



Michelle Wimes

## SHOOK HARDY &amp; BACON

MIDWEST

Shook Hardy & Bacon (SHB) is headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri. While the city is not known as a diversity hotbed, SHB views diversity as a cornerstone of a successful law firm.

Director of Strategic Diversity Initiatives Michelle Wimes says the firm has been promoting, evaluating

and refining its diversity initiatives for the past ten years. SHB also participates in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, an organization of chief legal officers from Fortune 500 companies and law firm managing partners dedicated to improving diversity in the legal profession. Last year, SHB created a firm-wide strategic diversity plan, expanded staff initiatives and provided scholarships while maintaining a work environment where all staff felt respected and appreciated, and their contributions were valued.

"We challenged ourselves to reaffirm our focus and develop creative ways to pursue our initiatives while providing quality service to our clients," Wimes says.

The Diversity Committee at SHB is comprised of eight sub-groups including a recruitment sub-committee which is responsible for ensuring a diverse class of summer associates; a retention sub-committee, which is responsible for initia-

tives to ensure that diverse attorneys brought to the firm are successful; and a buy-in sub-committee which consists solely of partners who are the face of diversity at the firm and who work to promote investment in diversity initiatives and efforts in the firm.

The Women's Management Council is a proactive group of SHB women partners that promotes programs targeting the unique challenges facing women practitioners.

To increase the pipeline, SHB conducts law school workshops and partners with student organizations such as the Hispanic Law Students Association and the Black Law Students Association to offer emerging lawyers practical advice on improving their resumes and interviewing skills. The firm also recruits at minority job fairs across the nation, including the Bay Area Minority Job Fair, DuPont Minority Job Fair, Lavender Law Job Fair, and the Southeastern Minority Job Fair. SHB also sponsors the Heartland Minority Job Fair which attracts potential recruits from all over the country.

The Shook Hardy & Bacon Foundation, a nonprofit organization, gives away \$50,000 a year in scholarships to diverse law students and further provides funding for student support services such as tutoring. SHB appreciates and celebrates winning the MCCA Sager award.

"We were thrilled," Wimes says. "MCCA's acknowledgement of our efforts as leaders in diversity is exciting."



Blanca Fromm Young

## MUNGER, TOLLES &amp; OLSON

WEST

Munger, Tolles and Olson (MTO) holds diversity high on its list of bedrock values because it's the right thing to do, it improves the firm's ability to serve its clients, and it creates a more dynamic workplace for the attorneys. Sustaining diversity means more than hiring women and ethnic minorities to work for the firm, however. To

retain a diverse workforce, the firm has created programs, strategies and initiatives to support the success of the people who work there.

One such project is the recent completion of a full-service day-care center. In partnership with Bright Horizons, a leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, back-up care, and early education, MTO built its first day-care center for the children of employees a few blocks from the Los Angeles headquarters. MTO is one of the first West Coast law firms to provide a state-of-the-art child-care center.

"We're proud of the center because it helps promote a work/life balance," according to Blanca Fromm Young, MTO's diversity committee co-chair. "It's a great way to support the families who work here."

The firm's managing partner, Sandra Seville-Jones is another member of the diversity committee. She says

diversity is a high-priority and high-profile issue at MTO. In addition to the day-care center, the firm has more traditional diversity initiatives including strategies to recruit, retain and promote diverse employees. In 2010, 53 percent of attorneys hired by MTO were minorities or women. To retain, and advance women and minorities, the firm offers both formal and informal mentoring and networks to promote professional development.

The firm has also taken steps to increase the pipeline of students from diverse backgrounds who are applying to law school. MTO partners with For People of Color, Inc. to conduct an annual workshop for high school students where firm lawyers share their insights about the law school application process as well as their own law school experiences. For college graduates who plan to attend law school there is the MTO Fellows program which offers up to four full-time positions to students from diverse backgrounds.

MTO is of course excited about winning the Sager award for its commitment to diversity.

"It is a great honor for us," Young says. "We're always looking at how to apply best practices with regard to diversity, so we're proud to be recognized for our efforts."