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## Diversity Matters

Summer 2015

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### Editor's Note

By [Nancy Vincent](#)

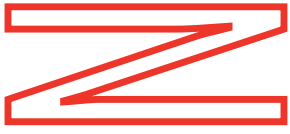


Freudian slips are commonplace mistakes in speech which are believed to reveal underlying, unconscious thoughts. Neuroscientists have shown that the unconscious mind is in control of decisions, actions and emotions 95 percent of the time, and that the conscious mind is only in control of cognitive or conscious decisions five percent of the time. The unconscious mind is generally on auto-pilot, creating shortcuts and categories to help a person get through each day without belaboring the consciousness. Some shortcuts, like tying one's shoes without thought, are very helpful. Other shortcuts, like automatically categorizing co-workers based upon their appearance, background, position and/or demographic, can lead to unintended bias (positive or negative) in the workplace.

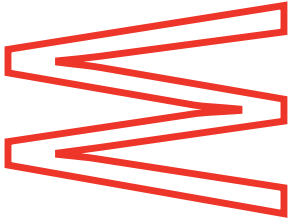
Approximately 20% of large U.S. companies with diversity programs have implemented unconscious bias training. Baker Donelson has just completed its "implicit bias" training for the majority of our more than 1,300 employees across 19 offices. The training included a presentation and discussion

that demonstrated how everyone has implicit or unconscious biases, and that those biases are usually a function of personal experiences. The training provided mechanisms to facilitate checking employment decisions and workplace actions for bias. It also emphasized the importance of making employment decisions based upon objective requirements and avoiding knee-jerk or impulsive decisions.

The Firm invested in implicit bias training as one way to ensure that it remains a best place to work for everyone. In May 2015, we were named among the "50 Best Places to Work for New Dads" in a report compiled by *Fatherly*, a lifestyle guide. Earlier this year, the Firm earned its sixth consecutive ranking on FORTUNE magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For®" list, ranking 30th, the Firm's highest ranking yet. This also marks the Firm's second consecutive year as the highest ranked law firm on this list. While Freudian slips are not easy to avoid, the implicit bias training aims to ensure mindful interactions within the Firm and has further solidified its foundations as a diverse and inclusive workplace.



# What is Implicit Bias and Why Should Employers Care?



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In 2014, Baker Donelson’s Diversity Committee instituted a mandatory firm-wide training program on “implicit bias” which has continued into 2015. While the Firm regularly conducts training in how to prevent discrimination, harassment and retaliation, the implicit bias training is different. It is not intended to combat any legally actionable conduct, but instead to help employees who strive to be fair and recognize the influence of implicit biases in their personal, professional and everyday lives.

Like it or not, implicit bias creeps into the hearts and minds of all humans, no matter how well intentioned or how committed to fairness and equality someone may be. Implicit biases are an unconscious product of our encounters from childhood through adulthood, influenced by everything from geographic location, to social class, mental abilities, profession, age, gender, family and marital status. These biases are further colored by our own observations, the media and stereotypes.

It works like this: our brains develop what are called “schema” or mental frameworks to allow our minds to apply shortcuts in sorting data into broad categories for quick mental processing. For example, no matter what shape, the human eye can generally recognize a chair, and an individual need not process and determine what a chair is each time he or she encounters one. The ability to quickly characterize objects and things in one’s everyday life is essential. However, what science is finding is that these schema also operate below

the conscious radar, influencing how we see and treat other people and groups, no matter our determination to be fair and objective. These biases have a real impact on individuals who may be associated with a less than favorable implicit association. Everyone is familiar with the Trayvon Martin case and the tragedy in Ferguson, Missouri. A discussion of how implicit bias may have played a part in these cases has taken center stage in the media.

The impact of implicit bias extends far beyond police shootings. Take hiring, for example. When six major research universities were asked to rate one-page identical resumes of a male and female candidate for a lab manager position, the male candidate routinely received a significantly higher average rating on his resume and was offered nearly \$5,000 more in starting salary than the female candidate. Just think what that pay and rating disparity could mean over the course of a career. Similarly, studies have been done on resumes involving “typically white” names (Emily, Ashley, etc.) and “typically black” names (Lakisha, Tamika, etc.). Strikingly, resumes with “typically white” names received 50 percent more callbacks than those with “typically black” names, and average “typically white”-named candidates received more callbacks than highly skilled “typically black”-named candidates. Clearly, this disparity in who even makes it in the door for a job interview will ultimately impact the diversity of a company’s workforce.

Implicit biases are not just associated with race and gender, though those may be easier to identify and study. Other potential unconscious biases might include such things as family responsibility, political beliefs, disability, appearance or accents.



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# Diversity Matters




Summer 2015

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## What is Implicit Bias and Why Should Employers Care?, *continued*

Individuals in the legal profession should be particularly concerned with the implications of implicit bias. Indeed, the American Bar Association has launched an [Implicit Bias Initiative](#) to look at how implicit bias impacts the justice system and the legal profession.

While the solutions are not easy, there are things that employers can do to lessen the negative impact of implicit bias in our workforce and community. Best practices for combatting implicit bias include:

-  avoiding “first impressions” and “gut response” decision making;
-  slowing down and making more deliberate decisions using objective criteria; and
-  fighting the natural instinct to prefer those who “fit in” or are “like me.”

Here at Baker Donelson, the response to the program has been overwhelmingly positive. The training, which includes breakout discussion of hypothetical scenarios, allows individuals to express themselves and discuss their own experiences regarding implicit bias. It demonstrates to employees that the company cares about them as individuals and desires to treat everyone fairly, while also recognizing that it is human nature for these biases to exist. And it gives attorneys and staff the tools to recognize, explore and expose implicit bias when they encounter it.

The implicit bias training is only one more way that Baker Donelson has demonstrated its commitment to being one of FORTUNE magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work For,” providing a professional culture that encourages the best in its employees, both at work and in their communities.

## Diversity Profile



[Sam Felker](#)  
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Sam Felker grew up in Brownsville, Tennessee, home to superstars such as Tina Turner and the woman on which Tanya Tucker’s famed “Delta Dawn” was based. Despite these illustrious neighbors, he lived an ordinary life in the small

western Tennessee town. Both of his parents were high school teachers who worked diligently to ensure the best for him and his brothers. Their work ethic inspired him immensely, as they taught him the importance of hard work, treating others fairly and performing tasks well. Felker has “tremendous respect for teachers because they have a tough job, but [knows] first-hand how they can have a very positive influence on their students and the community.”

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## Diversity Matters

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### Diversity Profile, *continued*



Felker went on to bleed maroon as an alumnus of Mississippi State University. While pursuing his undergraduate degree, he majored in journalism and wrote for the campus

newspaper. Felker was

presented with a life-changing opportunity after the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) put Mississippi State University on probation for football recruiting violations. He was entrusted with the responsibility of writing an article about the ensuing court case for the school newspaper. Throughout the course of the assignment, Felker followed the case intently and interacted with several lawyers. This exposure to the court system ignited his interest in law.

For a period of time, Felker delayed his dream of attending law school in order to further craft his journalism skills. He worked for several newspapers, including *The Commercial Appeal* in Memphis. Afterward, he attended The University of Virginia School of Law.

***“I was attracted to UVA because of its traditions, its outstanding academic reputation, the diversity of its students, and the perfect college town – Charlottesville.” Upon graduation, Felker started as a transactional commercial lawyer in the area of asset-based lending. He jokes, “sounds boring, right?” but the work was enough***

***to keep his passion for law burning bright. Felker maintains that, “There is nothing wasted in the practice of law and further down the road the skills I learned drafting contracts and loan documents came in handy.”***

Felker is now a shareholder in the Firm’s Nashville office and a member of the Product Liability/Mass Tort Group. He has focused his litigation practice on the defense of product liability, food safety, mass torts and commercial cases. In recognition of his extraordinary work ethic, Felker is rated in the AV® Preeminent™ Peer Review by Martindale-Hubbell. He is also listed in *Best Lawyers in America*® and *Mid-South Super Lawyers* since 2006, and has been named to *Lawdragon Leading 3000 Lawyers in America*.

Felker attributes his success to hard work, combined with outstanding mentoring from talented and caring lawyers. One such lawyer is Wilson Sims, a senior partner at his prior firm. Sims taught Felker the importance of working hard and delivering an excellent result for the client, and the art of managing client expectations. Sims also introduced him to the “do right rule,” which holds that lawyers should advise clients to do what is right – not just to stay within the bounds of the law.

Felker advises lawyers who are just beginning their careers that, “The first few years of practice are all about doing excellent legal work on every single matter you handle, no matter how small. Second, begin building a referral network starting with your law school classmates and friends – you will be surprised where they will end up.”

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## Diversity Matters

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### Diversity Profile, *continued*

He also encourages others to make time for personal health and well-being. Fitness is a big priority for him, and over the years he has become especially interested in cycling. As an adventure enthusiast, he once traveled from San Francisco to Los Angeles on his bike.

Not only does Felker encourage personal wellbeing, but he also spends time ensuring that the needs of others are met. Currently, he serves on the board of the Metro Nashville Health Department, working to make Nashville a more active and healthier place to live and work. The Department works to better Nashville through frequent and effective opportunities for food inspections, animal control, vaccinations, disease prevention and much more.

Felker also serves as president of the Stonewall Bar Association of Tennessee, an organization that promotes LGBT diversity in the legal profession and advocates for equality under the law for LGBT individuals.

*In the 18 short months he's been at the Firm, Felker has already made significant contributions to our culture and our clients, and is continuing his more than 30 years of leadership in the Nashville community.*

## Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace: Go Alone or Go Together?

As published in DRI's "For the Defense," May 2015



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I like to believe that I am the very embodiment of diversity. I am an African-American female who grew up in the Deep South, and I am a lesbian. I am the youngest of seven children and a first-generation lawyer. Though some of these characteristics are readily apparent, when people learn of the invisible characteristics that make me who I am, I often get the "Wow, you can certainly check every box on the diversity checklist." While there is some truth to this overexaggeration, rather than concentrating on how many boxes I can check, I think it is much more important to embrace the result of my varying experiences because of my differences from the next person.

Despite and in part because of my differences, I have successfully navigated my way through corporate America. I recently became a shareholder in Baker Donelson, a large, sophisticated law firm with more than 650 attorneys in seven states across the Southeast and Washington, D.C. While progress has been made, being one of only two African-American female shareholders in the firm carries with it a tremendous amount of pride and accomplishment and also an equally tantamount sense of responsibility.

This leadership situation is not uncommon. According to the National Association for Law Placement (NALP), in 2014, minority women accounted for only 2.5 percent of partners in firms of all sizes and across most jurisdictions, "making them the most underrepresented group

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# Diversity Matters

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## Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace: Go Alone or Go Together?, *continued*

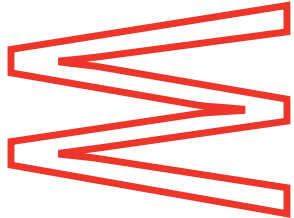
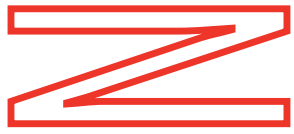
at the partnership level.” I believe that it is my personal responsibility to ensure that others coming up through the ranks behind me know that all things are possible and that embracing and showcasing the things that make them different only enhances their paths.

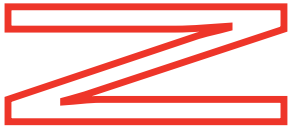
When I was approached to author this column, I thought to myself, “This is such a wonderful opportunity to say so much to such a wide audience, and there are so many things to say.” I then quickly realized that I did not want to dilute the message and its potential effect on the masses by overgeneralizing or by trying to save the world in one article. To that end, I want to focus on the importance of diversity in the workplace and how our individual differences, when embraced, only strengthen our respective organizations collectively.

A very dear friend of mine once said, “There are enough ways in this world for ALL of us to have his or her own.” Indeed, the differences among us don’t cease to exist once we enter the workplace. Regardless of who you are or the background that you have, you want to be able to be open, honest, and safe at home, at work, and in the community. Many of us spend a majority of our time in our various places of work, so of course we want to be comfortable in those environments. It is axiomatic that employees who are happy and secure in their jobs, and who do not have to spend time hiding who they are for fear of reprisal, perform their jobs better and more efficiently than those employees who are unhappy. To help foster environments

where all employees are comfortable, more organizations, large and small, are incorporating various diversity training programs for their employees. The philosophy behind this approach is that by valuing the individual, we are stronger as a whole, and working toward an environment where diversity is embraced is the most important step toward that end goal. I am proud to say that my organization recognizes this.

This year, 2015, is Baker Donelson’s sixth consecutive year to be included on FORTUNE magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work For” list, which recognizes companies that have exceptional workplace cultures. It is ranked thirtieth on the list, and this is our second consecutive year as the law firm with the highest rank on that list.





# Diversity Matters

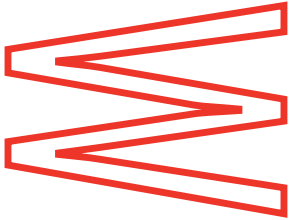
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## Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace: Go Alone or Go Together?, *continued*



A workplace culture necessarily includes a focus on the people who make up that workforce. My law firm has committed to training its entire workforce on diversity and implicit bias – those positive or negative mental attitudes someone may hold, at an unconscious level, toward a person, thing, or group. The training, which is conducted by me and other attorneys throughout our 19 offices, is meant to increase awareness about diversity and implicit bias, discuss how implicit bias can affect hiring, work assignments, relationships, promotions, and other decisions, and identify what individuals can do to reduce the influence of implicit bias.

Morally, the motivation to be fair and balanced in everything that we do makes diversity awareness and implicit bias training indubitably the right decision. However, the business case for embracing diversity is just as convincing. People with different experiences, backgrounds, values, opinions, and ideas bring to the table a plethora of benefits to a business as a whole. It helps us to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to relate better to diverse clients and to meet clients' expectations. It keeps our organization on the cutting-edge of trends in antidiscrimination practices and discrimination's current meaning. It helps with retention of highly qualified and talented individuals who might otherwise leave because of issues caused by implicit bias. It creates a level playing field for employees by eliminating implicit biases. It helps us as a firm to make informed decisions with well-rounded input, and it results in a more collegial workplace with greater productivity, unity, and inclusiveness. These are just a few of the many benefits of recognizing the importance of diversity and respecting and embracing people's differences.

This is a relevant and timely conversation to have against the backdrop of some of the world-changing events going on as I write this article. We are dealing with the effects and the fallout of the Ferguson, Missouri, situation and the videos of University of Oklahoma Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity members chanting a discriminatory song about the exclusion and lynching of African Americans. Further, as I sit here and write this article, people are marching from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama, to commemorate the iconic 1965 march that ultimately led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965, a law that was recently gutted by the U.S. Supreme Court. We are nearing the end of the term of our first African-American president and looking toward a 2016 election with a possibility of seeing our first female president. We are fortunate to have Justice Sonya Sotomayor, our first female justice of Hispanic heritage, sitting on the Supreme Court of the United States. That Court, on April 28, 2015, will have for the first time taken up the issue of whether states can ban gay marriage, or whether those bans are prohibited by the U.S. Constitution's guarantee of equal protection under the law. Currently, 37 states and Washington, D.C., allow gay marriage.

There is an African proverb that states, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." We cannot continue to go far unless and until we stop paying lip service to the importance of diversity and put into action what we proclaim. As legal professionals, we have a duty to the rest of the world to lead by example. While we have had setbacks as a whole, we are making far more positive strides than ever before. We have done this because we have chosen to do it together. Because of my choice, we will go far together.



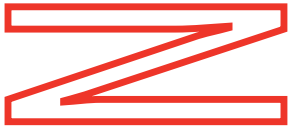
### Where We've Been

Baker Donelson's Diversity Committee has participated in a number of events around our footprint and around the country in the past few months:

**NBA Commercial Law Section 28th Annual Corporate Counsel Conference**  
*Naples, Florida*  
February 26 – 28, 2015

**HNBA Corporate Counsel Conference**  
*San Antonio, Texas*  
March 18 – 21, 2015

**HRC Equality Dinner**  
*Nashville, Tennessee*  
March 28, 2015



## Diversity Matters

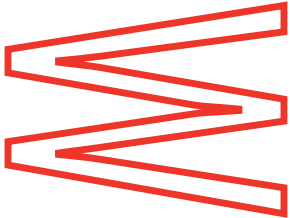
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## Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Gives Highest Honors to Ransom, Kimbrough, Ervin



Atlanta Shareholder [Damany F. Ransom](#) has been selected for the 2015 Fellows Program of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD), a national organization made up of the legal profession's top general counsels and managing partners. Mr. Ransom joins a class of more than 200 attorneys from around the country who have been selected to the 2015 class of Fellows.

include approximately 25 law firms and just under 20 corporations. The program allows participants to develop practical tools for relationship building, leadership and career development strategies during six months of in-person meetings, online learning opportunities, compass conversations, peer networking and study groups.



Additionally, New Orleans Associate [Camalla Kimbrough](#) and Atlanta Associate [Jennifer Ervin](#) were selected to participate in LCLD's newest initiative, the Pathfinder Program. This program is designed to work with diverse, high potential law firm associates who have three to five years of practice experience, and in-house counsel with three to five years of in-house experience. Participants

Founded in 2009, LCLD is a growing organization of more than 220 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners who are personally committed to creating a truly diverse legal profession. The LCLD Fellows program, which has trained more than 600 mid-career attorneys since 2011, is one of LCLD's most important initiatives. More information is available at [www.lclldnet.org](http://www.lclldnet.org).

LCLD has given Baker Donelson a major tip of the hat by selecting these three individuals, who have risen above and beyond to represent the Firm on a national level.

### Where We've Been

#### DRI Diversity for Success Seminar

Chicago, Illinois  
June 11 -12, 2015

#### Baton Rouge Pride

Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
June 11, 2015

#### Nashville Pride

Nashville, Tennessee  
June 26 - 27, 2015

#### MCCA Pathways for Diversity Conference

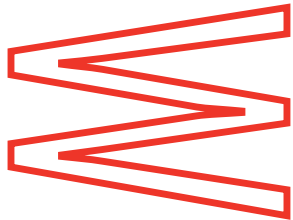
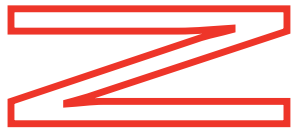
Washington, D.C.  
June 29 - 30, 2015

## Baker Donelson Ranked 30th in Sixth Consecutive Year on FORTUNE's 100 Best Companies to Work For® List

Baker Donelson has once again been named one of FORTUNE's 100 Best Companies to Work For®. In its sixth consecutive year to be included, the Firm is ranked 30th, earning its highest ranking yet and its second consecutive year as the highest ranked law firm on the prestigious list, which recognizes companies that have exceptional workplace cultures.

Baker Donelson Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Ben C. Adams said, "We remain focused on the development and morale of our people so that they are empowered and motivated to serve our clients, our communities and each other. Baker Donelson is proud to once again have those efforts recognized by FORTUNE and to continue to be named among the country's best workplaces."





## Diversity Matters

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## Baker Donelson Ranked 30th in Sixth Consecutive Year on FORTUNE's 100 Best Companies to Work For® List, *continued*

In naming Baker Donelson to the list, FORTUNE highlighted the Firm's Daily Docket, a five- to ten-minute meeting that is held every morning across the Firm's 19 offices to keep everyone on the same page and focused on client service. Baker Donelson was selected among hundreds of companies vying for a place on the list this year. Applicant companies opt to participate in the selection process, which includes an employee survey and an in-depth questionnaire about their programs and company practices. Great Place to Work® then evaluates each application using its unique methodology based on five dimensions: credibility, respect, fairness, pride and camaraderie.

Baker Donelson is consistently recognized as an exceptional workplace. In addition to its inclusion in FORTUNE's 100 Best Companies to Work For®, the Firm has been ranked among the top law firms in the country in Vault, Inc.'s "Best Law Firms to Work For" and has been recognized in numerous local workplace listings across its footprint, including rankings in Birmingham, Alabama; Washington, D.C.; Orlando, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; Memphis and Nashville, Tennessee; Jackson, Mississippi; and Houston, Texas.



## Management Updates



Baker Donelson has seen several significant management changes this spring, starting with Shareholder [Jennifer P. Keller](#) assuming the role of president and chief operating officer of the Firm on April 1, 2015. Ms. Keller is a former member of Baker Donelson's board of directors and chaired the Firm's Labor & Employment Department.

[Grant](#) and [Kristine L. Roberts](#) have been elected to Baker Donelson's board of directors by the Firm's shareholders. Ms. Finley and Mr. Grant will serve three-year terms as members of the board, while Ms. Roberts will serve a one-year term to fill the remainder of Ms. Keller's term on the board.



In addition, [Linda S. Finley](#), [Charles L.](#)



[Jenna M. Bedsole](#) has been named chair of the Firm's Labor & Employment Group and [Phyllis G.](#)

[Cancienne](#) has been named managing shareholder of the Firm's Baton Rouge office. Ms. Cancienne will be the Firm's first managing shareholder solely dedicated for that office.



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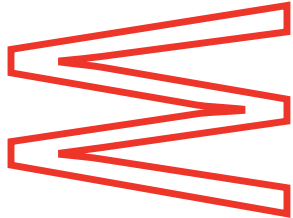
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## Fourteen Newly-Elected Shareholders

Baker Donelson has elected 14 new shareholders across the Firm, eight of whom are women. The new women shareholders and their primary areas of practice are:



[Emily T. Brackstone](#)  
Corporate Finance and Securities  
Memphis



[Lori Metrock](#)  
Corporate Finance and Securities  
Nashville



[Gina Ginn Greenwood](#)  
Health Law  
Atlanta/Macon



[Kathlyn Perez](#)  
Business Litigation  
New Orleans



[Whitney M. Harmon](#)  
Labor and Employment  
Memphis



[Kari L. Robinson](#)  
Consumer Finance Litigation  
and Compliance  
Houston



[Catherine Crosby Long](#)  
Consumer Finance Litigation  
and Compliance  
Birmingham



[Sarah-Nell Walsh](#)  
Consumer Finance Litigation  
and Compliance  
Atlanta

## Awards and Recognition

Among the 82 Baker Donelson attorneys listed as leaders in their field by *Chambers USA* are the following women and diverse attorneys, with their areas of practice:

- Banking & Finance: [Jackie Prester](#)
- Banking & Finance (Regulatory): [Jackie Prester](#)
- Bankruptcy/Restructuring: [Jan M. Hayden](#)
- Construction: [Linda A. Klein](#)
- Corporate/Commercial (Gaming & Licensing): [Dan M. McDaniel Jr.](#)
- Corporate/Commercial (Municipal Finance): [Sue Fairbank](#)
- Healthcare: [Anthea Daniels](#), [Donna Fraiche](#)
- Labor & Employment: [Phyllis G. Cancienne](#), [Jennifer P. Keller](#), [Amelia W. Koch](#) and [M. Kim Vance](#)
- Litigation (General Commercial): [Sheryl Bey](#), [Nancy Scott Degan](#), [Barry Ford](#) and [Linda A. Klein](#)
- Litigation (Medical Malpractice Defense): [Jill M. Steinberg](#)
- Real Estate: [Mary L. Aronov](#), [Martha A. Hartley](#) and [Denise W. Killebrew](#)

## Diversity Matters

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### Awards and Recognition, *continued*

Eleven Baker Donelson attorneys have been recognized as 2015 “Houston Top Lawyers” by *H-Texas* magazine. Among the Firm attorneys included in the 2015 edition are [Karen Smith](#) (Commercial Litigation); [Susan Mathews](#) and [Kari Robinson](#) (Banking); and [Marissa Arreola](#) (Corporate Finance/Mergers & Acquisitions).

[Marlena Pickering](#) (Jackson) was named Mississippi College of Law’s 2015 Young Lawyer of the Year.

Two Baker Donelson attorneys were finalists for the 2015 *Chambers USA* Women in Law Awards: [Nancy Scott Degan](#) (New Orleans), in the Leadership in the Community Lawyer of the Year (Private Practice) category, and [Christy Crider](#) (Nashville), in the Outstanding Achievement Award (Private Practice) category. The Firm was also a finalist in the category of Most Pioneering Gender Diversity Initiative (Firm) for our Women’s Initiative program and our new parental leave policy.

[Jamie Ballinger-Holden](#) (Knoxville) was honored at the East Tennessee Lawyers Association for Women’s Supreme Court Luncheon for her work as president from 2013 to 2014.

[Martha Boyd](#), [Charles Grant](#) and [Tonya Grindon](#) were among the Nashville attorneys named to the *Nashville Business Journal*’s 2015 “Best of the Bar” list.

[Sheila Burke](#) (Washington, D.C.) was named to the Accolade, Inc. board of directors.

[Eric Coleman](#) (Birmingham) received the Dean Bryan K. Fair Achievement Award from the University of Alabama’s Black Law Students’ Association.

[Christy Crider](#) (Nashville) was among nine women named to the 2015 *Nashville Medical News* “Women to Watch” list.

[Wendy Ellard](#) (Jackson) was recently appointed by the ABA Young Lawyers Division to serve as Liaison to the ABA’s Special Committee on Disaster Response and Preparedness.

[Donna Fraiche](#) (New Orleans) was recently elected to the Baton Rouge Area Foundation (BRAAF) Board of Directors. She was also appointed to the executive committee of Woman’s Hospital.

[Linda Klein](#) (Atlanta) has been selected by the *Atlanta Daily Report* as one of its Lifetime Achievement honorees.

[Amanda Perry](#) (Orlando) was named president-elect of the Central Florida Association for Women Lawyers.

[Staci Pierce](#) (Birmingham) was named to the *Birmingham Business Journal*’s 2015 “Top 40 Under 40” list.

Jennifer Thomas (Baton Rouge) was named Paralegal of the Year by the Baton Rouge Paralegal Association.

[Susan Wagner](#), [Patricia Clotfelter](#), [Anne Mitchell](#), [Lynn Reynolds](#), [Linda Peacock](#), [Catherine Long](#), [Meade Hartfield](#), [Lisa Borden](#), [Natalie Bolling](#) and [Jenna Bedsole](#) (all Birmingham) have been recognized among *B-Metro*’s Top Women Lawyers.

The Honorable [Ellen Tauscher](#) (Washington, D.C.) was named to a special task force of the Secretary of Energy Advisory Board, as well as the board of directors of BAE Systems.

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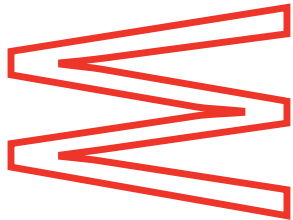
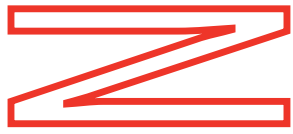
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### Where We’re Going

#### Lavender Law Conference & Career Fair

Chicago, Illinois  
August 4 – 7, 2015



Summer 2015

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# Diversity Matters

## Awards and Recognition, *continued*

[Jodi Taylor](#) (Atlanta) was appointed to the ABA Forum on Construction Law: Division 6 (Workforce Management and Human Resources) Steering Committee.

[Nancy Scott Degan](#) (New Orleans) was honored with the 2015 Firm-wide Pro Bono Award for her tireless work on behalf of the homeless. This year's recipients of the Firm's Susan E. Rich Women's Initiative Award are [Jenna Bedsole](#) (Birmingham) and [Linda Klein](#) (Atlanta). The award is presented annually to the person in the Firm who has demonstrated an unflagging commitment to the advancement of women at Baker Donelson, as well as to women's issues generally.

The Firm's Barry W. Ford Diversity Award was given to [Natalie Bolling](#) (Birmingham), and the inaugural Lifetime Diversity Award was presented posthumously to Abe Berkowitz. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Mr. Berkowitz was outspoken in his opposition to prevailing unfair laws and customs embodied by the Public Safety Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor. His bravery made him a target for anti-civil rights extremists. Yet despite strong opposition, Mr. Berkowitz contributed to changing Birmingham's form of government, which ultimately resulted in removing Connor from his position of control. He passed away in December 1985, and in 2003, the firm he founded merged with Baker Donelson as we both combined our deep-rooted values of diversity and inclusion.

## New Faces

A number of diverse attorneys have joined Baker Donelson in the past few months:



In our Atlanta office, [Suneel Gupta](#) has

joined as Transportation associate. In addition, [Teah Kirk](#) is of counsel and Natalie Suhl is an attorney in the Firm's Consumer Finance Litigation and Compliance group.

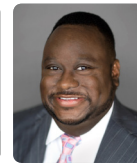


In Fort Lauderdale, [Diana Matson](#) is of counsel and [Victoria Beatty](#) is a new attorney in the Firm's

Consumer Finance Litigation and Compliance group.



Birmingham has welcomed [Jenna Stephens](#), a Real Estate/Finance staff attorney, and [Jade Sipes](#), an associate in the New Litigator group.



[Dorrella Gallaway](#) and [Angelica Fiorentino](#)

have joined as attorneys in Orlando and are in the Consumer Finance Litigation and Compliance group. Also in Orlando, [Richard Coaxum](#) has joined as of counsel in the Commercial Transactions and Business Transitions group.

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## New Faces, *continued*



Mary Branham is a new Business Litigation associate in Tallahassee.



Lori Hood is now a Business Litigation shareholder and Tiye Foley has joined as an associate in the New Litigator group in Houston.



Jennifer Crowder is of counsel in Chattanooga's Financial Services Transactions group.

Kyra Howell has joined that office as an attorney in the Health Law group.



In Nashville, Anthea Daniels has joined

the Health Law group as a shareholder, Kristen Cass is a new attorney in the Real Estate/Finance group, and Karen Blake is a new conflicts attorney.



In New Orleans, René Merino has joined as an attorney and Leopoldo Yanez is of counsel. Both work in the Business Litigation group.



Also in New Orleans, Anne Raymond is of counsel in the Real Estate/Finance group and Elizabeth Rutledge is an associate in the New Litigator group.



In Baton Rouge, Heather Cross has joined the Business Litigation group as an attorney.



The Washington, D.C. office has welcomed Mindy Rattan as of counsel in the Corporate Restructuring and Bankruptcy group.

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