

**Columbus Law Firms Report 74% Increase In Minority Attorneys Since 2000**  
*Pledge Third Five-Year Commitment to Build Racial Diversity*

COLUMBUS – The Columbus Bar Association (CBA) today announced results of the annual diversity survey, reporting a 74% increase in the number of minority attorneys at Columbus area law firms since the program began in 2000. At the same time the CBA, in conjunction with twenty-six organizations from the legal community, pledged a third five-year commitment to increase the number of attorneys recruited, hired and promoted in the central Ohio area.

“The CBA is proud of its history as a leader in the Managing Partners Diversity Initiative,” said David Bloomfield, Jr., president of the CBA. “Though we recognize that we have much to accomplish, the Diversity Initiative has been a success in increasing the number of attorneys of color practicing in firms in Columbus. With the signing of the new plan, the CBA will continue to partner with member firms, bar associations and law schools to create a diverse community of lawyers.”

Through the program the legal community has experienced a positive change of open dialogue concerning the recruitment and retention of minority talent in law firms. Stakeholders are provided the opportunity to critically analyze the successes and struggles of diversity programming. The initiative also creates a discipline that supports the focus of promoting diversity on a day-to-day basis.

Annual survey results from the participating law firms show significant increases in attorneys of color at many levels compared to 2000 - the first year statistics were collected. From 2000 to 2011:

- Minority partners increased 114%, from 14 to 30;
- Minority associates increased 35%, from 31 to 42;
- Minority summer associates increased 106%, from 18 to 37;
- Minority attorneys overall increased 74%, from 47 to 82;
- Small firms increased minority attorney representation from 1.3% to 6.6% (3 to 5);
- Medium-sized firms’ attorneys of color increased from 16 to 28;
- Large law firms increased the representation of minority attorneys from 3.8% to 6.4% (27 to 47).

“The Diversity Initiative has been a positive vehicle for helping us address the vital issue of diversity in our profession, and we’ve made great strides the last ten years in promoting inclusion at all levels,” said Kurt Tunnell, managing partner for Bricker & Eckler and chair of the Managing Partners Diversity Initiative Advisory Committee.

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“The commitment of these firms to the program is impressive. They see and understand the benefits. As a bar association we have not had to beg them to come to the table, they have done so willingly and allowed the CBA be a partner in this initiative,” stated Judge Stephen McIntosh, immediate past president of the CBA Board of Governors.

The CBA’s effort has been recognized locally, statewide and nationally over the past ten years - most recently receiving the Ohio State Bar Foundation “2007 Outstanding Program/ Organization Award,” and the 2010 John Mercer Langston Bar Association “Outstanding Organization Award.” The program continues to be seen as a model program for bar associations across the country.

The 2011 - 2016 action plan builds on the success of the first ten years with the commitment to recruit, hire, train, retain and invite to partnership attorneys who are African-American/Black, Asian-Pacific American, Native American Indian, and Hispanic.

“Now that we are entering our second decade, the firms and organizations agree that it’s time to challenge ourselves on ways to keep the momentum going. Diversity helps us better serve our clients, and it needs to be an ongoing focus of our profession,” stated Tunnell.

Each participating organization agrees to write diversity and inclusion plans with measurable results based on the best practices that meet its specific needs. Those plans will be reported to and supported by the CBA. The participants also agree to create and promote an image of Columbus as a “diverse community of lawyers.” Selected accomplishments of the MPDI in the first ten years include:

- Professional development seminars and webinars focused on topics such as career advancement, unwritten rules of the profession, improved strategies for law firm mentoring, new directions for entering the profession, and bias free evaluations;
- Promoted and provided support to expand minority scholarships offered by firms (from one to ten), primary sponsorship for three conferences for African American undergraduates and for three years provided summer internships for minority high school students in signatory firms;
- Developed and offered three advanced diversity training courses for firm leadership;
- Maintained accountability for diversity goals by conducting ten annual surveys and presenting the results at annual diversity meetings with law firm, law school and bar association leadership;
- Sponsoring minority bar association major events and participating in minority association formation and support;
- Developing websites, communication and marketing tools, and providing city-wide networking opportunities to reinforce a brand image of Columbus’ “diverse community of lawyers.”

Signatories of the 2011 - 2016 Managing Partners Diversity Initiative are: Bailey Cavaliere LLC, Baker & Hostetler LLP, Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP, Bricker & Eckler LLP, Carlile Patchen & Murphy LLP, Carpenter Lipps & Leland LLP, Chester Willcox & Saxbe LLP, Dinsmore & Shohl, Hahn Loeser & Parks LLP, Isaac Brant Ledman & Teetor LLP, Jones Day, Kegler Brown Hill & Ritter, Maguire & Schneider LLP, Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP, Reminger Co., LPA, Roetzel & Andress, Schottenstein Zox & Dunn Co., LPA, Squire Sanders & Dempsey LLP, Thompson Hine LLP, Vorys Sater Seymour and Pease LLP, Wiles Boyle Burkholder & Bringardner Co., LPA, Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Central Ohio, Capital University Law School, Columbus Bar Association, Columbus City Attorney, John Mercer Langston Bar Association, and The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.