

Sheppard Mullin Boosts Diversity Initiatives

Firm Formalizes Attorneys of Color and LGBT Affinity Groups Women's Networking Events Hosted By Firm Coast-to-Coast

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton continues to build on its ongoing diversity and inclusion initiatives with the formal launch of firmwide affinity groups for attorneys of color and LGBT attorneys. The LGBT Attorneys Group is co-chaired by partners Blaine Templeman and Candace Matson, and the Diversity & Inclusion Attorney Network for attorneys of color is led by senior associate Miriam Montesinos, along with co-leaders in each U.S. office.

In addition to these affinity groups, Sheppard Mullin's women attorney groups meet monthly and continue to hold a variety of regional networking events for the firm's female attorneys and clients. These most recently included a night benefiting charity at Sephora in Los Angeles, a "Women Impressionists" art exhibit at San Francisco's Legion of Honor and a private shoe sale at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York.

Sheppard Mullin's diversity committee was formed in the early 1990s to address emerging issues in the legal profession. Partner Dianne Smith, a member of the Labor and Employment practice group based in the Los Angeles office, has chaired the firm's diversity efforts since 2003.

In 2007, the committee was restructured to broaden its scope and include greater firmwide representation at attorney and staff levels. Joining the firm in inaugural positions last year, Robert Neufeld, as chief talent officer, and Carol Ross-Burnett, as manager of diversity and inclusion, are both based in the Los Angeles office. Neufeld leads all of the functions that affect the associate lifecycle, including diversity and inclusion. Ross-Burnett manages and supports the firm's existing diversity efforts and develops new internal and external diversity initiatives.

"Sheppard Mullin embraces and supports diversity. We are thrilled to build on our long-standing commitment and solid foundation, with the additional insight and experience that Blaine, Candace and Miriam bring," said Dianne Smith. "In an increasingly competitive environment where clients demand diversity and law students insist on it, we have demonstrated vision and leadership by laying the groundwork for success in attracting and leading our people."

"After years of addressing LGBT issues in the legal profession and in organizations at the local and national levels, I am excited to partner with the other attorneys and professionals at Sheppard Mullin," said Templeman. "I am impressed with the firm's commitment to diversity and look forward to helping to expand our firm's recruiting, development and retention of qualified LGBT attorneys and staff. I am especially excited by our firm's agreement to work with Lambda Legal as a national sponsor over the next year."

Templeman, a member of the Corporate and Intellectual Property practice groups in Sheppard Mullin's New York office and a member of the firm's diversity committee, joined the firm in September from Heller Ehrman, where he held LGBT leadership roles. Matson is a member of the firm's Real Estate, Land Use and Natural Resources practice group and is based in the Los Angeles office. Montesinos is a member of the Real Estate, Land Use and Natural Resources practice group in the firm's San Francisco office and was chair of the diversity committee at her previous firm.

About Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP

Sheppard Mullin is a full service AmLaw 100 firm with more than 560 attorneys in 11 offices located throughout California and in New York, Washington, D.C. and Shanghai. The firm's California offices are located in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Silicon Valley, Santa Barbara, Century City, Orange County, Del Mar Heights and San Diego. Founded in 1927 on the principle that the firm would succeed only if its attorneys delivered prompt, high quality and cost-effective legal services, Sheppard Mullin provides legal counsel to U.S. and international clients. Companies turn to Sheppard Mullin to handle a full range of corporate and technology matters, high stakes litigation and complex financial transactions. In the U.S., the firm's clients include more than half of the Fortune 100 companies.