

July 17, 2015

ABA Partnership Awards Winners Selected for Diversity Efforts

The Columbus Bar Association has been selected as a winner of the 2015 American Bar Association Partnership Awards for their efforts to promote diversity in the legal profession. The Columbus Bar will be recognized at the annual meeting joint luncheon of the National Conference of Bar Presidents, National Association of Bar Executives and National Conference of Bar Foundations on Friday, July 31, 2015 in Chicago.

In 2001, the Columbus Bar and key players in the central Ohio legal community created the Columbus Managing Partners' Diversity Initiative, a public pledge to significantly increase racial diversity. An initial five-year pledge was signed to attract minority law candidates to the city, increase minorities hired out of law school and create an atmosphere encouraging minority attorneys to advance. The current five-year plan focuses on retaining attorneys of color in the central Ohio legal community, fostering a more diverse and inclusive culture.

"This is an incredible opportunity for us to highlight the continuous dedication of local leadership to advance diversity within the legal profession. We are fortunate here in Columbus to have leaders within our law firms who believe in and devote significant resources to making sure the legal profession is representative of our community overall," Jay Michael, current president of the Columbus Bar, said.

The following firms participate in the MPDI: Bailey Cavalieri LLC, Baker & Hostetler LLP, Barnes & Thornburg LLP, Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP, Bricker & Eckler LLP, Carlile Patchen & Murphy LLP, Carpenter Lipps & Leland LLP, Chester Willcox & Saxbe LLP, Crabbe Brown & James LLP, Dinsmore & Shohl LLP, Frost Brown Todd LLC, Hahn Loeser + Parks LLP, Ice Miller LLP Legal Counsel, Isaac Wiles Burkholder & Teetor LLC., Jones Day, Kegler Brown Hill & Ritter, Maguire & Schneider LLP, Porter Wright Morris & Arthur LLP, Reminger Co. LPA, Roetzel & Andress LPA, Squire Patton Boggs, Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, Thompson Hine LLP, Vorys Sater Seymour and Pease LLP.

Kurt Tunnell, managing partner of Bricker & Eckler, has chaired the Managing Partners Diversity Initiative since 2010.

"Our firm has been a part of this effort since its inception almost 15 years ago. Accountability is of the utmost importance, and we are proud of the collaborative effort's progress," he said. "The number of minority attorneys has increased in every category among the participating employers. Minority associates are up; minority staff attorneys are up; minority partners have more than doubled. This is a tribute to the sustained efforts of every legal employer in central Ohio, and it means better representation for our clients, who benefit from the diverse viewpoints our firms provide."

The ABA Standing Committee on Bar Activities and Services co-sponsors the awards program with the National Native American Bar Association, the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Hispanic Bar Association and the National Bar Association. This year's submissions are available on the ABA Division for Bar Services website.