

DIVERSE LAWYERS

Making a Difference Awards

NOMINATION FORM

* Nomination fee will be returned if your candidate is not selected.



With this award, we are highlighting prominent diverse lawyers making a difference in diversity, inclusion, and equity within their law firms, and for their clients and communities. The profiles that will appear in the pages of *Profiles in Diversity Journal*® will showcase their achievements in all areas of their legal practices, including pipeline issues, the need for mentoring, leadership, LGBTQ+ rights, access to justice, and more.

While progress has been and is being made, more work is needed. Lawyers who are leading and showing the way deserve our recognition and have earned our respect. This award affirms that "differences" are valuable in achieving positive diversity, equity, and inclusion outcomes.

Who Are these Outstanding Individuals?

Nominated by employers or colleagues, Diverse Lawyers Making a Difference are confident, determined, high-performing, purpose-driven professionals who create value for their coworkers, customers, community, and of course, the organizations where they contribute their talents.

Throughout its history, *Profiles in Diversity Journal*® has recognized thousands of men and women from around the world who are making a difference. The profiles that will appear in this important edition will recognize and celebrate our Diverse Lawyers Making a Difference awardees, and enhance the reputations of the organizations that encourage, empower, and support these trailblazing individuals.

NOMINATION DEADLINE:

September 13, 2024

Your nomination allows us to showcase and honor these Diverse Lawyers and recognize the inclusive organizations that support their success.

Our crystal award provides each recipient with a lasting reminder of this prestigious honor. It will be shipped directly to your designee for internal celebrations at organizations around the globe.

Questions? Contact James Rector, Publisher

Email: profiles@diversityjournal.com

Office: 440-892-0444

Direct: 440-899-9223

Mobile: 440-662-9770

Profiles in Diversity Journal: Gemini Towers #1 • 1991 Crocker Road, #600 • Cleveland, OH 44145 • www.diversityjournal.com



DIVERSE LAWYERS

Making a Difference Awards

NOMINATION FORM

Complete Your Nomination in 3 Steps

1. Provide important nomination information on pages 3 & 4 of this document.

Nominations will be reviewed and judged based on the brief bio you provide, which may include contributions and achievements in support of colleagues, customers, or communities, and in other areas the nominator deems important:

- Professional Achievement
- Innovation
- Mentorship
- Community Involvement
- Leadership
- Pipeline development
- Legacy
- Supplier diversity and economic development

2. Complete the Nomination Processing Fee Area on Page 4

There is a \$495 processing fee per nomination which must be received by the nomination deadline. If your nominee is not selected your nomination fee will be refunded.

3. Upload* Your Completed Nomination document by September 13, 2024 at <https://diversityjournal.com/dlmd-nomination-upload/>.

* Nomination forms must be submitted/uploaded via PDJ's secure online portal. Email submissions will not be accepted!

It's that Easy

If your nominee should be selected as a 2024 Diverse Lawyer Making a Difference award recipient, we will notify both your successful nominee and the person who nominated him or her. We'll also send each nominee a Question & Answer packet. He or she will be asked to answer a few questions, write a brief essay, and provide a high-resolution photograph of him- or herself, as well as a digital version of your organization's logo. Each nominee's photograph, essay, and professional information will appear on a dedicated full page in our Q4 issue. Just complete the Nomination area on pages 3 and 4. Links for upload and payment are on page 4.

DEADLINE for Nominations:
September 13, 2024

Questions? Contact James Rector, *Publisher*

Email: profiles@diversityjournal.com **Office:** 440-892-0444 **Direct:** 440-899-9223 **Mobile:** 440-662-9770

Profiles in Diversity Journal: Gemini Towers #1 • 1991 Crocker Road, #600 • Cleveland, OH 44145 • www.diversityjournal.com



DIVERSE LAWYERS

Making a Difference Awards

NOMINATION FORM

(Please fill in all form fields)

A. Nominee Information

Nominee's Name: _____
(as it should appear in print)

Job Title: _____

Organization Name: _____

Full Corporate Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Contact info for Nominee's
Administrative Assistant: _____

B. Nominated by:

Note: The nominator must be the primary point of contact for all editorial communications. Using a company executive as the nominator will not increase a nominee's chances of selection. He or she will be evaluated on merit alone. Please ensure that the person whose information is entered below is available to manage all communications related to the nomination and award process.

Nominator's Name: _____

Job Title: _____

Organization Name: _____

Corporate Mailing Address: _____

Office Phone Number: _____

Mobile Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Secondary Contact

Name & Email: _____



DIVERSE LAWYERS Making a Difference Awards

NOMINATION FORM

C. Tell Us Why You Chose this Nominee

Briefly explain why your nominee should be recognized as a 2024 Diverse Lawyer Making a Difference: (100 words max.)

Provide a brief bio that highlights your nominee's contributions and accomplishments, which may include examples of professional achievement, innovation, mentorship, community involvement, leadership, pipeline development, legacy, supplier diversity, and economic development. (200 words max.)

Attach any documents (articles, surveys) supporting why the person you propose should receive the award.

D. Nomination Process

NOMINATION FEE: \$495:

After filling out this Nomination form be sure to save the file. Then click on the link below to go to the online form and fill it out. Near the end of the online form you will need to "Choose File" to attach this Nomination form and then submit everything. After that please be sure to go to our secure payment portal where you can submit your entry fee payment.



Please upload this document *(do not email)*
at: <https://diversityjournal.com/dlmd-nomination-upload/>



Submit \$495 application fee payment at:
<https://buy.stripe.com/fZe02Q6958NRbmg6ou>

Submitted nomination and fee must be received by September 13, 2024

Emailed submissions will not be accepted!

DIVERSE LAWYERS

Making a Difference Awards

NOMINATION FORM



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Will the nomination fee be refunded if our candidate is not selected?

Yes. Your nomination fee will be returned in full if your candidate is not selected.

2. Is my organization allowed to nominate a candidate who has won a different award this year from PDJ?

Yes. Your nominees may include a candidate or candidates who have previously won different awards from PDJ this year.

3. How will my organization be notified of our nominee's acceptance?

Confirmation that your organization's nominee has been accepted will be sent to the nominator and the award winner along with the Question & Answer Form.

4. Is purchasing an advertisement in the Q4 2024 issue of PDJ required if our nominee is accepted?

Purchasing space for a congratulatory or branding ad is optional and not required.

5. Will we be able to receive pdfs of our nominee's profile layout?

Yes. If you wish to receive a **FREE pdf** of your nominee's layout from the Q4 magazine, please email a request to stevetoth@diversityjournal.com after the issue has been launched.

Each Winner will receive a full page in the Q4 issue
The next 3 pages are samples of similar profile pages.



Christopher Fowlkes
Partner



We Need to be Cognizant of Unconscious Bias

I am grateful that every day I get to do something I am passionate about, which is being involved in high-stakes products liability litigation. I'm a former Division I athlete, and I thrive on competition. It's exciting and it's thrilling to be able to go up against highly capable adversaries in unfriendly jurisdictions with bet-the-company litigation.

One of the things that helped me get to this level in my career was having mentors who I could trust. Law firms can be difficult for anyone to navigate, but I think even more so for traditionally disadvantaged people, including persons of color. As I was coming up through the ranks, there weren't that many people who looked like me in the rooms where decisions were made or who were partners in large law firms. Having mentors who were successfully able to navigate these waters was critical.

I have been very fortunate to have a mentor in Jerry Blackwell, who I met through the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers and who recently served as lead prosecutor on the Derek Chauvin case on a pro bono basis. Having Jerry as a confidante was instrumental to my mental health and my resolve to continue, even when I felt like I was being treated differently. As a diverse attorney, people either treat you with kid gloves or push you harder than anyone else. Having a mentor gives you someone you can vent to without fear of appearing vulnerable or being misunderstood.

It's important to me that we also mentor the next generation of diverse lawyers and help them out because a lot of us didn't have many helping hands. This looks like: giving younger attorneys opportunities to argue substantive motions, more standup time in trial, and letting them participate in the governance of the firm.

We also need to be flexible in how we deal with the next generation of attorneys. So many are used to working remotely, which we've seen can be just as effective as traditional, in-person work. We need to understand that not everyone who becomes an attorney wants to make partner in the firm. We've got to value those individuals just as much as we value rain-makers because we risk losing good, talented people. Finally, we need to be cognizant of unconscious bias. I've been practicing since 1998, and the numbers are pretty much the same across all the different affinity groups. That in and of itself is to me demonstrative of the issue. I think we can start to make change by having more people of color represented in hiring, policy making, and management positions.



Education: University of Minnesota School of Law, JD (1998); University of Minnesota, BA, Philosophy (1995)

Company Name: Nelson Mullins

Industry: Legal

Company CEO: James Lehman

Company Headquarters Location: Columbia, South Carolina

Number of Employees: 1000+

Your Location (if different from above): Minneapolis, Minnesota

Words you live by: Never let anyone else define your narrative or diminish your resolve.

Who is your personal hero: Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

What book are you reading: *Quiet Strength: The Principles, Practices, and Priorities of a Winning Life* by Tony Dungy

What was your first job: Utility clerk for Pick 'N' Save grocery store

Favorite charity: Feed My Starving Children

Interests/Hobbies: Fine Dining, movies and attending my children's activities.

Family: Wife – Melissa; 3 children – Myla, Jackson and Shiloh

Questions? Contact James Rector, *Publisher*

Email: profiles@diversityjournal.com **Office:** 440-892-0444 **Direct:** 440-899-9223 **Mobile:** 440-662-9770



Education: AB Biochemistry, Columbia College, Columbia University, Ph.D. Molecular Biology, Princeton University, JD, University of California, Berkeley

Company Name: Norton Rose Fulbright

Industry: Legal

Company CEO:
Jeff Cody, US Managing Partner

Company Headquarters Location:
Houston/New York

Number of Employees: 7,150

Your Location (if different from above):
Austin, TX

Who is your personal hero:
The Honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg

What book are you reading:
My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante

What was your first job: Paper route with my brother when I was 12

Favorite charity: Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Interests/Hobbies: Baking delicious things for friends and family

Family: Spouse David is a Philosophy Professor; son, Felix, in college; twin daughters, Isabel and Anita

Stepping Away from Work and Attending to Personal Needs is Possible

After years of fertility treatments, first with a success that was my son, and then being pregnant with twins, I was shocked when the obstetrician said that I was checking into the hospital even though I was only 26 weeks pregnant. Shock turned to fear after another test predicted at least an 80% chance of going into labor that weekend. At that stage of the pregnancy, my girls were not quite two pounds each. This wasn't supposed to happen now, and as an IP partner at a large law firm, I hadn't planned to step away from my practice just yet.

Thankfully, my week in the hospital was uneventful. I went home for strict bedrest and monitored contractions daily. Nothing changed except we (the girls and I) got bigger every day. My husband was a constant support alongside our moms who alternated weeks to help. My Cuban mother-in-law served me large platefuls of arroz con pollo, carnitas, frijoles negros and rice, as well as hot fudge sundaes (I gained four-pounds/week), while my Japanese-American mom made me crispy tacos and fried rice (I gained just two pounds/week). I started to worry less, as we passed each weeks' milestone; the prospects of the NICU, oxygen tanks, eye or heart surgery, and developmental challenges decreased.

I tried to manage some client matters but working while lying down with a growing belly (which was the size of a small garage) was uncomfortable. I was incredibly grateful that others stepped in and undertook all my work. Fortunately, I carried the girls to week 37—full-term for twins. I took six months of leave, during which clients were not lost and matters were handled. I returned to work as if nothing had happened (home, of course, was a different issue).

That experience taught me two things: one, I had created a narrative about the importance of work that wasn't true and potentially kept me from taking better care of myself. We place pressure on ourselves that may undermine our well-being. Second, it highlighted that I could do what was needed at a particular time. Those ten weeks of bedrest taught me that I shouldn't overestimate the importance of work while minimizing the need to prioritize what is most important at that moment (and being okay with that). While it does require the help of others, stepping away from the job and attending to personal needs is possible, indeed advisable. To this day, I continually assess what needs to be prioritized—whether it's work, health, my husband, or my son and now 16-year-old daughters, and plan accordingly.



Education: BA in History and Political Science – Creighton University; MS Public Policy and Management – Carnegie Mellon University; JD – Washington University in St. Louis

Company Name:
Union Pacific Railroad Company

Industry: Railroad

Company CEO: Lance Fritz

Company Headquarters Location:
Omaha, NE

Number of Employees: 31,000

Words you live by: Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it. –Maya Angelou

Who is your personal hero:
My great grandfather

What book are you reading:
The Black Count by Tom Reiss

What was your first job: Process Consultant at Anderson Consulting

Favorite charity:
Women's Fund of Omaha

Interests/Hobbies: Travel and reading

Family: husband – Aaron Conley; sons – Justin Conley 16 Jackson Conley 14

Without Honesty it is Hard to Give or Receive the Hard Feedback

The thing I am most passionate about in my career and personal life is being of service to others. Mentoring is one of the most significant ways that you can make a major difference in the life of others. Giving back by mentoring is something only you can do; no one else can provide the presence that is uniquely you. Your experience is a story that only you can tell. Your story provides others a roadmap of how it can be done and reassurance that they are not alone in their challenges. None of us got where we are on our own and it is a gift that multiplies. People who are mentored often see the immense value and reach out to do the same for others. Most importantly, your efforts can be life changing for someone that just needed a small amount of inspiration, encouragement, and support.

I have had several mentors in my life at various stages that have had a huge impact on my life. I cherish those relationships as they told me truths. Truths that changed my perspective and how I moved through the world. There was one that was a quiet, unassuming powerhouse that was dropped into my life right at a pivotal time in my career. We did not have long conversations, but she listened and then would drop a nugget of wisdom for me to sit with and work through. While each of those nuggets felt small at the time, they built on each other and changed my perception and understanding of the world I was operating in.

Vulnerability and honesty are the keys to a successful mentor relationship. I believe in sharing my experiences and lessons learned generously as my mentors have. You cannot be an effective role model or mentor without a relationship or exchange that is grounded in honesty. Without honesty it is hard to give or receive the hard feedback. I own my ups and downs and encourage others not to feel shame when they experience failure. I never want an upcoming professional to feel like they are alone in their challenges. We can only arm others with tools to overcome adversity if we first bare our own adversity.

I am grateful that I have been positioned to be able to create development and growth opportunities for upcoming talent. One of my greatest joys is seeing my mentees' mindsets change which drives attitude and approach changes and eventually circumstance changes.