



First Class of Diverse Attorneys Complete Jon Gray Shook Lawyers Leadership Academy

KANSAS CITY, MO. (April 20, 2022) Four Shook, Hardy & Bacon lawyers will graduate from the firm’s inaugural The Honorable Judge Jon Gray Shook Lawyers Leadership Academy (JGSLLA), April 20, 2022. Recognizing the value of a diverse workforce, Shook created the professional development program and selected Partner Jon Gray as its namesake. Gray served more than 20 years as a circuit judge in the 16th Judicial Circuit in Missouri before joining Shook in 2007.

“We are excited to see this first class complete the program, and we look forward to celebrating the next chapters in their legal careers,” said Shook Chair Madeleine McDonough. “When you bring together a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, you foster even greater creativity and innovation for our clients. Naming the program after Judge Gray, a passionate trailblazer in both the legal profession and in public service, is a fitting way to honor his many contributions.”

The 18-month program is designed for a class of six to seven high-potential, high-performing, senior associates within two to three years of partnership consideration. It pairs a fellow (attorney) with a champion (senior attorney) who assists in building acumen in leadership, executive presence, client-facing opportunities and business development, in addition to meaningful work-building trial practice skills. In Shook’s inaugural JGSLLA program, one third of both the champions and fellows are women and three of the fellows have been promoted to partner.

“For too long, the profession was made up of lawyers who looked just like other lawyers and not a true reflection of society,” said Gray. “I’m honored and humbled the firm named the program after me, and I look forward to working with these young lawyers on their trial preparation skills. They all have bright futures ahead of them.”

The fellows who completed the inaugural program include the following attorneys:

- California Partner Joan Camagong represents clients in product liability, consumer protection class actions and consumer fraud warranty litigation;
- Florida Partner Anitra Raiford Clement defends clients in product liability, class action and complex litigation matters;
- Missouri Partner Matt DePaz advocates in the defense of companies in complex product liability and class action litigation; and
- Missouri Associate Brice Nengsu Kenfack defends clients in product liability, construction, insurance, commercial and general liability disputes.

“For me personally,” said Kenfack, “while I learned some business development do and don’ts through some of the amazing speakers, my biggest gain from the first edition of the Jon Gray Lawyers Leadership Academy came in the form of formal and informal mentor/mentee relationships I developed through the program. I hope the program will continue to evolve.”

Shook will hold a graduation ceremony at the firm April 20, 2022, for the fellows. The next Jon Gray Shook Lawyer Leadership Academy is currently underway, and the class is composed of 43% women. Shook’s Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives are led by Partner John Lewis, Jr. and Lolly Cerda, director of Strategic Diversity Initiatives. In March, the firm announced its new partner class which was made up of more than 50% women attorneys.

For more information or to speak to a Shook attorney, contact Public Relations Manager Heather McMichael, hcmichael@shb.com or 816.559.2016.

About Shook, Hardy & Bacon

Founded in 1889, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. has 17 offices in the United States and London, with attorneys and professional staff serving clients in the health, science and technology sectors in areas ranging from product liability defense and commercial litigation to intellectual property prosecution and litigation, environmental and toxic tort, privacy and data security, and regulatory counseling.