

Tips for Lawyers

The KBA Diversity in the Profession Committee sponsors a reception each fall and it provides local attorneys with a great opportunity to connect with a UT or LMU law student. The Buddy Match Program pairs an attorney with a law student for the limited purpose of networking at the reception. Those of us who are matched with a student have the chance to help a future colleague acclimate to the Knoxville Bar, to get an inside track on possible recruiting opportunities, and to help our community keep more diverse and talented professionals.

The purpose of the buddy match program is to make sure that each student is welcomed and introduced to other members of the Bar, including particularly those who practice in practice areas of interest to the student.

Each of us participating gets to help in an important part of the Bar's mission to make our association more diverse and retain talent in Knoxville. It also helps each of us individually in a number of ways. A diverse and inclusive workforce helps avoid employee turnover and associated costs. Such a team of lawyers benefits firms by making them more attractive to national and international firms looking for representation, as well as to consumers looking for attorneys for advice. Firms with diverse populations foster more creativity and innovation and may be more capable of adapting to competitive economic markets by coming up with unique solutions to difficult issues. Those firms attempting to appeal to entrepreneurs should be interested in a diverse set of lawyers and staff to catch to that growing segment of the business population. A diverse law firm can make inroads with traditionally underserved communities. Of course, any diverse workforce drives economic growth and the competitive national economy. Finally, firms which include more diverse candidates in their recruiting efforts have a deeper talent pool from which to draw—and, after all, a firm can never have *too many* talented attorneys.

Beyond economic benefits, diversity helps to create a more inviting and culturally engaging atmosphere, which can, in turn, lead to even more attorneys choosing to practice in Knoxville and the surrounding areas after leaving law school. Feeling like one belongs is important to any new attorney, so creating a more inviting atmosphere can only aid firms' efforts to attract and keep talented attorneys locally.

Each of you has the chance to leverage diversity to achieve your firm's full potential. Please volunteer for the Buddy Match Program and attend the reception with others from your firm.