

July 2022 Legal Industry News and Highlights: Law Firm Hiring, Industry Recognition, and the Latest in Diversity and Inclusion

Article By:

Thank you for reading the National Law Review's latest in legal industry news – read on below for updates on law firm hiring and expansion, industry awards and recognition, and diversity and inclusion initiatives! We hope you are staying safe, happy, and healthy.

Law Firm Hiring and Expansion

[Womble Bond Dickinson](#) has announced its upcoming merger with [Cooper, White & Cooper LLP](#), a multi-practice law firm based in San Francisco. Effective on September 1, 2022, the expansion will strengthen Womble's presence in the Bay Area, with more than two dozen legal professionals operating out of the San Francisco area.

"California is home to some of the world's key business and technology hubs, with San Francisco chief among them," said [Betty Temple](#), CEO and Chair of [Womble Bond Dickinson \(US\)](#). "The state – and indeed the entire West Coast – is strategically important to Womble, and we are thrilled to anchor our presence in the market through a firm that is well-known for its robust litigation and transactional skills. We look forward to continuing the growth of our services and footprint on the West Coast and in other key markets to provide greater value to our clients."

"We have been impressed by Womble's transatlantic platform and stellar reputation for advising companies on complex, high-stakes issues," said [Jed Solomon](#), a partner at Cooper, White & Cooper. "Combined with our cultural compatibility and shared commitment to exceptional client service, this was an ideal opportunity to expand our services to our collective client base."

[James W. Cox, MS](#), an experienced biologist and risk assessor, has joined [Bergeson & Campbell, P.C.](#) and The Acta Group as Senior Scientist. Mr. Cox, who has formerly served as an Acting Lead Biologist in Risk Assessment in the EPA's Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics and as a Biologist at the Department of Defense, has reviewed hundreds of biological agents, nanomaterials, industrial chemicals, and more to determine risks to human health and the [environment](#). At the firm, he will continue to provide regulatory process guidance for products subject to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), the [Toxic Substances Control Act \(TSCA\)](#), and

[other notable regulatory programs.](#)

“James’s contributions to our practice areas come at a crucial time, given the considerable uptick in the need for risk assessment skills,” said [Lynn L. Bergeson](#), Managing Partner of [Bergeson & Campbell](#) and President of Acta. “We are so pleased James has joined our team and look forward to introducing him to our clients.”

[Varnum LLP](#) has expanded its office in Birmingham, Michigan. With growing client demand and ongoing hiring, [the firm](#) has nearly doubled the size of its operations in the area in the last three years, featuring noteworthy practices in the fields of banking, [finance](#), corporate law, [M&A](#), intellectual property, and more.

“Since opening our doors in Birmingham three years ago, we have been thrilled with the reception from clients, legal talent and the community alike,” said Firm Chair [Ron DeWaard](#). “Our newly expanded office will allow us to continue our growth trajectory with first-class space for clients and talent.”

Industry Awards and Recognition

[Nick Welle](#), Partner at [Foley and Lardner LLP](#), has received a [2022 Philanthropic 5 Award](#) from the United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County. Created by the organization’s Emerging Leaders Council, the award recognizes five notable leaders in the community, particularly ones that have made significant contributions of mentoring, volunteer work, or leadership to nonprofit organizations in the area.

[Mr. Welle](#) is the Chair of [the firm](#)’s Health Benefits Practice Group, as well as the co-chair of the Pro Bono Committee based in Milwaukee. Both at the firm and through community volunteer work, Mr. Welle has managed projects such as camp clean-ups, backpack drives, and clothing fundraisers in the area, dedicating hundreds of hours to the [Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee](#). Additionally, he assists in running the Milwaukee [Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program](#), which aids high school students from diverse backgrounds in researching potential legal professions.

At the 40 at 50 Judicial Pro Bono Recognition Breakfast, [Barnes & Thornburg LLP](#) was honored by the Judicial Conference of the District of Columbia Circuit’s Standing Committee on Pro Bono Legal Services for its [ongoing commitment to pro bono legal services](#). More than 40 percent of the firm’s [Washington D.C.](#)-based attorneys performed more than 50 hours pro bono work in the last year, and as such, the firm was made eligible for the recognition.

In addition, the organization recognized [Barnes & Thornburg](#) for being one of only six firms in which at least 40 percent of its partners in the Washington D.C. office reached the 50-hour marker.

[Tycko & Zavareei LLP](#)’s [Sabita J. Soneji](#) has been nominated to the [Public Justice](#) Board of Directors for a term that will last three years. Working against unchecked corporate power, ongoing pollution, unjust employers, punitive credit card companies, and more, Public Justice engages in impactful legislation to take on notable systemic threats to justice in the United States. Ms. Soneji, a Partner at [Tycko & Zavareei](#), has nearly 20 years of experience in litigation and legal policy, fighting consumer fraud at both the federal and state level.

“I’m genuinely honored to be nominated to serve on the Board of an organization that tirelessly works to promote justice, diversity, and fairness,” said [Ms. Soneji](#). “I’m even more excited to get to

do that work with such an incredible group of devoted attorneys.”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

[Brittainy Joyner](#), attorney at [Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, LLP](#), has been accepted into the 2022 cohort for the Nonprofit Leadership Center’s Advancing Racial Equity on Nonprofit Boards (ARENB) Fellowship. Broken into six separate sessions, the ARENB program helps to advance the racial and ethnic diversity of nonprofit boards throughout the [Tampa Bay](#) area, ensuring these organizations are prepared and committed to fostering more inclusive cultures and environments. Ms. Joyner, a member of Shumaker’s [Litigation and Disputes](#) Service Line, focuses her practice on litigation and disputes for homeowners associations, as well as arbitration, mediation, and negotiation.

“We are proud that Brittainy got accepted into Advancing Racial Equity on Nonprofit Board Fellowship,” said [Maria Del Carmen Ramos](#), Shumaker Partner and Diversity and Inclusion Committee Co-Chair. “At Shumaker, we understand the importance of promoting racial equity. We are happy to see our attorneys, like Brittainy, being committed to doing something about it. We know Brittainy will be a valued fellow.”

In celebration of 2022’s Pride Month, New York Times bestselling author and Pulitzer Prize finalist Dr. Eric Cervini joined [Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP](#) attorneys for a virtual conversation about the history of LGBTQ+ politics in the United States, as well as the continued battle for LGBTQ+ rights. The event was moderated by [firm](#) Partner [J Matthew W. Haws](#), who is a [member](#) of the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Chicago and the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association.

With more than 300 anti-LGBTQ+ bills proposed this year across the country, Mr. Cervini acknowledged the community’s ongoing struggle. However, he noted “As I remind people, we have been through much worse. We have survived the inquisition, the Lavender Scare, the AIDS crisis, and Anita Bryant [...] We can certainly get through this. But we need to be studying up, how we were successful and how we failed in the past and then also be recruiting new allies, just as Frank Kameny recruited the ACLU, we need to be recruiting new allies today.”

[Darrell S. Gay](#), partner at [ArentFox Schiff LLP](#), has been named one of Crain New York Businesses’ 2022 [Notable Diverse Leaders in Law](#). Selected for his contributions to local counseling, pro bono work, and community service and philanthropy, as well as his commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives, Mr. Gay is an experienced attorney, focusing his practice on the field of [labor and employment](#). He assists in guiding clients through employee relations issues, as well as internal investigations and traditional labor matters.

In addition, [Mr. Gay](#) is a longtime leader in the private bar and the business community. He served for three years as the Commissioner for the New York State Civil Service Commission, and additionally played a central role in founding and leading the firm’s [Center for Racial Equality](#).

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