

Sheppard Mullin Establishes Race, Inclusion and Equality Task Force

Firm Pledges \$400,000 Towards Internal and External Initiatives to Promote Cross-Cultural Understanding and Dialogue, Support Impacted Communities and Peaceful Efforts to Achieve Racial Justice, and More

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP today announced the formation of a new task force with a charter beyond the firm's existing diversity and inclusion program. Comprised of attorneys and staff, the new Task Force will lead the firm's efforts to address the various issues around race, inclusion and equality, including those that have arisen out of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with regard to the Asian community, and out of recent events once again bringing to the fore the experience of the Black community. To support various activities, Sheppard Mullin has initially committed \$400,000 to the work of the Task Force, \$100,000 of which comes from the court award for the Firm's successful pro bono representation of people with disabilities in New York City enforcing their human right to safety in emergency situations, specifically during Hurricane Sandy in 2016.

"The recent conversations about race around our country and our Firm have made us uncomfortable, conjuring painful emotions and experiences, and challenging preconceived notions," said Guy Halgren, Sheppard Mullin's Chairman. "We hope this outpouring of emotion will continue and we encourage everyone in our Firm community to speak out against racial injustice and police misconduct. At the same time, the Firm enthusiastically wants to begin redoubling its efforts to be part of the solution."

"The Task Force will look both inward and outward," Halgren continued. "Its work will include providing resources and trainings on allyship, promoting cross-cultural understanding and dialogue, providing opportunities for the Firm and its members to support impacted communities, supporting peaceful efforts to achieve racial justice, assisting with issues related to COVID-19-related racism, and redoubling our efforts to make Sheppard Mullin a welcoming, supportive, safe and inclusive place. The Task Force will determine how to best support the community through a number of avenues, including community service, pro bono, Diversity & Inclusion organizational restructuring, and financial contributions."

Halgren concluded, "While we are initially funding the task force with \$400,000, we recognize this is not about throwing money at a problem, hoping it will go away, and feeling better about ourselves. Real change will require us to engage, let down our defenses, listen, do our best to put ourselves in the shoes of others with different lived experiences, take action and persevere."

The Task Force is led by Firm Chairman Guy Halgren; Diversity & Inclusion Partner Rena Andoh; and Director of Diversity & Inclusion and Talent Management Strategy Lois Durant.

One of the Task Force's initial pro bono projects will be leveraging the Firm's unique experience with several aspects of police reform in the U.S. In 2013, the Firm and partners Jonathan Aronie and David Douglass were appointed by the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana as the federal monitor of the New Orleans Police Department (NOPD), responsible for reviewing, assessing, and reporting publicly on the NOPD's compliance with a far-reaching federal Consent Decree. Growing out of this work, Aronie, Douglass, and others have invested almost 3,000 pro bono hours to support the creation of the nation's first department-wide police intervention program called EPIC (Ethical Policing Is Courageous). The program teaches officers skills and tactics to intervene in another officer's actions to prevent mistakes and misconduct. Aronie and Douglass have been asked by police chiefs from departments around the country to work with their departments to help initiate similar programs.

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