diversity at all levels. The committee focuses on assisting the firm's efforts to increase diversity among its employees and to promote inclusive policies and practices within the firm. Consistent with our longstanding commitment to excellence, diversity is an essential component of our firm. The firm is committed to inclusion and the principle that the firm and our clients benefit from a workplace that promotes each individual's ability to learn, grow, and lead in their profession.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2023-2024



Doneene Damon
Immediate Past President
and Chief Diversity Director,
Chair, 2024-25



Marcos Ramos
Director, Chair, 2023-24



Katharine Lester Mowery
Director, Vice Chair, 2024-25



Monica Ayres
Director, Vice Chair, 2023-24



Lisa Schmidt
President



Paul Heath
Executive Vice President



Jeffrey Moyer
Senior Vice President



Catherine Dearlove
Director



Gina Edwards
Director of Human Resources



Anne Foster
Director



Jennifer Jauffret
Director



Beth Gansen Knight
Director



Melissa Lennon
Chief Legal Talent Officer



Claire Love
Director



Matthew Murphy
Director



Stephanie Norman
Director



Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk
Director of Attorney Development



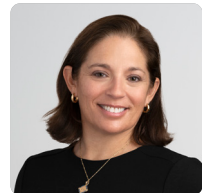
Joshua Novak
Director



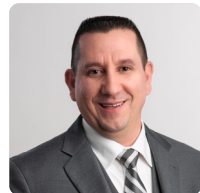
Mark Purpura
Director



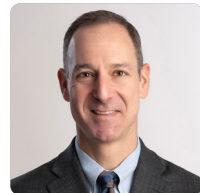
Srinivas Raju
Director



Laura Lubin Rossi
Chief Marketing &
Communications Officer



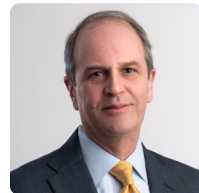
John Seraydarian
Director



Russell Silberglied
Director



Sara Wagner
Director



William Yemc
Director

MEMBERSHIPS

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL ON LEGAL DIVERSITY (LCLD)



The firm is a member of the **Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)**, whose mission is to promote inclusivity in order to enhance the recruitment, retention, and advancement of attorneys of diverse backgrounds within the legal profession.

UNITED STATES LAW FIRM GROUP (USLFG)



The firm is a member of the **United States Law Firm Group (USLFG)** and an active participant in its **Diversity & Inclusion** and **Women Lawyers Committees**. The USLFG, along with its committees, serves as a think tank on best practices for the member law firms throughout the United States.

LEX MUNDI



The firm is proud to be the Delaware member firm of **Lex Mundi**, which is comprised of more than 150 member law firms spanning 100 countries across the globe. The firm is involved with **Lex Mundi's Diversity and Inclusion Initiative, Women's Initiative Network to Success (LM WINS)**, which focuses on promoting, supporting, and advancing women in Lex Mundi's member firms.

VAULT



The firm is a **Vault** Gold Member and participates in its annual Diversity, Equity & Inclusion survey, which reinforces its mission of enhancing and expanding diversity programming and career resources for law students and attorneys seeking lateral career moves.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR LAW PLACEMENT (NALP)



NALP is an association of over 2,500 legal career professionals who advise law students, lawyers, law offices, and law schools in North America and beyond. NALP believes in fairness, facts, and the power of a diverse community. The firm regularly engages with NALP through its annual surveys, conferences, and trainings.

LOCAL MEMBERSHIPS

The D&I Committee supports the firm's involvement in a wide variety of local organizations, including

- DE&I Diversity Clerkship Subcommittee of the Delaware State Bar Association (DSBA)
- Multicultural Judges & Lawyers Section of the DSBA
- Delaware Barristers Association
- Delaware Hispanic Bar Association
- South Asian Bar Association of Delaware
- LGBTQ+ Section of the DSBA
- Women & the Law Section of the DSBA

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL ON LEGAL DIVERSITY INVOLVEMENT

LCLD'S ANNUAL MEETING

Doneene Damon and **Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk** attended the LCLD's annual meeting in September 2024. The LCLD's annual meeting provides the firm with the opportunity to learn from other LCLD members and their respective diversity and inclusion practices, and to contribute to the profession's commitment to continually evolve and improve in these areas.

LCLD SUCCESS IN LAW SCHOOL MENTORING PROGRAM

The firm also participates in the LCLD's Success in Law School Mentoring Program, which matches attorneys at LCLD member organizations with 1L students of diverse backgrounds. The Mentoring Program provides guidance and support to law students during their first year of law school and beyond.

The firm's past and current LCLD mentors include **Paul Altman**, **Jessey Blau**, **Doneene Damon**, **Andrea Filbeck**, **Kevin Gross**, **Maya Jackson**, **Jonathan Kaplowitz**, **Philip Micha**, **Melissa Lennon**, **Vicky Liu**, **Katharine Lester Mowery**, **Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk**, **Marcos Ramos**, **Matthew Schwalm**, **Frank Sun**, **Cassandra Thompson**, and **Sara Wagner**, among others.

LCLD ALUMNI

Richards Layton LCLD alumnus **Frank Sun** participated in the **LCLD's 13th Annual Alumni Leadership Symposium** in Seattle in June 2024.

LCLD 1L SCHOLARS

The D&I Committee supports the firm's commitment to pipeline programs that create more opportunities for talent, including diverse talent, and encourages traditionally underrepresented individuals to consider and commit to a career in the legal profession. The firm's LCLD-related 1L Scholars Program is an excellent example of the firm's actualization of its commitment in this area. Under the 1L Scholars Program, the firm hires 1L students for our summer program and provides an opportunity for each 1L Scholar to return to the firm as a 2L participant in its summer program and to become a new attorney hire.

LCLD FELLOWS AND PATHFINDERS PROGRAMS

Nicole Henry was nominated by the firm and accepted into the **2024 LCLD Fellows Program**, and **Anastasia Bowes** and **Maya Jackson** were nominated and accepted into the **2024 LCLD Pathfinders Program**. The LCLD developed these programs to recognize and serve as a platform for attorneys' continued professional growth. The Fellows Program, designed for mid-career attorneys, and the Pathfinder Program, for early-career attorneys, offer tools and strategies focused on professional and personal development, relationship-building, and leadership training. **Marcos Ramos** serves as the firm's program facilitator and mentor for the participating attorneys.



► Kinsey Lenehan was an LCLD Pathfinder and Atlas Award winner



► From left: Maya Jackson, Nicole Henry, and Anastasia Bowes at the LCLD Fellows and Pathfinders Conferences in San Diego, CA February 21-23, 2024



► LCLD Fellow Nicole Henry, LCLD Pathfinder Anastasia Bowes, and Maya Jackson attended the LCLD Fellows and Pathfinders Conferences in Washington, D.C., October 8-10, 2024



WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

The Women's Initiative fosters the professional development of our attorneys and promotes a sense of community that strengthens their commitment to each other, the firm, and the legal profession. The initiative focuses on the retention and professional development of women and other lawyers within the firm, the support of the attorneys' professional and business skills, the development of meaningful mentoring opportunities, and the promotion of leadership potential within the firm.



▶ From left: Ashley Brown, Melissa Lennon, Maddie Jolles, Kristin Cunningham, Alexa Monro, Christine Dealy Haynes, Stacy Shamburger, Eileen Sarter, Michelle Silberglied, Doneene Damon, Katherine (Kate) Strauch, Alyssa Boob, and Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk

DIGNITY GROWS™ SERVICE PROJECT

In June 2024, the Women's Initiative hosted a Dignity Grows™ service project. Dignity Grows™ aims to alleviate "period poverty" by providing monthly tote bags of emergency toiletries to those who can't afford them. **Michelle Silberglied, chair of the Jewish Federation of Delaware's Dignity Grows™ chapter**, led the Women's Initiative in this effort, along with volunteer Eileen Sarter. **Stacy Shamburger, LMSW, director of West End Neighborhood House's Life Lines Program**, spoke of the impact the 100 tote bags will have on the homeless youth in our community.



LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP SERIES

The Women's Initiative's "Lessons in Leadership" webinar series features panel discussions with influential women leaders moderated by a member of the Women's Initiative.

In June 2023, the Women's Initiative hosted *Lessons in Leadership by Esteemed Women on the Federal Bench*, featuring **The Honorable Sherry Fallon, Magistrate Judge, United States District Court for the District of Delaware; The Honorable Maryellen Noreika, United States District Court for the District of Delaware; and The Honorable Laurie Selber Silverstein, Chief Judge, U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware.** Director **Amanda Steele** was the event moderator.

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE PROGRAMMING

In July 2023, the Women's Initiative hosted the Ethics CLE presentation, *Jurors' Perceptions of Women Litigators*, featuring **Dr. Rachel York Colangelo, Lee Diamondstein, Esq., and Kevin Grodnick of Magna Consulting.**

In honor of Women's History Month, the Women's Initiative hosted a conversation with director **Anne Foster**, the firm's general counsel. The event was moderated by associate **Nicole Henry.**



▶ From left: Nicole Henry and Anne Foster at the Women's Initiative's Women's History Month Event

DELAWARE STATE BAR ASSOCIATION'S WOMEN & THE LAW SECTION'S ANNUAL RETREAT

Alexandra (Ally) Ewing, Kelly Farnan, Samantha Jonjo, and Katharine Lester Mowery attended the DSBA's Women & the Law Section's annual retreat, which was held in April 2024 in Dewey Beach.



▶ From left: Samantha Jonjo, Katharine Lester Mowery, and Ally Ewing

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Throughout FY 2024, the Women's Initiative hosted social events and lunch discussions on a regular basis to foster engagement and support among the firm's women attorneys.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION NETWORK

RLF and its D&I Committee announced the launch of the Diversity and Inclusion Network in 2022. The network provides associates with an opportunity to engage and collaborate with each other and firm leaders on diversity and inclusion issues that are important to them. It includes a broad range of programs focused on professional and business development, networking, mentoring, and educational opportunities.



D&I NETWORK EVENTS

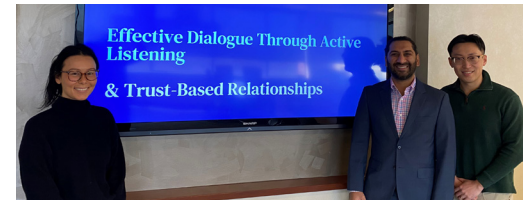
In August 2024, the Diversity & Inclusion Network hosted its annual event in support of **United Way of Delaware's Back to School Resource Fair and Backpack Giveaway**. We purchased, stuffed, and donated over 200 backpacks, and firm associate **Maya Jackson** joined other volunteers at the Wilmington Library to distribute the backpacks to local underserved children.

In FY 2024, under the leadership of associates **Maya Jackson** and **Frank Sun**, the D&I Network began hosting small group lunches where associates hear directly from firm directors about their paths to partnership and the career advice that led to their success.

In February 2024, **Sartaj Narang, MBA and Executive Certificate in Leadership Coaching, Head of Organizational Health, Teamshares**, presented the Ethics CLE, *Effective Dialogue Through Active Listening & Trust-Based Relationships*. Associate **Mari Boyle** gave introductory remarks.

In April 2024, the Diversity & Inclusion Network and the Women's Initiative presented *Both/And Thinking*, featuring **Dr. Wendy K. Smith**. Drawing on her book of the same name, Dr. Smith focused her presentation on how leaders and senior teams effectively respond to contradictory yet interdependent demands. Dr. Smith has helped managers all over the world address issues of interpersonal dynamics, team performance, organizational change, and innovation. Firm officers **Lisa Schmidt, Paul Heath, and Doneene Damon** were among those who attended the in-house event.

In June 2024, in recognition of Pride Month, the D&I Committee and the D&I Network invited everyone at the firm to take a break outside and enjoy free snow cones, because snow cones, like Pride flags, feature every color of the rainbow. Resources highlighting the symbolism behind the Pride flags' colors were also shared with the firm.



▶ From left: Mari Boyle, Sartaj Narang, and Frank Sun



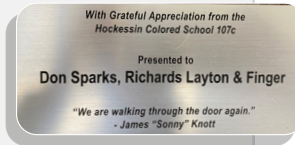
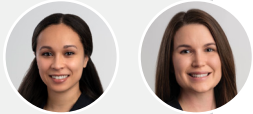
▶ From left: Dana Stanford, Regina Harris, Miami Harris, Ashley Brown, and Gina Edwards in front of the Cajun Snow Truck



▶ From left: Paul Heath, Lisa Schmidt, Dr. Wendy Smith, and Doneene Damon



AWARDS/ACHIEVEMENTS



For the fourth year in a row, the firm was named a Top Performer and Compass Award winner by the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD), which recognizes law firms and corporations showing a strong commitment to building more diverse organizations and a more inclusive legal profession.

Richards Layton associate **Kinsey Lenehan** received the **inaugural Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD) Atlas Award** in 2023, which recognizes attorneys who showed the highest levels of engagement throughout the LCLD's Pathfinder Program. **Anastasia Bowes** received the **LCLD Atlas Award** in 2024. Attorneys who are accepted into the Pathfinder Program learn tools and strategies focused on professional and personal development, relationship-building, and leadership training.

In September 2024, **Mari Boyle** was the **DSBA MJL's Section's Member of the Month** for her leadership roles within the section and the DSBA.

The firm received an award from **Hockessin Colored School 107C** in recognition of the pro bono assistance provided by **W. Donald Sparks II** and **Stephanie Norman**. Don Sparks attended the event and accepted the award, which was printed on a brick from the original school building. The firm is a proud corporate sponsor of Hockessin Colored School 107C and its mission to transform the historic Hockessin school that ended segregation into the new Center for Diversity, Inclusion & Social Equity.

Doneene Damon, the firm's Immediate Past President and Chief Diversity Director, received the **DSBA's Distinguished Mentor Award** at its December Awards 2024 Luncheon.

At the invitation of **Chief Justice Collins Seitz** and then **Justice Tamika Montgomery-Reeves**, **Doneene Damon** served as a member of the **Steering Committee** for the **Delaware Bench and Bar Diversity Project**.

Marcos Ramos serves as a member of the DSBA's **DE&I Committee's Judicial Clerkship** program subcommittee that creates summer clerkship opportunities in Delaware for 1L and 2L students.

Mark Purpura was appointed to serve on the **Delaware Advisory Committee** to the **U.S. Commission on Civil Rights**.

LOCAL MEMBERSHIPS

The D&I Committee supports the firm's membership in a wide variety of local organizations, including the **DE&I Committee of the Delaware State Bar Association**, the **Multicultural Judges & Lawyers Section of the Delaware State Bar Association**, the **Delaware Barristers Association**, the **South Asian Bar Association of Delaware**, the **LGBTQ+ Section of the Delaware State Bar Association**, the **Women & the Law Section of the Delaware State Bar Association**, and the **Delaware Hispanic Bar Association**.

D&I SPONSORSHIPS, CONFERENCES, AND EVENT PARTICIPATION

The firm and the committee support and sponsor many organizations and activities in our community. Some of these activities are highlighted below.

The firm was a 2024 Bronze sponsor of the **National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL)** and a participant in NAWL's Leadership Program. NAWL's mission is to provide leadership, a collective voice, and essential resources to advance women in the legal profession and advocate for the equality of women under the law.



In FY 2024, the firm was a Bronze sponsor for the **Debbie Epstein Henry (DEH) Speaker Series**, which offers engaging webinars throughout the year.

The firm was a Diamond sponsor of the **DSBA's 100th Anniversary Gala** in September 2023.



▶ From left: Ally Ewing, Mari Boyle, Bob Maddox, Kinsey Lenehan, Nicole Henry, and Morgan Harrison at the DSBA's 100th Anniversary Gala

D&I SPONSORSHIPS, CONFERENCES, AND EVENT PARTICIPATION (continued)

The firm was a Gold sponsor for DirectWomen's Sandra Day O'Connor



Board Excellence Award Luncheon in 2023 and 2024 in New York City. DirectWomen works to increase the representation of women on corporate boards—a mission the firm supports through its sponsorship of this organization as well as Mark Gentile's service as treasurer of DirectWomen and a member of its board of directors. **Alexandra (Ally) Ewing, Kinsey Lenehan, Katharine Lester Mowery, Melissa Lennon, and Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk** represented the firm at this event in 2023.

In October 2024, **Lisa Schmidt, Nicole Henry, Margaret Rockey, Melissa Lennon, and Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk** attended the event in New York City to honor those who have worked to advance diversity on corporate boards.

In recognition of DirectWomen's achievement of advancing 200 women attorneys onto for-profit boards, DirectWomen was invited to ring the bell at the Closing Bell Ceremony at the New York Stock Exchange following the luncheon. **Lisa Schmidt and Nicole Henry** represented the firm at this event.

▶ From left: Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Alexandra Ewing, Kinsey Lenehan, Melissa Lennon, and Katharine Lester Mowery at the 2023 DirectWomen Board Excellence Luncheon



▶ From left: Margaret Rockey, Melissa Lennon, Lisa Schmidt, Roberta (Bobbi) Liebenberg, founder of DirectWomen, senior partner at Fine, Kaplan and Black, R.P.C., and Principal of the Red Bee Group, Nicole Henry, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk at the 2024 DirectWomen Sandra Day O'Connor Board Excellence Luncheon



▶ Lisa Schmidt and Nicole Henry at the New York Stock Exchange Closing Bell Ceremony honoring DirectWomen

HONORING MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

The firm was a Platinum sponsor of the Delaware State Bar Association's Martin Luther King Breakfast and Day of Service on January 15, 2024. **Monica Ayres, Doneene Damon, Maya Jackson, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Mark Purpura, Marcos Ramos, Frank Sun, and Sara Wagner** represented the firm at this event.

▶ From left: Mark Purpura, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Monica Ayres, Doneene Damon, Sara Wagner, Maya Jackson, Marcos Ramos, and Frank Sun at the DSBA's MLK Day Breakfast



ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA (APABA)

The firm sponsored the Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania (which includes Delaware, South Jersey, and Pennsylvania) (APABA)'s Lunar New Year Banquet held in February 2024. **Gabriela Monasterio, Frank Sun, and Yuan Tao** attended this event.



▶ From left: Frank Sun, Yuan Tao, and Gabriela Monasterio at the APABA Lunar New Year Banquet

PARTNERING WITH THE DELAWARE BAR FOUNDATION

In November 2024, in partnership with the Delaware Bar Foundation, the firm hosted students in Howard High School's Legal Administrative Assistance (LAA) Program for a presentation with firm leaders on the various employment opportunities that exist within a law firm. **Kim Gold**, HR Operations Manager and a founding member of the LAA Program at Howard High School, spoke of the program's success over the years. **Lisa Schmidt, Doneene Damon, Marcos Ramos, and Ashley Brown** participated in the discussion, followed by tours of the firm for the students.



NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION

The firm was a Judge level sponsor of the Delaware Law Related Education Center's (DELREC) National High School Mock Trial Competition, held in Wilmington, Delaware in May 2024. **Fred Cottrell, Anne Foster, Matt Perri, Lisa Schmidt, and Bob Whetzel** attended the Donor Recognition Event in October 2023. **Marcos Ramos** attended the Celebrating Diversity in the Bench and Bar reception at the Delaware Contemporary Museum of Art, and **Anne Foster** represented the firm at the Judge's Reception at the Queen Theater.

Members of the firm's Women's Initiative attended the 20th Annual Pennsylvania Conference for Women at the Philadelphia Convention Center.



▶ From left: Morgan Harrison, Melissa Lennon, Adriane Kappauf, Nathalie Freeman, Katharine Lester Mowery, and Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk at the PA Conference for Women

PARTNERING WITH DELREC



▶ From left: Anastasia Bowes; Doneene Damon; The Honorable Kathleen M. Miller, Delaware Superior Court; The Honorable Collins J. Seitz, Jr., Chief Justice of the Delaware Supreme Court; and Betsy Renzo, Executive Director of DELREC



From left: ◀ Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Monica Ayres, Mari Boyle, Marcos Ramos, Beth Gansen Knight, Josh Novak, Melissa Lennon, and Samantha Jonjo at the Haile L. Alford Memorial Breakfast

In May 2024, the firm hosted a first-generation social at DE.CO in partnership with DELREC and the DSBA's Young Lawyers Division for all Delaware attorneys and first-generation law students at the Delaware Law School and Wilmington University.

The firm was a Diamond sponsor of the DSBA's annual **Haile L. Alford Memorial Breakfast**, which honored the life and legacy of Judge Haile L. Alford. This event, hosted by the Multicultural Judges & Lawyers (MJL) Section of the DSBA, is held annually to commemorate Delaware's first African-American female judge. **Mari Boyle, the MJL Section's Vice-Chair of Legislative Affairs & Community Relations**, gave introductory remarks. Firm members **Monica Ayres, Mari Boyle, Samantha Jonjo, Beth Gansen Knight, Melissa Lennon, Josh Novak, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, and Marcos Ramos** attended the event.

The firm continued to sponsor the **DSBA's Multicultural Judges and Lawyers Section's Supplemental Bar Course** in 2024. The firm's sponsorship enables the MJL to underwrite the participation of diverse Delaware bar exam applicants.

In FY 2024, the firm served as a sponsor of the **WRK Group's (The Warehouse, REACH Riverside, and Kingswood Community Center) 3rd Annual HBCU Fair**, which enables youth to meet with admissions counselors and alumni from regional HBCU schools, and the group's **Annual Toy & Coat Drive at Kingswood Community Center**.



▶ Mari Boyle, the MJL Section's Vice Chair of Legislative Affairs & Community Relations, gave introductory remarks at the Haile L. Alford Memorial Breakfast

Marcos Ramos serves on the subcommittee for the Judicial Diversity Clerkship program of the Delaware State Bar Association's **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Committee**. Marcos, along with firm and D&I Network leaders **Lisa Schmidt, Paul Heath, Doneene Damon, Mari Boyle, Frank Sun, and Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk**, hosted a lunch with the 2024 judicial diversity clerks and a member of the Delaware bench to discuss the various legal career paths that one can be afforded in Delaware.



We W@K Together To...
empower the community to reach its full potential by eliminating the barriers of structural racism and revolutionizing teen engagement.



Marcos Ramos and Frank Sun participated in the MCCA's 2023 *Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference*, which was held in New York City.

We were proud to sponsor the **Delaware Barristers Association's Louis L. Redding Benefit and Awards Gala** in October 2024. The gala honored the life and legacy of civil rights advocate Louis L. Redding, who was a prominent Delaware lawyer and the first African American attorney to be admitted to the Delaware bar. **Anastasia Bowes, Doneene Damon, Maya C. Jackson, Samantha Jonjo, Quamaine Montgomery, Kate Mowery, and John Ferko** attended the event from RLF, along with alumni **Dorronda Bordley** and **Lorin Dale-Pierce**.



▶ From left: Daniel Keenan, Samantha Jonjo, Maya Jackson, Dorronda Bordley, Lorin Dale-Pierce, Heyward Damon, Doneene Damon, Quamaine Montgomery, Renaldo Neeley, Elizabeth Wang, and John Ferko at the Louis L. Redding Gala



The LGBTQ+ Section
Delaware State Bar Association

In July 2024, the firm served as a co-host sponsor for the **DSBA's LGBTQ+ Section's Summer Reception** honoring **Anthony (Roddy) Flynn, Jr.**, founder of the LGBTQ+ Section and a Richards Layton alumnus. The event marked the section's 10-year anniversary, and **Mark Purpura** spoke of Roddy's deep dedication to the LGBTQ+ community and the enormous impact of Roddy's work, both locally and nationally.



▶ From left: Mark Purpura and Roddy Flynn

- The firm sponsored **Rutgers Law - Camden's Black Law Students Association's 28th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Champions of Social Justice and Equality Gala and Awards Ceremony** in January 2024.
- RLF sponsored the **Mid-Atlantic Black Law Students Regional Convention**, held in February 2024.
- The firm sponsored the **Penn Law Women's Association Carrie B. Kilgore Annual Reception** in March 2024.
- The firm is a proud sponsor of the **2024 Southeastern Law School Consortium** and the **Delaware Diversity Job Fair**.
- In March 2024, **Marcos Ramos, Morgan Harrison, and Samantha Stern** gave a presentation on the Delaware legal landscape, practicing in Delaware, and the firm's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion to **Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law's students**, which was co-sponsored by the **Black Law Students Association and the Business Law Section**.
- In July 2024, the firm served as the event sponsor for the **Delaware Hispanic Bar Association's Mix & Mingle** event.
- The firm traditionally sponsors the **Delaware Hispanic Bar Association, Delaware South Asian Bar Association, Delaware State Bar Association's (DSBA) LGBTQ+ Section, Women & the Law Section, Multicultural Judges & Lawyers Section, DSBA's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Annual Breakfast and Haile L. Alford Memorial Breakfast**, and the **Delaware Barristers Association's Louis L. Redding Benefits and Awards Gala**, among others.
- The firm was a Diamond sponsor for the **DSBA's inaugural Changemakers Gala** in support of the judicial clerkship program, the DSBA's other diversity initiatives, as well as its community outreach projects. **Brendan Clark** and **John Ferko** represented the firm at this event.

EVENT PARTICIPATION

In August 2023, **Marcos Ramos** served as a panelist at the JFF Congressional Staff Network on the topic of *Using Sectoral Partnership Strategies to Diversify the Tech Workforce*, with leaders from **Tech Council of Delaware, Yes, We Tech!, Code Differently, Delmarva Power, Rodel Foundation**, and the **Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League**.

In January 2024, **Andrea Filbeck, Maya Jackson, and Samantha Stern** participated in **Drexel University Thomas R. Kline School of Law's Inclusive Employer Table Talk**.

Samantha Stern moderated a panel, which included **Jason Rawnsley** and was sponsored by the **Delaware Diversity Job Fair Committee**, in May 2024. Law students from schools nationwide were invited to watch this virtual panel, where they heard from attorneys at several of Delaware's leading law firms about the career opportunities available here.

Doneene Damon spoke on the panel, *How to Build Meaningful Relationships*, at **Leadership Delaware's Annual Fall Workshop, Think Differently**, held at Goldey-Beacom College in September 2023.

In March 2024, **Alexandra (Ally) Ewing, Alex Steiger, and Melissa Lennon** gave a presentation to **Temple Law School students**, co-sponsored by the **Black Law Students Association and Tax and Bankruptcy Law Society**, on the benefits of practicing law in Delaware.

The firm participated in the 32nd and 33rd **Annual Delaware Diversity Job Fair (DDJF)** in July 2024. **Marcos Ramos, Melissa Lennon, and Samantha Stern** serve as members of the **DSBA's Delaware Diversity Job Fair Committee**.

PRO BONO AND COMMUNITY SERVICE WORK FOCUSED ON D&I INITIATIVES

ALLIANCE FOR ASIAN AMERICAN JUSTICE

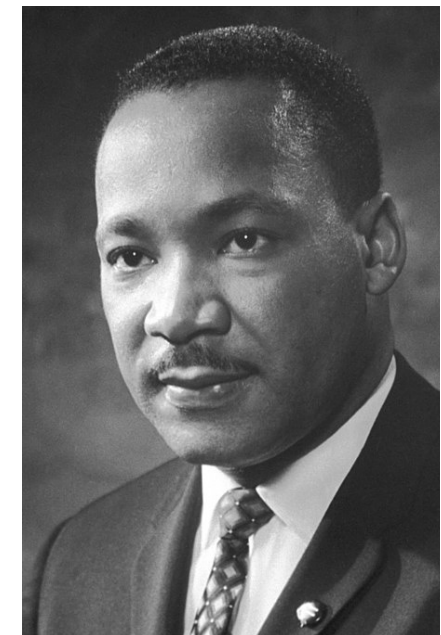
The firm joined the **Alliance for Asian American Justice**, which primarily aims to assist Asian Americans who have been subjected to violence with their cooperation with law enforcement investigations or their pursuit of civil remedies. The firm has agreed to help the Alliance with its future Delaware needs.

SECOND CHANCE EMPLOYMENT COLLABORATIVE

The firm is a pro bono partner for the **Second Chance Employment Collaborative** launched in 2021 by **JPMorgan Chase and Wilmington Alliance**, in partnership with **Delaware Volunteer Legal Services, Wilmington HOPE Commission, Delaware Center for Justice, and Project New Start**. Firm attorneys assist the participants of the Second Chance Employment Collaborative with the expungement process and the filing of FDIC waivers in order to pursue employment in the financial, healthcare, and IT sectors. **Margaret Rockey**, among others, served as a pro bono attorney for the **Second Chances Record and Expungement Fair** in October 2023.

MLK DAY OF SERVICE

The firm sponsored the **DSBA's Annual MLK Day Breakfast and Day of Service** at the Chase Center. **Maya Jackson** donated blood in partnership with the **Blood Bank of Delmarva** and **United Way**, **Andrea Filbeck** provided pro bono assistance at a **Wills for Seniors** event at the Police Athletic League, and **Ryan Brady** volunteered at the **Sunday Breakfast Mission** by preparing, serving, and cleaning up a lunch for the homeless and working poor in our community. The firm continued its annual tradition of donating a catered lunch provided by Cosmos Restaurant to the **Ministry of Caring's Emmanuel Dining Rooms East and West**. And our previous collection for **Eisenberg Elementary School's** food pantry continues to provide food and supplies to the school's students and families who are homeless, living in poverty or at risk. **Monica Ayres, Doneene Damon, Maya Jackson, Mark Purpura, Marcos Ramos, Frank Sun, Sara Wagner, and Danielle Nowaczyk** represented the firm at the DSBA's MLK Day Breakfast.



▶ 1964 photo of Martin Luther King Jr.

SERVIAM GIRLS ACADEMY

In 2022, the firm launched a tutoring program with **Serviam Girls Academy**, a private, tuition-free middle school that provides a year-round education to low-income girls in grades 5-8 in our community. The firm’s 2023-24 volunteer tutors included **Jessey Blau, Gabrielle Colson, Maya Jackson, Vicky Liu, Alison Mitchell, Grace Jennings, Danielle Nowaczyk,** and **Lisa Schmidt**, among others. **Ashley Brown** coordinated this program, which offers tutoring on basic spelling, reading, vocabulary, and math skills. The firm served as a sponsor for Serviam Girls Academy’s “Evening Under the Stars.” **Mark Kurtz** represented the firm at this event.



NATIVITY PREP SCHOOL

In 2023, the firm launched a tutoring program with **Nativity Preparatory School of Wilmington**, a middle school that provides a year-round education to low-income boys in our community. The firm’s tutors include **Danielle Bell, AJ Dillione, Wilson Guarnera, Keegan Hicks,** and **Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk.** **Ashley Brown** coordinated this program.

YES, WE TECH! HIGH SCHOOL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

In 2024, the firm again participated in the **Yes, We Tech! High School Internship Program** in partnership with **Rodel, Delaware, Tech Council of Delaware, Code Differently,** and the **Metropolitan Wilmington Urban League.** The program was designed to provide workplace readiness and career experiences to Delaware high school students through on-the-job training and classroom-based learning. Through this program, Richards Layton sponsored two high school students. **Lisa Schmidt**, firm President, represented the firm at the Yes, We Tech! graduation.

LAW DAY

The firm partnered with **The Honorable Maryellen Noreika** and **The Honorable Sherry Fallon** to host all the students from Serviam Girls Academy and Nativity Prep School for a Law Day event at the U.S. District Court of Delaware in December 2023. This opportunity included a mock trial presentation which involved the students as lawyers, judge, and jurors for a positive educational experience. **Jessey Blau** spoke to the students and answered their questions about why she chose to become an attorney.

LEADING YOUTH THROUGH EMPOWERMENT (LYTE)

In 2024, the firm sponsored a rising college student to participate in **LYTE’s** summer internship program in partnership with **DELREC.** This opportunity provided broad exposure to the various roles and practices of Delaware’s judges and public interest attorneys.

In 2024, RLF partnered with **DELREC** to create a summer internship program focused on the legal profession for **LYTE** students and sponsored a **LYTE** intern to participate in it. The firm hosted a lunch with the two **LYTE** interns and the legal employers who hosted them throughout the course of the summer.



From left: Puja Upadhyay and Jessey Blau at the U.S. District Court of Delaware for the Law Day event

Distinguished guests included **The Honorable Collins J. Seitz, Jr.**, Chief Justice, Delaware Supreme Court; **Besty Renzo**, executive director, **DELREC**; **Eve Ormerod**, Operations Associate, **DELREC**; **Ankur Arya**, executive director and founder, **LYTE**; **Sean Boyd**, Director of Development and Finance, **LYTE**; **Gayle Lafferty**, Administrative Office of the Courts; **Megan Greenberg**, executive director, Delaware Bar Foundation; **Allison Abessinio**, Deputy Attorney General, Delaware Department of Justice; **Daniel Atkins**, executive director, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc (**CLASI**); **Margaretta Kroeger**, Communications and Marketing Director, **CLASI**; **Cindy DePue**, executive director, Legal Services Corporation of Delaware, Inc.; and **Kelly Ensslin**, Chief of Legal Services, Office of the Child Advocate. **Lisa Schmidt, Paul Heath, Doneene Damon, Marcos Ramos, Katharine Lester Mowery,** and **Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk** attended on behalf of the firm.

In November 2024, **Kevin Rodriguez** volunteered at the **LYTE Practice Interview Event**, where he met one-on-one with **LYTE** Scholars to prepare them for high school and college admissions interviews.

WELL-BEING INITIATIVE



Richards Layton has been a proud signatory of the ABA Well-Being Pledge since 2021. The ABA Well-Being Pledge & Campaign is designed to support well-being in the legal profession and address the profession's troubling rates of alcohol and other substance-use disorders, as well as mental health issues. The campaign's goals are to raise awareness, facilitate a reduction in the incidence of problematic substance use and mental health distress, and improve well-being in the law. From education to policies to culture, the seven-point pledge identified in the campaign reflects the core areas on which legal employers should focus and the concrete steps they should take as they seek to achieve those goals.

Every October, the firm commemorates World Mental Health Day and the importance of prioritizing one's mental health and well-being.



MAY 6-10, 2024

Richards Layton is proud to participate in the Annual Well-Being Week in Law to highlight the importance of each facet of one's life that contributes to an individual's health and wellness, and

to recognize the need for the legal profession to emphasize wellness and well-being. In recognition of Well-Being Week in Law, the firm hosted activities and CLEs throughout the week to promote the physical, spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional well-being of our attorneys and staff. We know we can't deliver the best client service unless we bring our best selves to work.



Mindful Return

The firm hosted **Lori Mihalich-Levin, Esq., CEO & Founder of Mindful Return**, for the CLE, *Time & Energy Management for Busy Professionals*, in honor of Well-Being Week in Law.



Patrick Krill, JD, LL.M., MA, Principal and Founder of Krill Strategies, led the Ethics CLE presentation, *Reclaiming Our Wellbeing: Practical Tips for Success*, in honor of Well-Being Week in Law.



▶ Ashley Brown testing the t-shirt making press at the firm's Well-Being Week in Law social

The firm hosted a firm-wide social and crafts party run by our resident artists **Melissa Robinson** and **Semaj Ward**.

Doneene Damon, Richards Layton's Immediate Past President and Chief Diversity Director, received the **2024 James H. Gilliam Jr. Award at the American Heart Association's Delaware Heart Ball** at the Hotel DuPont. Each year the American Heart Association awards one Delawarean who has made a significant contribution to the health, welfare, or benefit of the community.

Doneene acknowledged the firm's ongoing commitment to wellness and its well-being initiatives. She also highlighted that the firm's sponsorship is creating partnerships between the American Heart Association's food insecurity programs and those served by **The Ministry of Caring, Inc.** and **The WRK Group**.



▶ Shelby Ady, Matthew Ady, Maya C. Jackson, Doneene Damon, Paul Altman, Danielle Andrisani Nowaczyk, Shawn-Ere Jackson, and Logan Herring, Chief Executive Officer of The WRK Group, at the AHA Heart Ball



American Heart Association
Heart Ball

TEAMING UP FOR A CAUSE

In September 2024, RLF participated in the 19th Annual Art Connolly Race Judicata 5k at the Logan House in Trolley Square. Our team, led by **Ashley Brown**, included **Keegan Hicks** and **Matthew Ady**, along with RLF friends and family members. The firm received the “largest team” award for the third year in a row.



▶ Ashley Brown at the Art Connolly Race Judicata 5k

For the third consecutive year, we participated in the **JPMorgan Corporate Challenge**, a 3.5-mile race starting at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The firm’s race team included **Hannah Ryan, Melissa Lennon, Gabrielle Colson, Ashley Brown, Heather McNally, Philip Micha, Matthew Ady, and Spencer Crawford**. Spencer Crawford was our team’s leader.

The firm sponsored the **American Cancer Society’s Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk** at Bellevue State Park. The RLF team was led by **Tina Innis** and included **Susan Carey, Kathy Howard, Lillian Leitao, Emanuel Perris, Ryan Brady, Bryce DiPatre, Ismat Nawaz, and Khatia Khadishvili**.



▶ Matthew and Shelby Ady at the Art Connolly Race Judicata 5k



▶ From left: Hannah Ryan, Melissa Lennon, Philip Micha, Gabrielle Colson, Matthew Ady, Ashley Brown, Spencer Crawford, and Heather McNally at the JPMorgan Corporate Challenge 5k



▶ Front row from left: Susan Carey, Kathy Howard, Lillian Leitao, and Maria Marchesani
Back row from left: Tina Innis, Emanuel Perris, Ryan Brady, and Bryce DiPatre

RICHARDS LAYTON & FINGER
125 YEARS

WORLD
MENTAL HEALTH
DAY

OCTOBER 10

In honor of World Mental Health Day, the firm hosted *Using Social Connection to Promote Well-Being in the Legal Profession*, a presentation by **Bree Buchanan**, JD, MSF, of **Krill Strategies**. We also hosted *Emotional Intelligence*, a lunch & learn by **Lisa Sorantino** from **Wellness Today**. This year and every year, we are proud to recognize World Mental Health Day and participate in Well-Being Week in Law.



We offer this report with profound gratitude for the Delaware legal community of which we are a part and with a fresh determination to continue pushing it forward.

— *Lisa A. Schmidt*
President



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