

PRESS RELEASE

Baker Donelson Announces 2009 Diversity Scholarship Program Recipients

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(Memphis, TN/September 17, 2009) The law firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC, announces the selection of this year's recipients of the Baker Donelson Diversity Scholarship Program: Jalil D. Dozier of North Carolina Central University School of Law, Denetra N. Hartzog of Cumberland School of Law at Samford University and Stephanie M. Nowak of the University of Tulsa College of Law.

Mr. Dozier, who holds an undergraduate degree from North Carolina State University, served as a judicial intern for the Honorable Michael L. Rankin of the District of Columbia Superior Court, and was a legislative intern for the North Carolina House of Representatives. Ms. Hartzog graduated *summa cum laude* from Auburn University with a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration and has worked for law firms as a summer associate and legal secretary. Ms. Nowak, a graduate of Montana State University, clerked for the Tulsa County District Attorney's Office and served as judicial assistant and deputy court clerk for the 18th District Court in Bozeman, Montana.

The three recipients were selected from almost 80 applicants from law schools across the country, such as Boston University School of Law, George Washington University Law School, Wake Forest University School of Law and William & Mary School of Law.

The Baker Donelson Diversity Scholarship Program, which was established in 2008, awards scholarships annually to diverse law school students who have completed their first year of law school. Baker Donelson awards each recipient a salaried second year summer associate position in one of the Firm's offices. Mr. Dozier will work in the Firm's Knoxville office, Ms. Hartzog will work in the Firm's Birmingham office and Ms. Nowak will work in the Firm's Nashville office. After the completion of the summer associate position, the Firm then awards each recipient a \$10,000 scholarship during the student's third year of law school.

"We're pleased to have another stellar group of recipients for our Diversity Scholarship Program this year," said Mark A. Baugh, Chair of Baker Donelson's Diversity Committee. "Like last year, we had many outstanding applicants, which tells us there is a genuine need for this type of program. Baker Donelson is proud to continue to offer greater opportunities to minorities and women interested in the legal profession, not only through our Diversity Scholarship but other programs within our overall Diversity Initiative."

In addition to launching the scholarship program in 2008, Baker Donelson also began a program to reach out to diverse undergraduate students to help them achieve their goal of entering the legal field. "Bringing Diversity to Our Businesses" is designed to develop a pipeline that increases the number of minority and female students who go to law school. The outreach program partners with strategically identified colleges and universities to focus on enhancing awareness of the accessibility and attainability of attending law school and practicing law through ongoing mentoring relationships that encourage and educate minority and female college students who have an interest in the legal profession.

According to Mr. Baugh, initiatives such as the scholarship and outreach programs are necessary to address the declining numbers of women and minorities entering the legal profession. "For a while now, law firms across the country have been focusing on the recruitment, retention and advancement of women and minority attorneys, but you also have to address the need to increase the number of diverse students who choose law

as a profession and create better opportunities for diverse students in both college and law school," said Mr. Baugh. "We're committed to an effort that goes beyond the usual programs and has a real impact on bringing attorneys of diverse backgrounds to our profession."

Baker Donelson continues to expand its diversity program through efforts such as inclusion training that focuses on the importance of recognizing and accepting the value of diverse backgrounds and perspectives. From December 2008 through April 2009, the training was implemented across the Firm's 15 offices and was mandatory for its more than 1,000 employees. Mr. Baugh notes, "As a firm, we not only value diversity, we believe it is vital for us to provide the best service to our clients. The inclusion training highlighted the importance of diverse perspectives based on all types of differences, such as age, religion, race, gender and economic status."

Since the launch of its Diversity Initiative in 2002, Baker Donelson's diverse attorney population and the number of diverse shareholders have more than quadrupled, far outpacing the Firm's overall growth. The recruitment and retention of female attorneys and the representation of women in leadership positions at the Firm have all improved as well. And diverse student participation in Baker Donelson's summer associate program has grown steadily: 22% of the Firm's 2009 summer associates were minority, up from 18% in 2008 and 14% in 2007.

The Firm's efforts have been recognized by *MultiCultural Law* magazine, which consistently ranks Baker Donelson on its annual lists of the "Top 100 Law Firms for Diversity" and the "Top 100 Law Firms for Women."