

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Baker Donelson Earns Seventh Consecutive Ranking Among Top Law Firms for Diversity**

**May 10, 2011**

(Memphis, TN/May 10, 2011) For the seventh consecutive year, Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC has been named among the "Top 100 Law Firms for Diversity" by MultiCultural Law, a magazine focused on diversity in the legal profession. The Firm also received its fourth consecutive ranking on MultiCultural Law's list of "Top 100 Law Firms for Women" and was ranked among the "Top 25 Law Firms for African Americans."

Since the launch of its Diversity Initiative in 2002 and its Women's Initiative in 2005, Baker Donelson has implemented numerous programs designed to foster an atmosphere that honors each individual's diverse qualities, such as:

- The Baker Donelson Diversity Scholarship, which continues to award up to three scholarships annually to diverse students who have completed their first year of law school.
- The Advisory Board for Minority Associates, which was established to identify and implement steps to enhance retention of diverse attorneys, as well as work toward an increase in representation of diverse attorneys and women in leadership positions within the Firm.
- The Firm's Diversity Initiative, which has established the Barry W. Ford Diversity Award, named after Barry Ford, a shareholder in the Jackson, Mississippi office, in honor of his exemplary commitment to diversity. This award recognizes one attorney and one staff member who display an ongoing commitment to strengthening the atmosphere of inclusion at Baker Donelson through his or her efforts toward the advancement of diverse employees at the Firm.
- The Baker Donelson Women's Initiative, which has established the Susan E. Rich award in honor of Susan Elliot Rich, a shareholder in the Chattanooga, Tennessee office who was the Firm's first woman shareholder, the first woman to be an Office Managing Shareholder and the first woman appointed to the Firm's Board of Directors. This award is given to a recipient who exemplifies ongoing commitment and effort to strengthen the role of women attorneys at the Firm.

Baker Donelson continues to enhance its commitment to diversity through upcoming efforts, such as expanding its diversity training program with sessions focusing on understanding the needs and challenges of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender clients, staff, attorneys and communities. To further promote work/life balance, the Firm's Board of Directors adopted significant revisions to the Firm's parental leave policy, including formalizing policies for primary and non-primary caregiver leave time and for telecommuting.

Baker Donelson strives to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our employees and welcomes people of all races, genders, ages, languages, ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, disabilities, sexual orientations and religious beliefs to assist clients in achieving their legal goals. The Firm understands and salutes the unique perspectives and approaches that are provided by differences in educational background, socio-economic background, personality profile, geographic location, job duties, and marital and family status. More information on Baker Donelson's Diversity Initiative is available online at <http://www.bakerdonelson.com/diversity/>.