

In an upcoming issue of *The Litigator*, in my first message as President of OTLA, I will be reflecting on the societal changes that have shaped recent months and years.

In addition to the challenges of practicing remotely during the pandemic, 2020 also highlighted the systemic barriers that continue to prevent visible minorities from achieving equality and equity within the legal system and in society at large. Reflecting on these issues during Black History Month is appropriate as we take stock as an Association and as a society. Last year, the tragic, senseless, merciless killing of George Floyd by a Minnesota law enforcement official brought necessary attention to how visible minorities continue to be treated differently, unfairly, and sadly at times resulting in deadly consequences.

OTLA members have responded to these concerns by forming a Diversity and Inclusion Caucus that is tasked to provide input on what type of section/caucus should be formed and what the mandate and purpose of it should be. At the heart of everything being considered is how to better address the challenges faced by our diverse members. This effort should have been undertaken long before 2020, but we are working hard to catch up and ensure that we are doing what we can to address these important issues.

These issues, which are important to discuss in the context of Black History Month, are of course part of the lived experiences of our members throughout the year. We will be exploring aspects of this theme through several topics including:

- Cultural differences and the importance of these differences in litigation
- How systemic racism permeates the legal system and our practices
- Black lives matter and police misconduct
- Hiring issues

Going forward we are hopeful that we can continue to make progress and help address these important issues in dialogue with all members of OTLA.

I invite your input and support of these initiatives.

Kris Bonn

President-Elect

OTLA