

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION UPDATE



October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), recognizing the contributions of workers with disabilities. Robins Kaplan honors NDEAM, celebrates the ingenuity of workers with disabilities, and reaffirms its commitment to ensure greater access and opportunity in the workplace for individuals with disabilities.

## Event Recap:



On September 23, a panel of experts from the Minnesota Chapter of the Federal Bar Association Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and the Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities, joined Robins Kaplan for a conversation about voting rights of individuals with disabilities.

Panelists provided historical context of voting accessibility in the U.S., described the current political and legal climate of voting rights of individuals with disabilities, and illustrated the legal and informal barriers that still prohibit equal access to voting for people with disabilities.

## SUMMER RECAP: PRIDE MONTH, PRONOUN POLICY, AND RACIAL JUSTICE COMMITMENT

**Pride Month:** In celebration of Pride Month and in raising awareness of issues facing LGBTQ+ individuals, Robins Kaplan organized a firm-wide social event, CLE, and fundraiser. The Pride social event featured Marti Gould Cummings, a New York City drag artist, activist, and candidate for New York City Council, who led the firm in a trivia game and discussion related to LGBTQ current events. The Pride CLE, co-sponsored by Gender Justice (GJ) and OutFront Minnesota, featured panelists from GJ and OutFront who shared their expertise on current legal issues impacting LGBTQ equity. The Pride fundraiser culminated in donations to Lambda Legal, the Center for Black Equity, and the National Black Justice Coalition totaling \$11,211, which included a generous match from the firm's foundation.

**Pronoun Policy:** As part of our Pride Month observations, the firm implemented a new pronoun policy that offers all firm members the option to list their personal pronouns in email signatures and on other firm communications—including website biographies, business cards, and internal firm systems. We are now providing the same options to new hires as part of the onboarding process.

**Racial Justice Commitment:** In the wake of the senseless killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Tony McDade, and countless others, the firm made a renewed commitment to take meaningful steps toward racial justice in our communities and our firm. We created a Black Firm Member Resource Group, organized a series of programs to discuss police brutality and racial inequities, and developed new pro bono and volunteer partnerships with legal services and advocacy institutions to ensure all of us have equal access to justice. Together, the firm and our firm members also made donations of over \$100,000 to organizations dedicated to racial justice, legal services to underserved communities, and nonprofits serving our local communities of color. We continue to create forums for dialogue with our firm members of color and consider additional actionable steps that will meaningfully move the needle on diversity at the firm.

## LEADERSHIP UPDATE: TIM PURDON, CO-CHAIR OF DIVERSITY COMMITTEE



We are pleased to announce Tim Purdon as the new co-chair of the firm's Diversity Committee. He joins Sherry Roberg-Perez, who will remain in her co-chair role. Tim joined the firm in 2015 and is a partner in the Business Litigation group in our Bismarck office. He assumed the co-chair role in September of this year and will help lead the committee in making meaningful strides forward to address the issues facing attorneys of diverse backgrounds.

## Upcoming Events:



**10.21.2020**

Women of Robins Kaplan (WoRK)  
Fireside Chat with Minda Harts:  
Intersectionality of Race and Gender  
(Firm wide)  
Register [here](#)

**10.21.2020**

YWCA: It's Time to Talk: Forums on Race  
(Firm wide)

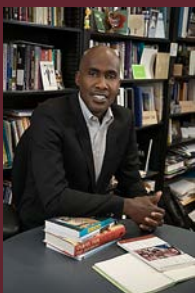


**10.23.2020**

Robins Kaplan and OutFront Minnesota  
Name Change Clinic  
(Minneapolis)

**10.27.2020**

Minnesota Women Lawyers (MWL)  
26th Annual Rosalie Wahl Leadership Lecture  
(Firm wide)



**11.04.2020**

Family Resource Group Program (FRG) with  
Dr. Tyrone Howard: Talking to Children about  
Race and Racism  
(Firm wide)  
Register [here](#)

## ANNOUNCEMENT: ROBINS KAPLAN ACHIEVES MANSFIELD RULE 3.0 CERTIFICATION

Robins Kaplan is pleased to announce that the firm has achieved Mansfield 3.0 Certification status for 2020. This certification means that the firm met or exceeded the program's goal of increasing diversity in law firms by considering at least 30 percent women, lawyers with disabilities, LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers of color for significant leadership roles and lateral partner and senior associate searches and openings.

The firm has already committed to participating in Mansfield 4.0, which adds a new category for a "Certification Plus" designation asking that 30% of the lawyers staffed on matters resulting from formal pitch meetings be from historically underrepresented groups.



You can find more about the results and findings from Mansfield 3.0 [here](#).

## DIVERSITY SPOTLIGHT: LIANA NEWTON ASSOCIATE, BOSTON



**What is one fun fact about you?** I was a Division I softball player in college and ended with a .300 career batting average.

**What inspires you?** I am inspired by professionals who use their spare time (even if just a few hours a week) to embrace and commit themselves to a personal passion project or side-hustle. It's amazing when a spark of interest turns into your favorite part of the day.

**Why is diversity and inclusion important to you?** I believe diversity and inclusion brings richness to an environment. Different conversations can be had, new activities can be conducted, and true personalities can emerge. Listening, not just hearing, unfamiliar experiences and perspectives allows us to understand multiple modalities and therefore we are better prepared to engage with our clients and cases.

**What are you looking forward to most this fall?** Finding Rae Dunn Halloween home things at Home Goods and swapping my second cup of coffee for hot apple cider.

## CONGRATULATIONS!

**Holly Dolejsi** was selected to receive *Minnesota Lawyer's* Diversity and Inclusion Award. [Read](#)

**Christine Yun Sauer** was shortlisted as the Diversity and Inclusion Lawyer of the Year for the Chambers Diversity and Inclusion awards. [Read](#)

## ARTICLES IN DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

A Movement, Not a Moment: Law Firms Need to Discuss Racial Inequality Now [Read](#)  
Inclusion in Law Firms Should Be About Everyone—Not Just Lawyers [Read](#)  
In Their Shoes: Stories of Systemic Racism from the Legal Profession [Read](#)  
3 Ways Law Firms Can Guard Diversity Gains During Crisis [Read](#)