Meet the Recipients of the **2023 HBA Diversity Awards**

**Organization - Bush Seyferth PLLC**

BSP is committed to hiring diverse candidates at all levels, participating in the third cohort of the Mansfield Rule for Midsize Law Firms. BSP offers clerkship and mentorship opportunities for diverse summer law clerks and college and high school interns who express interest in the legal field. They work to grow, retain, and advance the number of women and diverse attorneys and professional staff at the firm. They organize several DE & I events at the firm, including BSP’s Speed Networking event, giving diverse law students the opportunity to network with in-house counsel, judges, representatives from bar associations and other legal professionals. They promote attorney visibility and advancement opportunities by getting attorneys at all levels directly involved with clients and their cases and providing robust business development opportunities through conference and event participation.

BSP maintains a pro bono program for all attorneys which allows them to receive billable hour credit for pro bono work with organizations such as Houston Volunteer Lawyers. And the BSP Law Charitable Foundation created the Joe Stern Scholarship Fund in an effort to create and advance
diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession. The scholarship seeks to provide financial support to students from diverse backgrounds who contribute to the diversity of their law school student body as they pursue their legal career.

Individual - Eric Muñoz, partner, Akin

Eric is a partner at Akin. Eric serves as a mentor to diverse lawyers and aspiring lawyers, including through UHLC’s Pre-Law Pipeline Program, which provides resources to students from low-income, first generation and underrepresented backgrounds interested in pursuing legal careers.

Eric is an active member of HISBAH and is highly involved with the HBA’s Corporate Counsel Section. He is involved in Akin’s Houston office’s DEI efforts, being named chair of its DEI Committee in 2018, and also is chair of the Inclusion Committee and a member of the Pro Bono Committee. As chair of the DEI Committee, Eric routinely seeks opportunities to improve diversity and inclusion through on-site programming, such as cultural events and film screenings. He has spearheaded the office’s DEI network and presence among firm offices and minority-focused organizations statewide.
Individual - Scott Ellis, managing partner, Foley & Lardner LLP

Scott is Office Managing partner of Foley & Lardner LLP’s Houston office, Vice-Chair of the firm’s Energy Litigation Section, Hiring Partner for the Houston office, and adjunct professor at the University of Houston Law Center. He is a mentor, and ally, an advocate and a selfless leader.

Scott uses his leadership positions to put diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront of every decision he makes, whether it be recruiting new attorneys to the firm, staffing attorneys on new matters, or deciding which attorneys should spearhead new initiatives at the firm. He spends countless hours mentoring associates and ensuring that they are fulfilled and developing as a young attorney. He prioritizes equity and inclusion when it comes to staffing associates on cases and delegating work amongst attorneys. Scott is also just as passionate about recruiting talented and diverse law students and lateral associates to work at the firm. Scott makes sure that Foley participates in the HBA’s DEI 1L Summer Clerkship program.

Scott has served as a member and co-chair of the HBA’s DEI Committee as well as a member of the Implicit Bias Task Force. Last year he was appointed to the University of Houston Law Center Alumni Board of Directors where he works with law students to advance and develop their trial advocacy skills before they graduate.

Thank you to the Diversity Awards selection committee:

Diana Gomez
Stephanie Noble
Nikki Morris
Join us to celebrate our award winners at the DEI Summer Associate Luncheon on Wednesday, July 26. Purchase your tickets here.

Listen to the latest episode of Behind the Lines: The Houston Lawyer Podcast - "We WON'T See You in Court: Hot Topics in Transactional and Other Non-Litigation Law." Accredited for 1.25 CLE credits. Tune in today!
Read the May/June 2023 issue of The Houston Lawyer, “Transactional Law,” by clicking the image above.

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