



# MECKLENBURG COUNTY BAR

## 2009 Diversity Initiative Report

### FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

On behalf of the Mecklenburg County Bar (MCB) Special Committee on Diversity, we would like to thank each of our signatories to the Call to Action of the General Counsel and Managing Partners Diversity Initiative (Call to Action). Since the Call to Action's 2006 inception, more than twenty public and private signatories have adopted the outlined diversity goals, which seek to increase the number of minority attorneys recruited, hired, trained, retained, and promoted to join senior level positions in our legal community.

The Special Committee on Diversity formed an Advisory Group tasked with collecting data and furthering the Call to Action's goals. The Advisory Group has collected and reviewed current and historical data, dating back to 2006, from all signatory law firms, and is gathering similar data from signatory law departments. The data indicate that the signatory law firms are implementing innovative programs that are beginning to impact the racial composition of our legal community. That being said, the data also indicate that we are far from achieving the diverse legal community envisioned in the Call to Action. While we congratulate the signatories' efforts to date, we encourage each of the signatory organizations to invest more time and resources to achieve our collective diversity goals.

Like the signatory law firms and legal departments, the MCB is committed to implementing programs and best practices in furtherance of the Call to Action. Some of the MCB's 2009 diversity related programs and achievements, ranging from sustaining our diversity pipeline to mentoring and developing minority and female attorneys, are highlighted in this publication. The success of the MCB's programs is the direct result of the Bar's leadership and volunteers, as well as the vigorous support provided by the signatories. The MCB continues to look for new opportunities to support the diversity of our legal community.

Finally, we recognize that the legal profession faces serious challenges due to the economic recession-- challenges felt acutely in our local community. Despite these difficult times, we must ensure that diversity remains a core workplace value at our respective institutions. Failing to do so would jeopardize our progress to date and in the future. If there is anything the MCB can do to further support your organizations' diversity goals, please let us know.

Thank you again for your continued commitment to the work of our committee.

Sincerely,



Judge Albert Diaz  
2009-2010 Co-Chair



Valecia M. McDowell  
2009-2010 Co-Chair

MCB Special Committee on Diversity

### INITIATIVE LAUNCHES INAUGURAL SURVEY

#### Signatories Report Statistics Concerning Firm Diversity

This spring, the Mecklenburg County Bar (MCB) General Counsel and Managing Partners Diversity Initiative began its first effort to obtain statistics from signatory law firms concerning the number of minority attorneys and law students within their employ.

The comprehensive MCB Law Firm Diversity Survey, developed under the leadership of the Diversity Initiative Advisory Group, requested signatory law firms to provide the number of minority attorneys in their Charlotte-Mecklenburg office from 2006 through 2009. Additionally, the signatories were asked to supply information about firm programs that support and increase workplace diversity. Members of the Advisory Group and the MCB staff are developing a comparable methodology to evaluate the internal and external hiring practices of signatory legal departments. For a complete list of Diversity Initiative signatories and public endorsers please see page 4 of this publication.

In 2006, the signatories signed the Diversity Initiative Call to Action—a public pledge to create a more diverse community of lawyers. The Survey was launched, in large part, to fulfill a requirement laid forth in the Call to Action—to significantly increase the number of minority attorneys in senior level positions. The Survey data will help the Advisory Group evaluate any measurable change in the demographic make-up of signatory firms and identify underrepresented populations.

"Tracking the progress of our local law firms in increasing diversity among lawyers is a cornerstone of the Call to Action signed by our signatory managing partners and general counsel," said Rob Harrington, co-chair of the Advisory Group under the MCB Special Committee on Diversity, and shareholder at Robinson, Bradshaw and Hinson, P.A. "The MCB staff and Advisory Group members have worked hard to develop a usable form for collecting this diversity information. Responses from all of the law firms solicited are vital to making the Call to Action a success."

Survey findings will be presented at the MCB Diversity Initiative Annual Meeting in the fall of 2009. The Annual Meeting will provide a forum for signatories to chart their progress made toward implementing the Call to Action's objectives and to discuss experiences and practices found to be successful in their respective organizations.

The Advisory Group continues to recruit law firms and legal departments within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg legal community who are interested in joining the Diversity Initiative. Current signatories should contact Stephanie A. Marella, MCB Diversity Coordinator, at [smarella@meckbar.org](mailto:smarella@meckbar.org) to recommend potential signatories or public endorsers to join the Diversity Initiative.

For a complete copy of the Call to Action of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg General Counsel and Managing Partners Diversity Initiative, please visit the MCB website at: [www.meckbar.org/publications/pr\\_committees.cfm](http://www.meckbar.org/publications/pr_committees.cfm).

## MECKLENBURG COUNTY BAR CO-HOSTS EVENTS WITH LOCAL AFFINITY BARS



(Left to right) District Judge Charlotte D. Brown-Williams, Superior Judge Linwood O. Foust, and Immigration Judge Theresa Holmes-Simmons provide courtroom tips and techniques at a recent MCB CLE program.

becomes more effective and better able to serve all of its members, particularly those from historically underrepresented groups."

On April 23, the Charlotte Women's Bar and the MCB presented Women Lawyers 2009: Retention, Advancement, Equity & Satisfaction. This highly attended CLE program provided panelists and attendees the opportunity to share experiences and discuss issues that women face in the legal profession. "Women are tremendously effective in negotiating on behalf of their clients, but often fail to utilize effective negotiation tactics when advocating on their own behalf," said keynote speaker Lauren Stiller Rikleen. Rikleen, author of *Ending the Gauntlet: Removing Barriers to Women's Success in the Law*, and panelists Abbie Baynes, Abbie G. Baynes PLLC; Valecia M. McDowell, Moore & Van Allen; and Marlon Nesbeth, Hinrichs Flanagan Financial offered techniques to better enhance personal negotiation tactics.

The Mecklenburg County Bar (MCB) and local affinity Bars recently collaborated to host a series of well-attended events. The collaborative events included Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminars and networking receptions.

"Encouraging a more inclusive culture within the MCB is a priority that extends beyond our Diversity Committee-- it is a Bar-wide objective", said MCB President Patrick E. Kelly. "By cultivating and maintaining relationships with local affinity Bars, the MCB

The MCB, John S. Leary Bar Association, N.C. Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and the newly established Mecklenburg County Hispanic Latino Lawyers Bar co-hosted a CLE program and networking reception on April 24. Moderated by District Judge Tyyawdi M. Hands, the CLE reviewed basic procedures for representing clients, and appropriate conduct in open court sessions. Nine judicial panelists participated in the program, each offering insight to best practices they have observed while serving on the Bench. Suggestions ranged from appropriate courtroom etiquette to the practice of law.

This summer, the MCB and the affinity Bars joined forces to host a Minority Summer Associates Reception at Sonoma Modern American Cuisine. Mecklenburg County attorneys were invited to welcome minority law students to Charlotte, and network with other practicing attorneys.

These well received events exceeded expectations, and reaffirmed the benefits of collaborative initiatives. The MCB and local affinity Bars will continue to look for points of intersection to better serve our members.



(Left to right) Charlotte Women's Bar Board Member and Membership Committee Co-Chair Sarah Dohoney Byrne with CLE keynote speaker Lauren Stiller Rikleen.

## DIVERSITY DAY 2009

fourth year, the conference introduces minority students to the legal profession and connects them with practicing Mecklenburg County attorneys.

Increasing Diversity in the Legal Profession had three panel discussions focused on the role of individuals with legal training in society. Representatives from six North and South Carolina law schools provided admissions information during a resource expo. Keynote speaker Rob Harrington, shareholder at Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, spoke to the value of obtaining a quality education and persistent hard work. Harrington encouraged the youthful audience to solicit mentors in the legal profession. He concluded by noting the importance of

exploring all educational opportunities, and urged the students to visit with each attending law school at the conference.

Established in 2006 under the leadership of Marion A. Cowell, Jr., chair of the Diversity Outreach Subcommittee, the conference is an effort to expand the Special Committee on Diversity's diversity pipeline. Since the conference's inception, more than 150 students have attended the event. The Committee aims to introduce students to the legal profession at a young age, providing better support and encouragement to diverse individuals at every stage of their legal career.



Undergraduate students from North Carolina State University and St. Augustine's College traveled to Charlotte to attend the 2009 Diversity Day conference.



Aretha V. Blake, a member of the MCB Special Committee on Diversity and attorney at Parker, Poe, Adams, and Bernstein L.L.P., speaks to high school and undergraduate students about a career in the legal profession.

## CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE SIGNS ON TO MECKLENBURG COUNTY BAR DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

The Charlotte City Attorney's Office signed on as the first public endorser to the Mecklenburg County Bar's (MCB) Call to Action of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg General Counsel and Managing Partners' Diversity Initiative. As a public endorser, the City Attorney's Office will join twenty local law firms and legal departments in a collective commitment to create a diverse community of lawyers.

"The principles in the MCB Call to Action match well with the philosophy of the City of Charlotte; a true commitment to equal opportunity and a proven belief in the value of a diverse workforce," said Dewitt "Mac" McCarley, Charlotte City Attorney. "To be effective, the values have to translate to the way the office runs. Diversity and inclusion have to be shared values among decision makers, veteran attorneys and new hires alike."

Since its inception, the Diversity Initiative has focused on increasing diversity within its private law firm and legal department signatories. Recently, the Diversity Initiative Advisory Group recommended expanding the program's scope to include public legal departments that will participate as public endorsers in the same capacity as their signatory counterparts. The Advisory Group anticipates that the inclusion of public endorsers will better assist the Initiative in recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting minority attorneys within the Charlotte-Mecklenburg legal market.

Signatories and public endorsers achieve the Call to Action objectives by: establishing effective mentoring and leadership

### SIX DESERVING 1L STUDENTS SPEND SUMMER IN CHARLOTTE

Six first-year law students in the Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerkship (CLDC) program will call the Queen City home for the 2009 summer. These students were selected from more than 190 applicants from across the country, the largest applicant pool since the program's 2006 inception. The CLDC immerses students in professional and social activities during the 12-week course, representative of the lifestyle of practicing law and living in Charlotte. Students spend six weeks in a law firm and six weeks in a legal department.



Melody Chen and Mathew Telford at the 2009 CLDC Welcome Reception.

resumes, along with a statement explaining how they would contribute to the goal of creating a more diverse legal community in Charlotte.

Representatives from the CLDC firms and corporations interviewed the 20 semi-finalists in late February. The highly-qualified candidates took part in a two-day interview and attended a networking reception with representatives from CLDC law firms, legal departments and the Mecklenburg County Bar (MCB).

All applicants provided academic and professional

#### 2009 Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerks

Johnson Atkinson	Duke University School of Law
Melody Chen	University of North Carolina School of Law
Christian Murphy	University of North Carolina School of Law
Andrew Tamayo	University of North Carolina School of Law
Mathew Telford	University of Pennsylvania Law School
Liana Rebollo	University of North Carolina School of Law

training programs; promoting, fostering, and enhancing diversity efforts among their managing structures; and encouraging attorney participation in sensitivity and diversity training. Furthermore, each signatory and public endorser provides an annual report to the MCB regarding its hiring, retention and promotion practices. This empirical data is used to chart the progress made toward implementing the Initiative's action plan and outlined objectives.

Committed to the Diversity Initiative, the City Attorney's Office will participate in the 2009 Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerkship (CLDC) — a twelve week internship opportunity for first-year minority law students. The CLDC students spend six weeks with a law firm and six weeks with a corporate legal department. This year, they will also work in the City Attorney's Office for a day.

As a public endorser, the City Attorney's Office will continue to enhance and promote diversity within its workplace culture. "The City Council reflects the community, our workforce reflects the community, and the City Attorney's Office must also reflect the community. Equal opportunity and diversity are core principles for the City of Charlotte," said McCarley.

The Diversity Initiative's Advisory Group looks forward to working with the City Attorney's Office and continues to solicit participation in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg General Counsel and Managing Partners Diversity Initiative from local legal entities.

"As a young African American attorney I will represent possibility—the possibility that total dedication to one's craft can provide a forum in which to contribute to society in a manner befitting the position," said applicant Christian Murphy, a first-year student from the University of North Carolina School of Law. "It is this ideal which I seek to emulate, by being the best attorney that I can possibly be. I intend to give truth to the reality that quality work is not exclusive to one race; and that integrity of character is not limited to one class of people; and that intellect and a willingness to use it is indiscriminate." Murphy was offered a clerkship position. He will spend his summer with Mayer Brown and TIAA-CREF.



CLDC Clerks (left to right) Andrew Tamayo, Liana Rebollo, Mathew Telford, Christian Murphy, and Johnson Atkinson perform a short violin piece at a CLDC Cultural Arts Reception. The clerks, having no prior violin experience, were instructed by a Community School for the Arts' faculty member.

The CLDC clerks began their tenure on May 19, 2009. This year's program features events with the MCB Young Lawyers Section, the City Attorney's Office, a theatrical performance and judicial luncheon. The CLDC program operates under the leadership of its co-chairs Kristi K. Walters, Special Counsel and Director of Professional Development and Diversity with Parker, Poe, Adams and Bernstein, and Timika Shafeek-Horton, Associate General Counsel at Duke Energy Corporation.

The following law firms and corporations have participated as CLDC partner employers during the past two years: Alston & Bird, LLP; Bank of America; Compass Group USA Inc.; Duke Energy Corporation; Goodrich Corporation; Hunton & Williams; K & L Gates; McGuireWoods, LLP; Moore & Van Allen, PLLC; Parker Poe Adams & Bernstein LLP; Mayer Brown; Robinson, Bradshaw & Hinson, P.A.; TIAA-CREF; Wells Fargo Corporation; and Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice.



## COMMITTEE FOUNDER RECEIVES DIVERSITY AWARD

Special Committee on Diversity founding member, George V. Hanna, III was awarded with the second annual presentation of the MCB Julius L. Chambers Diversity Champion Award.

This April, the Mecklenburg County Bar (MCB) Special Committee on Diversity honored past MCB and Mecklenburg Bar Foundation president George. Hanna III with the second annual presentation of the Julius L. Chambers Diversity Champion Award. The Award, which was presented to Hanna at the 2009 McMillan Fellowship Fund Dinner, celebrates those who have made a significant contribution to diversity and equal opportunity in the Charlotte- Mecklenburg legal community.

The award reflects Mr. Hanna's "passionate advocacy for making diversity a key focus of our Bar," including his pivotal role in founding the MCB Special Committee on Diversity, said Norfleet Pruden, current Committee

member and attorney with K&L Gates. Since its creation in 2004, the Committee has launched a number of initiatives to diversify the local legal profession, including: the Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerkship program, Lunch with a Lawyer, the Diversity Day program for undergraduate and high school students of color, the Diversity Initiative and the recruitment of a fulltime diversity coordinator. The Committee continues to provide support to local minority Bars through various partnerships as well.

Hanna, a trial attorney with Moore & Van Allen, has served as a member of the MCB Volunteer Lawyers Committee for more than ten years. He continues to serve as a member of the North Carolina Chief Justice's Commission on Equal Access to Justice, and was a former board chair for Legal Services of Southern Piedmont and the Children's Law Center (currently referred to as the Council for Children's Rights).

Outside of his professional and community commitments, Hanna places a priority on spending time with his grandchildren.



Rob Harrington (right) presents the award to Hanna.

The Award is fittingly named after its first honoree, the distinguished civil rights attorney Julius L. Chambers. Mr. Chambers represented the plaintiffs in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school desegregation case in which the late James B. McMillan, whose memory the McMillan Fund honors, was the presiding judge. Since 1995, the McMillan Fund has supported justice and innovation within our local legal system by awarding law students summer fellowships in public agencies. These fellowships are funded in large part by the annual dinner.

# THANK YOU!

The Diversity Initiative Advisory Group would like to thank all of its participating signatories and public endorsers for their continued contribution and support to increasing diversity in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg legal community.

ALSTON+BIRD LLP

K&L GATES



HUNTON & WILLIAMS



MAYER BROWN

GOODRICH



Nelson Mullins

Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

WELLS FARGO

KING & SPALDING

HAMILTON MOON STEPHENS STEELE & MARTIN, PLLC ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Littler Employment & Labor Law Solutions Worldwide

McGUIREWOODS Relationships That Drive Results

Bank of America

Moore & Van Allen

WOMBLE CARLYLE INNOVATORS AT LAW

PARKER POE PARKER POE ADAMS & BERNSTEIN LLP

JMD JAMES McELROY & DIEHL, P.A. ATTORNEYS AT LAW



CADWALADER

ROBINSON BRADSHAW & HINSON