

WHY DIVERSITY?

BY JIMMY GOODMAN
CROWE & DUNLEVY (OKLAHOMA CITY, OK)

*Why is diversity important to the legal profession?
What is it, anyway?*

What does it mean for me?

Will changing my approach to it make me a "better" lawyer?

Does it impact my ability to attract and serve clients?

Haven't we done enough already?

These questions may be on your mind, or may be posed to you by a colleague. The **ABA Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession** offers these views and comments of fellow lawyers and clients in an effort to address such questions.

It is our hope that this brochure will help to better inform all lawyers about the critical need for everyone in the legal profession to support the initiatives begun by the ABA, state and local bar associations, private law firms, corporations, courthouses and national and local bar leaders to improve the racial and ethnic diversity of our profession. Supporting diversity will help us better serve our clients, the justice system, and the broader needs of our changing society.

We cannot afford to wait. It is time for our profession to address these opportunities and challenges together, creatively, and with a feeling of profound assurance that creating a collection of *diverse* lawyers, serving all sectors of this great nation, is in our own economic and professional self-interest. And, pursuing diversity is also in the interest of this country, our system of justice, the legal profession, future generations of our fellow Americans, and in the interest of preserving those very ideals and principles that forged this nation, made it, and maintains it as the envy of the world.

“Beyond the moral imperative based on concepts of fairness and equal opportunity, diversity in a private law firm is simply good business. Corporate America is increasingly insistent that you staff their work with lawyers who look like their diverse workforce. And rather than the lip service clients once devoted to the issue, more and more of today's business clientele really mean it. Law firms that do not measure up will be left behind in today's heavily competitive environment.”

GREG EURICH
PARTNER, HOLLAND & HART
DENVER, CO

“Diversity is extremely important to our companies, their leadership and employees, and to the customers they serve. We are working actively to promote diversity within our workplace, and we expect the law firms which represent our companies to do so as well. In making decisions concerning selection of outside counsel, we will give significant weight to a firm's commitment and progress in this area. We expect our law firms to do it, and we will be visiting those firms in the near future to discuss this principle and each law firm's efforts to make it happen.”

CHARLES R. MORGAN,
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND
GENERAL COUNSEL, BELL SOUTH
CORPORATION, ATLANTA, GA

“The future will belong to those law firms that make diversity a core value. For those that do so, the clients, the top law students and the best staff will be theirs for the taking. For firms looking to be strong in the future, diversity is absolutely essential. No single measure will take precedence over the degree to which a firm, in all its human components, reflects the diversity of its communities.”

BILL McBRIDE
MANAGING PARTNER
HOLLAND & KNIGHT LLP
TAMPA, FL

“Diversity is really a matter of long-term self-interest for law firms. There is a growing pool of talent in lawyers of diverse ethnic, racial, and other kinds of backgrounds, and we benefit from bringing that talent into our firm. We also need to reflect the diversity of our community and clients in the future.”

RUTH A. BEYER
MANAGING PARTNER,
STOEL RIVES LLP
PRESIDENT OF THE MULTNOMAH
COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION
PORTLAND, OR

DIVERSITY—HERITAGE OF THIS NATION

The United States of America was forged in the fires of diversity, and based on the principle that all people are created equal. The nation's founders came from vastly different—sometimes opposing—cultures, religious beliefs, backgrounds and national heritages. The foundational documents of our country are solid and have endured as long as they have, because more than two centuries ago this **diverse** collection of individuals collaborated together, debated fiercely with one another, and hammered out collectively acceptable governance principles that respected and protected their respective rights and interests.

DIVERSITY—FUTURE OF THIS NATION

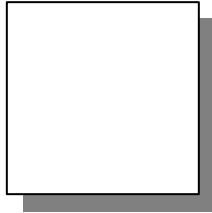
All across America, business, government, and all sectors of our vibrant, mobile society are realizing that diversity is a great strength of this country—and that our ability to prosper, economically and socially, as a national community will depend significantly on embracing, respecting, and harnessing the power of that diversity. Business, especially, is recognizing that its best decisions—like those of the founders—come out of discussion, debate, and input from a collection of culturally, ethnically, and individually different persons. **Diversity** is the mantra of business in the new millennium—because it is working for them.

DIVERSITY—FUTURE OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION

This awakening to the importance of **diversity** for the future of all Americans is exciting—and also challenging. It is particularly challenging to our profession. For, as the racial and ethnic diversity of our country continues to offer new strengths and opportunities for success, it also places new stress on the ability of our non-diverse profession to meet the demands for justice and access to legal services that accompany those opportunities.

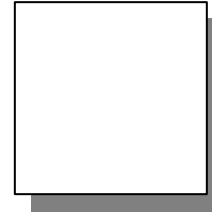
“The principle reason in my view to support diversity is because only if we have racial and ethnic diversity throughout our society will our society continue to function the way it should, under the rule of law.”

*WILLIAM G. PAUL
ABA PRESIDENT -- 1999-2000*



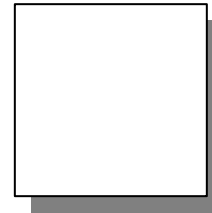
“Diversity is embodied in our country’s laws, and we are all better because of it. The fabric of our society gains strength from diversity, and we must work to make diversity a reality in the legal profession and the legal workplace.”

*WILLIAM J. LINKLATER
PRESIDENT, THE CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION*



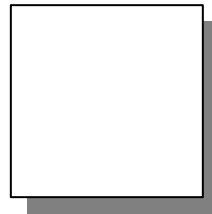
“Lawyers serve society as guardians of the rights and liberties of all people regardless of race, color, or creed. The legal profession cannot preserve this responsibility and privilege without reflecting the many faces of society at all levels of service. Diversity resonates throughout the law and must be a constant measure of the legal profession’s ability to fulfill this awesome responsibility and privilege.”

*TERRENCE M. MURPHY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE CHICAGO BAR ASSOCIATION*



“The face of America is changing. We represent a more diverse client base than ever before. Our clients will continue to increasingly expect us to look more like America as a profession. Dean Roscoe Pound believed that as a profession, lawyers pursue a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service. We cannot, however, properly answer the call to service as a racially divided profession. We must answer as one, together.”

*RON D. HARRISON, PRESIDENT
ARKANSAS BAR ASSOCIATION*



DIVERSITY IN THE PROFESSION

THE FACTS

Minority representation among law partners remains less than 3 % in most cities.

Minority representation among general counsel in the Fortune 500 is 2.8%.

In 1999, the total number of minority law graduates in the United States dropped for the first time since 1985.

Minorities continue to be underrepresented in the legal profession relative to the representation in other professions. Combined African American and Hispanic representation among lawyers was 7% in 1998, compared to 14.3% among accountants, 9.7% among physicians, 9.4% among college and university teachers, and 7.9% among engineers. The only professions with lower levels of minority representation were dentists (4.8%) and natural scientists (6.9%). The U.S. population is projected to be almost 60% “minority” by 2050.

*FROM MILES TO GO 2000:
PROGRESS OF MINORITIES IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION*

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ABA
**Defending Liberty
Pursuing Justice**

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Commission on
Racial and Ethnic
Diversity in the Profession
