



## **Shook Launches DEI Advisory Practice**

*Shook introduces a new client offering under the leadership of Partner John Lewis, Jr. formerly of The Coca-Cola Company. Lewis served as the former global head of litigation and diversity and workplace fairness. Lewis will lead the array of litigation and investigation services under the Shook DEI Counseling, Compliance & Disputes Practice.*

**ATLANTA** (February 20, 2024) Shook, Hardy & Bacon announces the launch of its newly formed diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) Counseling, Compliance & Disputes Practice (CCDP) to assist with the interdisciplinary legal risks faced by companies in a modern workplace.

The CCDP is a natural evolution of Shook’s decades-long commitment to build its own inclusive workplace and leverage inclusion strategy as a marketplace differentiator.

Shook’s CCDP is led by Houston Managing Partner John Lewis, Jr., who also serves as the firm’s chair of DEI Initiatives and Strategy. Before joining Shook, Lewis held increasing roles of responsibility for The Coca-Cola Company, including as Coca-Cola’s chief litigation counsel where he lead teams in shareholder, securities and related governance litigation and investigations. While at Coca-Cola legal, he founded and led Coke’s Legal Division Diversity Council which created outside counsel assessments, a supplier diversity initiative partnering with minority- and women-owned law firms, and deepened pipeline and affinity partnerships. Following a decade in Coke legal, Lewis was appointed as the company’s global head of diversity and workplace fairness where he had board level accountability for all aspects of inclusion and workplace fairness strategy.

Listen to Lewis discuss workplace issues in a short [podcast](#) with Shook Chair Madeleine McDonough.

In recent years, DEI-related risks have changed. Once a dialogue predominately about culture, human resources initiatives, community engagements and programs, organizations who seek to advance their inclusion goals now face the potential for novel legal challenges, emergent business risks and heightened scrutiny from investors, governmental entities, activists and DEI opponents.

“Shook lawyers have trained, audited, defended and advised global clients and organizations on DEI-related matters over many years,” said Lewis. “Our DEI Counseling, Compliance & Disputes Practice is a natural evolution of our longstanding commitment to inclusion and fairness.”

According to Lewis, DEI also informs strategy in more traditional human capital work streams including training, recruitment, leadership development, philanthropy, equity scans, community engagement and workplace fairness. DEI efforts are crucial to retaining talent, gaining market

share, and attracting a diverse cross-section of investors in ever-evolving, highly competitive national and global markets.

“Our DEI Counseling Practice is also shaped by the award-winning initiatives for which Shook and its lawyers have been nationally recognized,” said Shook Chair Madeleine McDonough. “Among other avenues for advancing diversity and inclusion, we have a dedicated civil rights practice led by a former assistant district attorney with over a decade of jury trial experience in civil rights and police misconduct cases.”

In addition to Lewis, the practice includes Public Policy Co-Chair Phil Goldberg, who served as a litigation communications specialist at two leading public relations firms and communications director for three members of Congress, as well as ESG Co-Chair Veronica Gromada, who previously managed the legal, policy and business aspects of bellwether employment class action litigation while working in-house at one of the world’s largest retailers. They are joined by Senior Counsel Michael Harrison, who heads up the firm’s civil rights and racial justice pro bono practice and Partner William Martucci who leads Shook’s national Employment Litigation and Policy Practice as well as Employment Litigation Partner Carrie McAtee.

Collectively, the group has led board-directed investigations domestically and abroad. They have advised some of the largest companies in the world on public policy matters, communications strategy and related advocacy, and have trained scores of clients on topics including unconscious bias, avoiding DEI-related litigation risks, and leading culturally-sensitive investigations.

### **About Shook, Hardy & Bacon**

Founded in 1889, Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. has 19 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 business litigation to intellectual property prosecution and litigation, environmental and toxic tort, privacy and data security and regulatory counseling.