



STATEMENTS ON DIVERSITY & INCLUSION



BASSFORD REMELE



Kelly Putney is the Chief Operating Officer of Bassford Remele. She oversees the day-to-day operations of the firm and promotes a range of initiatives focused on fostering individuality. As a professional liability litigator, Kelly has helped clients navigate and prevent malpractice actions for 25 years. Also experienced in licensing and ethics matters, Kelly is a true professionals' lawyer, having represented and counseled hundreds of lawyers, physicians, and other professionals before their respective licensing boards.

Q: What do you see as the biggest challenge and greatest opportunity the legal profession will face over the next five years?

A: The greatest opportunity the legal profession will face over the next five years is also its greatest challenge: to interrupt the status quo and change how we do business.

The most successful in practice often hold the most power. They have a genuinely held belief that their success is due to the way they run their practice: by selecting the "right" attorneys to staff their files, by deliberately targeting business partners, and by rewarding those who reach "standard" markers of attorney success: high billable hours and receipts. Further, in general, we surround ourselves with people who are "like" us. While this has worked well for some, it creates barriers to diversity and inclusion.

Albert Einstein famously said, "Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results." Lawyers need to stop embracing the status quo. We need to change how we practice if we want change. This means changing "accepted" beliefs about what makes lawyers successful. We need to look at who we are "letting in." We must consider how we compensate our attorneys, who we are introducing to clients, who we are putting on succession plans, in whom we are choosing to invest, and the influence implicit bias may have on these factors. Only by coming out of our comfort zones will we bring meaningful change.

So how does this challenge equate to opportunity? We believe there are three reasons for intentionally committing to diversity and inclusion. First, it is the right thing to do. Second, we all do better when experiencing true diversity and inclusion. A wider range of backgrounds and experiences brings a wider range of perspectives and ways of looking at things, which helps us reach clients, judges, and juries. Finally, our clients expect serious

commitment to diversity and inclusion. Embracing this great challenge of changing will bring great opportunity to all.

Q: What role are corporate clients playing in trying to drive D&I at outside law firms?

A: Most firms have heard about their clients engaging in internal efforts to increase diversity and inclusion for years. They've also heard that, at some point, corporate clients' focus on diversity and inclusion would expand to law firms they retain. That time is now.

On the front end, many corporate clients require diversity statistics in connection with requests for proposals and consider that information when selecting law firms. In addition, several institutional clients have communicated their expectations related to diversity

and inclusion efforts. They send regular audits requesting statistics to track law firm progress and compliance.

Intangible efforts have also increased. For example, some corporate clients request face time with younger attorneys working on their files. Often these efforts lead to increased involvement of diverse attorneys in important matters that are critical to professional development. Some clients want to have input into succession planning, demanding that succession plans include diverse attorneys. Such efforts impact hiring practices, but they also improve retention of diverse attorneys by helping them grow a book of business and develop client relationships.

Bassford Remele, like other firms, continues to work to improve diversity and inclusion on its own. But the efforts of corporate clients are critical because they provide a source of accountability—accountability that can be measured in dollars and cents.

Q: What are you doing now for D&I efforts that you weren't doing two-three years ago?

A: Bassford Remele has employed many diversity & inclusion initiatives throughout the years, some more successful than others. The key to our successes has been "intentionality" in our efforts and expected outcomes.

Bassford Remele actively promotes diversity and inclusion across all levels of our firm, and we work hard to hire, retain, and promote diverse talent. For example, the firm's Diversity and Inclusion Committee works closely with our Board of Directors, and Recruiting and Associate Development Committees to foster a diverse workforce.

To hire diverse candidates, we regularly participate in the Minnesota Minority Recruitment Conference and the 1L Clerkship Program - both sponsored by Twin Cities Diversity in Practice - as well as the Cook County Bar Association Minority Job Fair in Chicago.

To retain and promote our hires, we offer a Mentor Program that assists with internal communication, workload issues, marketing and business development, and overall support. We also offer benefits packages that are friendly to a spectrum of lifestyles and life circumstances, incentivizing our workforce to stay. And we encourage our lawyers to sit on diversity committees and seek leadership positions, which many do, including for the Federal Bar Association, the Minnesota State Bar Association, the Hispanic National Bar Association, the Minnesota Association of Black Lawyers, the Minnesota Defense Lawyers Association, and others.

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Q: For D&I, what does "success" look like for your firm?

A: To fully answer this question we must recognize that as a community, as a profession, and as a firm, we are not where we want to be regarding diversity and inclusion. Bassford Remele fully appreciates that it plays a critically important role in the discussion and in making demonstrable change. To that end, "success" means improving where we are as a firm and continuing to be intentional in our efforts to become more diverse and inclusive. It means continuing to be active in the community and being recognized as an ally and thought leader. It means continuing to support efforts to broaden the pipeline of diverse students succeeding in school and going to law school. And it means always being cognizant that the efforts we undertake are necessary for the good of our communities, professional and personal. Since 1882, Bassford Remele has prided itself on being a leader within the Twin Cities legal community. That leadership must extend to our commitment to diversity and inclusion, and fuel our desire to see Bassford Remele reflect the community we serve. "Success," therefore, is not a specific number but is a continuing and unwavering commitment to act "intentionally" to improve diversity and inclusion within our firm, the profession, and the greater community.

PRACTICE AREAS

Alternative Dispute Resolution
Appellate Practice
Bankruptcy/Creditors' Remedies
Class Action/Multidistrict Litigation
Commercial Litigation
Construction
Consumer Law Defense
Employment Litigation/Advice
General Liability
Housing
Insurance Coverage
Intellectual Property Litigation
Organizational Liability for Sexual Misconduct/Abuse
Products Liability
Professional Liability/Claim Prevention
Trust and Estates Litigation

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