Our Commitment to Diversity

BAKER DONELSON
BEARMAN, CALDWELL & BERKOWITZ, PC
MISSION STATEMENT ON DIVERSITY

We are committed to recruiting, developing and retaining employees from diverse backgrounds, and are dedicated to creating a workplace that respects and values diversity, and provides a fair opportunity for all our employees to maximize the fullest extent of their abilities in pursuing a career at Baker Donelson. We recognize that valuing diversity and inclusion results in improved employee satisfaction and client service, and allows us to better serve our community.
“Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common. Celebrate it every day.” – Anonymous

At Baker Donelson, we understand that people from different cultures and backgrounds provide unique perspectives and approaches to solving legal problems. Diversity, whether in person or thought, is an integral part of our Firm’s culture and values. Diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, sexual orientation and religious belief. Diversity also refers to the many ways we are different, such as educational background, socio-economic background, personality profile, geographic location, job duties, marital status and whether or not one has family. Diversity is the recognition and celebration of the fact that we all are unique, yet alike in many respects.

Our goal is to continue to move the discussion and action on diversity in a positive direction. As an AmLaw 200 firm and one of the largest firms in the south central United States, diversity is more than just a catch phrase at Baker Donelson. We practice inclusion in our hiring, retention and professional development.

“Getting it” at the highest levels
Our management philosophy promotes the treatment of every person with dignity and respect, values the contribution that each person makes as an individual, strives to enable our colleagues to be comfortable being themselves and encourages every person to realize his or her potential.

Our Diversity Committee counts among its ranks our Chairman and CEO, COO, two office managing shareholders and a practice group leader. Meeting once a month, the Committee’s job is to oversee and implement the Firm’s diversity initiatives.

What is Baker Donelson doing?
We continue to stand apart in our constant effort to push forward and be thought leaders in our communities. Among them are Maurice Wexler, a shareholder who sits on the board of the National Civil Rights Museum and is on the planning committee of the EEOC’s ERACE (Eradicating Racism and Colorism in Employment) Program National Model; and Charles Grant, a shareholder who was awarded the 2009 Harris Gilbert Pro Bono Volunteer of the Year Award for his work on issues of disenfranchisement and restoration of voter rights.

- We established the Baker Donelson Diversity Scholarship Program for law students. Recipients of the three annual scholarships are awarded a salaried 2L Summer Associate position, and $10,000 is paid during the students’ third year of law school to help defray the cost of tuition and related expenses.

- We provide full funding for the Baker Donelson Internship Program at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI). Three interns are chosen from an application process and are assigned to positions in education, archives or public relations to support the BCRI mission, which is “to promote civil and human rights worldwide through education.”

- We participated in the Nashville Bar Association High School Internship Program, which led to our hiring a high school student in our Nashville office for the summers of 2008 and 2009.

- We’re a regular co-sponsor of Nashville’s Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week and the Memphis-based Mid-South Minority Business Council Economic Development Fair. Each event provides a forum to discuss the continued growth and development of minority business enterprises.

- In August 2007, we were the primary sponsor of the Birmingham Business Journal’s inaugural Best in Minority Business Awards, which celebrated the spirit, creativity and resourcefulness of minority business leaders and companies promoting and achieving diversity in their business. We continue to be an annual sponsor.

- We sponsored the 2008 “Diversity for Success” seminar presented by the Defense Research Institute’s Diversity Committee.

- In May 2008, we held our second minority attorney retreat, and the overall consensus revealed a commitment to continue Baker Donelson’s tradition of encouraging diversity as well as a renewed sense of optimism about the Firm’s commitment to diversity.

- We held our first Diversity Committee Retreat in 2008, which was led by an outside moderator.
Our Commitment

• We implemented and completed mandatory Inclusion Training for the entire Firm. In 2008, we retained a consultant to train several attorneys and staff members to deepen the discussion on inclusion and diversity, then allotted billing credit for the attorneys who performed the training. We’re now creating lunch programs for attorneys and staff to continue the dialogue.

• We regularly reward the accomplishments of our diverse staff.

Recruitment and Retention of Attorneys
The Firm is committed to recruiting, hiring, training, retaining and inviting to Shareholder status attorneys from under-represented groups. We understand that the necessary changes will not be achieved by good intentions alone. In order to achieve meaningful, measurable and lasting progress toward greater inclusion of racially and ethnically diverse legal talent, it is necessary for us to not only commit philosophically to those goals, but also to commit resources, individually and collectively, towards activities that we as a group believe will have a positive impact.

At the beginning of the Firm’s diversity initiative in 2002, we had seven minority attorneys. We outlined a goal of increasing our minority attorney population by 100% in two years, and we met it. Today, we have 40 minority attorneys and almost 180 women attorneys, and are always looking for diverse talent.

• We actively recruit at historically African-American law schools, such as Howard University, North Carolina Central, Southern University and the Thurgood Marshall School of Law, and we strongly consider applications from students at similar institutions. Our Recruiting Committee works with attorneys on our Diversity Committee and throughout the Firm to explore and implement new ways to widen our field of candidates.

• Our summer associate program has seen a steady growth of minority students. In 2007, 14% of our summer associates were minority; in 2008, that number jumped to 18%. And for 2009, we had 22%.

• In the Fall 2006 recruiting class, we made offers to ten minority students, and six minority students accepted. In the Fall 2007 recruiting class, we made offers to 11 minority students, nine of whom accepted. And for the Fall 2008 recruiting class, we made offers to six students, five of whom accepted.

• We have established a mentoring program for our associates and are preparing our diverse attorneys for leadership positions throughout our Firm.

• We’ve created an initiative to reach out to diverse undergraduate students to help them achieve their goal of entering the legal field. “Bringing Diversity to Our Businesses” is led by two female minority attorneys, showing not only our dedication to encourage more minorities to attend law school, but also our commitment to growing leaders from within our own ranks.

Your success is our success
Female and minority attorneys have assumed leadership roles throughout the Firm. Women and minority attorneys currently serve or have recently served as four of our ten managing shareholders, and chair or co-chair three of our nineteen practice groups. Two female and one minority shareholder serve on the Board of Directors, and numerous committees are chaired by minority and female lawyers. Women head several administrative departments, including Attorney Recruitment and Human Resources.

We regularly discuss diversity and our progress in this area at attorney and shareholder retreats; our CEO and Diversity Chair have spoken about how Baker Donelson attorneys and clients increasingly desire and expect a diverse team of attorneys to be engaged in the Firm’s work. At the most recent Firm retreat, representatives from three prominent clients served as panel members to discuss the importance of diversity in the legal profession. Our Recruiting Committees have attorneys from very diverse backgrounds.

We have implemented a flex time policy for our attorneys, which allows lawyers to deviate from the standard billable-hour format. We support the desire of our attorneys to balance a challenging professional career with their personal lives and other outside interests and responsibilities.

Going Farther
We have not completed our journey. We continue to seek leadership opportunities and to encourage our attorneys to be active in the community.
We look at diversity beyond the usual metrics and discussions. Our definition of diversity includes, but is not limited to, race, gender, age, language, ethnicity, cultural background, disability, sexual orientation and religious belief.

Our team includes persons who are the first in their families to attend college or any professional school, the first African-American woman who served as General Counsel of the Nashville Chamber of Commerce, an attorney who was formerly a reporter and attorneys who are leaders in the Hispanic community.

As technology has made our world expand and seem to contract at the same time, law firms are exposed to a wider tapestry of cultures, both as adversaries and as clients. Our diversity creates a variety of thought and ideas that we effectively use in developing solutions to our clients’ challenges. We continue to build on our rich history and continue to be one of the leaders in the legal profession.

At Baker Donelson we value our diversity and aspire for greater diversity and inclusion. We strive to create an inclusive environment where all of our attorneys can develop professionally, provide outstanding service to our clients and reach their maximum potential as professionals in the practice of law.

We understand that these goals will not be achieved by good intentions alone. In order to achieve meaningful, measurable and lasting progress toward greater diversity and inclusion, we have committed philosophically to those goals and have committed resources, individually and collectively, towards activities that we believe will have a positive impact. Our commitment is reflected in hiring, training and retaining attorneys who are diverse in every sense. We educate our staff and attorneys about diversity and inclusion and foster an environment that acknowledges the contributions of all our attorneys and staff.

Mark A. Baugh  
Shareholder  
Chairman of the Diversity Committee  
Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC

Ben Adams  
Chairman & CEO  
Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC
Our Involvement

Our attorneys are involved in many professional and public service activities that strengthen diversity within the Firm and our communities. They include:

- Napier Looby Bar Association
- Ben Jones Bar Association
- Stonewall Bar Association
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
- American Bar Association’s Committee on Diversity in the Profession
- American Bar Association’s Minority Council Program
- New Orleans Bar Association – Minorities in the Profession Committee
- Nashville Bar Association Minority Opportunities Committee
- Chattanooga Bar Association Minority Recruitment and Retention Committee
- United Negro College Fund
- The National Civil Rights Museum
- Mississippi Cultural Exchange
- Women’s Policy, Inc.
- Memphis in May International, Inc.
- Girl Scouts of America, Birmingham
- Civic and Business Leaders Enterprising – a Nashville women’s business group
- Ten Thousand Villages of Nashville, Inc.
- American Turkish Council
- Birmingham Committee on Foreign Relations (chapter of Council on Foreign Relations)
- Association of Women Attorneys
- Mid-South Minority Business Council
- AIDS Law
- Regional Cultural Alliance, Birmingham
- Women Build, Habitat for Humanity International
- University of Alabama School of Law—Black Law Students Association
- Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Louisiana
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Nashville Minority Business Council
- Minority Corporate Council Association
Nikki Smith-Bartley, Associate and Vice Chair of the Diversity Committee

Diversity from the top down is vital to the success and sustainability of any organization existing in the 21st century. Diversity transcends race, age and gender. It includes other attributes, such as religion, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, educational background, and general everyday experiences. Inclusion of diverse perspectives not only stimulates ingenuity, but it enhances the morale of an organization.

Mark Carlson, Shareholder

We see diversity as an asset. We use it to benefit clients by staffing projects with lawyers with broad experience and varying perspectives. We also use it to strengthen our firm by recruiting from a wide pool of candidates and prolonging careers through flex-time and other policies.

Robert Tom, Associate

Law firms and clients alike are recognizing that diversity in the legal field is no longer simply a politically correct idea to stand behind, but truly a benefit to the quality of legal services provided. While many law firms seem only to pay lip service to diversity, Baker Donelson truly has made the commitment to diversity a number one priority, and this commitment is evidenced through the programs it has fostered to recruit, mentor and retain minority attorneys.

Tim Lupinacci, Shareholder

Grenville Kleiser wrote that “Your life is like a book...Once the [ending] must be written, let it then be said of your book that it is a record of noble purpose, generous service and work well-done.” At Baker Donelson, we each strive to fulfill noble purpose, generous service and work well-done each day. Baker Donelson has a long tradition of visionary leaders with a passion for civil rights advocacy and guiding underrepresented populations toward commercial and financial success. From Birmingham office founding partner Abe Berkowitz’ significant work during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and ‘70s to Baker Donelson’s partnership with the Minority Business Opportunity Center of Alabama in 2007 to the implementation of the Baker Donelson Minority Scholarship in 2008, Baker Donelson consistently joins with community businesses and leaders to move the firm progressively upward toward reaching new heights. Striving for noble purpose in the areas of diversity, inclusion and achievement remains a vital part of the fabric of who we are as a firm.

Linda Klein, Shareholder

It’s enormously inspiring to be part of a leadership that actively seeks and embraces diversity. Our clients need creative solutions, and Baker Donelson’s ability to put a diverse team of lawyers on a problem assures an innovative result.

www.bakerdonelson.com

Please visit our website for additional information.