

# Diversity & Inclusion at Shook

SHOOK  
HARDY & BACON

Summer 2020

## SHOOK D&I MISSION

*We are committed at Shook to an inclusive workplace where everyone is respected, rewarded, equipped and invested in because of their differences. We embrace diversity and maintain that genuine inclusion creates an environment where everyone can belong and thrive.*

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The recent events of our nation have had a profound effect on communities, on us as individuals, and the entire Shook firm. The Shook Diversity & Inclusion team and others in our firm community have been meeting and speaking on a daily basis on how we as a firm, and within our local communities, will continue our fight against these injustices, raise collective awareness of the factors that brought us to this place, and consider how we can use the lessons of this sad but inevitable period in our history to root out inequities in our own profession and firm.

For the three months prior to this civil unrest, we were all dealing with sheltering at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many law firms, Shook has had to reimagine the workplace due to COVID-19. We are proud of the progress we have made even during this challenging time. In a time when it is easy to let people slip through the cracks, our partners are reaching out to each of our diverse associates to address any issues and find solutions. The partners are also connecting in bi-weekly calls to discuss any issues or topics that may need speedy and immediate action. We continue to strive for the engagement of our attorneys and professional staff and are making strides towards that goal.

Below are highlights of a few of our new programs.

## CLIENT DIVERSITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (CDAC)

Shook is launching a Client Diversity Advisory Council (“CDAC”). The CDAC creates a collaboration platform for our firm and key clients to advance our shared passion for improving diversity both within our firm and more broadly, within the legal profession.

We hope that by virtue of this partnership with some of our most important clients, the CDAC will help us chart a course toward specific, measurable and sustainable progress in our recruitment, retention and promotion of diverse lawyers. What we know is that if any inclusion in our profession is to be impactful, it must be client driven. It is our hope this CDAC will offer our firm both strategic guidance and hold us accountable for progress beyond best efforts and good intentions.

We envision that the CDAC will be a place where we can have open and frank discussions as partners, where we share best practices swiftly implemented into actions.

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## THE HONORABLE JON GRAY LAWYERS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PROGRAM

The Honorable Jon Gray Lawyers Leadership Academy Program will launch in July and aims to enhance the long-term advancement and retention of minority lawyers by providing them access and tools to become successful Shook partners.

Designed as an 18-month leadership development experience, the Lawyers Leadership Program is open to an inaugural class of six high potential, high performing senior Shook associates within two years of partnership. Candidates will be selected by self-nomination and recommendations made by managing partners throughout the firm.

The Lawyers Leadership Academy will include a one-to-one pairing with a Fellow to build acumen in leadership, executive presence, client facing opportunities and business development, as well as meaningful work building trial practice skills. The faculty and sponsors will include key client relationship partners, marquee trial lawyers, alumni, clients and others working as program stakeholders.

## SHOOK SCHOLARS INSTITUTE

Diverse 1L law students from across the country apply for this Institute, which is an innovative diversity and inclusion focused development program with concentration in the areas of litigation and trial skills, inclusive leadership development, and career success strategies. Twelve students are selected and attend this 3-day intensive program designed to give law students the rare opportunity to learn from a litigation powerhouse in an interactive, small group setting led by Shook's attorneys. It provides students with critical development experiences, while introducing them to valuable relationships and networks. Each law student is partnered with a Shook mentor who serves in this capacity throughout the duration of the student's law school career. In light of the pandemic, this year's program will be held virtually.

## D&I WEBINAR SERIES

This year, our Diversity Retreat was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To keep momentum, we have launched a series of webinars aimed at engaging our attorneys while we all are sheltering at home. We currently have planned several sessions and have others under consideration.

- ◆ *Rainmaker Panel* – Three of our partners, moderated by an associate, shared their journey in the legal practice and gave tips to attendees to help as they navigate their career. These Shook leaders and diversity champions shared lessons learned on being mentored, sponsored, navigating challenges and leadership.
- ◆ *Judges Panel* – This engaging panel shared their experiences, perspectives and lessons on:
  - Diversity in the court room
  - Achieving success
  - Projecting presence and credibility
- ◆ *Meet the Executive Committee* – Shook's own Executive Committee members will participate in a series of webinars sharing their journeys and a backstage look at the Committee, routines, and governance.

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- ◆ *Client Panel* – A couple of clients will come together in a fireside chat to share what they seek in the law firms they engage. They will share their thoughts on diverse teams and how this enhances the overall work product.
- ◆ *Shook Alumni Fireside Chat* – Shook alumni engage in a fireside chat where they share their experiences of defining and achieving success both within Shook and beyond. Our alumni discuss challenges, successes and tips for practicing law in various settings and how they leveraged the skillsets and experience from Shook to succeed in their post-Shook careers.

## SHOOK DIVERSITY ADVOCATES LAUNCH



In an effort to be inclusive of all of our offices, we recently launched a Shook Diversity Advocate role for each of our locations. These roles are filled by attorneys assisting in advancing the Firm's diversity agenda within their respective office. They serve a number of important functions including: coordinating diversity & inclusion events within the office, overseeing program execution, promoting Firm diversity & inclusion initiatives, monitoring and seeking feedback on various diversity & inclusion initiatives and issues, and providing updates to the Diversity & Inclusion Committee.

## ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT | PALAK SHAH

**Palak Shah** is an Associate and intellectual property attorney in our Houston office, where she drafts utility patent applications and oversees patent prosecution. Palak also counsels clients on their privacy and data obligations, with a particular focus on HIPAA laws and regulations, as a member of the Privacy and Data Security Team.

Palak brings an enthusiasm to her role as the Diversity & Inclusion Advocate for the Houston Office, and has implemented initiatives such as organizing events to engage the office in meaningful conversations, developing monthly diversity prompts, coordinating book clubs, and sharing materials from diverse perspectives such as *Code Switch* – a podcast that explores how race impacts every part of society. She also serves as a member of the Corporate Advisory Board for the Society of Women Engineers section of her alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin. Recently Palak served as moderator for the D&I Committee All Attorney Webinar – Rainmaker Panel.



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## ADVOCATE LOCAL PROGRAMMING

### Washington, DC | Chad Coots – Advocate

Chad provided his office with a monthly update of the events happening around town, including exhibits at the Library of Congress exhibition, the National Archives and the Smithsonian just to name a few.

### Houston | Palak Shah – Advocate

Every few weeks, Palak shares a listing of podcast episodes. The first few she shared were regarding LGBTQ+ perspectives.

### Miami | Katherine Mastrucci – Advocate

Katherine started connecting with her office by inviting everyone to an office Happy Hour. She included a selection of podcasts and a movie to get the discussion started.

### Philadelphia | KaSandra Rogiers – Advocate

KaSandra has instituted a Philly Podcast Club. A listing of podcasts is provided and group discussions follow.

### San Francisco | Emily Weissenberger – Advocate

Under the encouragement of Emily, the San Francisco office recognized Black History Month by hosting an office luncheon to increase the diversity and inclusion awareness in her office.

## LGBTQ+ EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP (ERG)

In late 2019, we launched a pilot LGBTQ+ ERG in our Kansas City office. The stated mission of the LGBTQ+ ERG (“Group”) is to promote an inclusive community and environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer employees and their allies; and is open to all Shook, Hardy & Bacon employees. The ERG will support Shook’s efforts to promote authenticity within the workplace and to diversify its workforce at all levels. The group is preparing for a firm wide launch and formation of other groups.



# Diversity & Inclusion at Shook

## Shook Diversity and Inclusion Leadership



**John Lewis, Jr.**  
Houston | Ext. 64005  
*Partner, Co-Chair of Diversity  
& Inclusion Initiatives*



**Buffy Mims**  
Washington, D.C. | Ext. 47015  
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**Lolly Cerda**  
Kansas City | Ext. 15023  
*Diversity & Inclusion  
Manager*

To view a message from our Co-Chairs of Diversity Initiatives, please click [here](#).

The D&I Committee was founded in 2005 as a grassroots effort by a group that believed in the value diversity brings to an organization. Those efforts were quickly supported by firm leaders and diversity was captured as a firm value. Today's Committee is a group of firm leaders tasked with being change agents who champion the concept of inclusion, assist in decision making, and ensure leadership accountability.

**“We’re going somewhere; you should come along”**  
**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE 2020**

 <b>Madeleine McDonough</b> Kansas City   Ext. 19001 <i>Firm Chair</i>	 <b>John Lewis, Jr.</b> Houston   Ext. 64005 <i>Partner, Co-Chair of Diversity &amp; Inclusion Initiatives</i>	 <b>Buffy Mims</b> Washington, D.C.   Ext. 47015 <i>Partner, Co-Chair of Diversity &amp; Inclusion Initiatives</i>
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 <b>Barbara Thompson</b> Kansas City   Ext. 23034 <i>Chief Human Resources Officer, Executive Operations Team</i>	 <b>Greg Wu</b> Kansas City   Ext. 23009 <i>Partner, Search Committee</i>	
<b>DIVERSITY &amp; INCLUSION TEAM PROFESSIONAL STAFF</b>		
 <b>Lolly Cerda</b> Kansas City   Ext. 15023 <i>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Manager</i>	 <b>Michael Donnici</b> Kansas City   Ext. 15579 <i>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Coordinator</i>	 <b>Nancy Nettle</b> Kansas City   Ext. 15580 <i>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Administrative Assistant II</i>