

**A LETTER FROM THE
BALCH DIVERSITY CHAIR**

This summer, Balch proudly hosted its inaugural Diversity Summit, “Diversity Dialogue in the Changing Workplace,” to encourage engaging conversations about diversity in the workplace. The summit featured panels and presentations that covered topics such as, “Organizations’ New Approach to Diversity and Inclusion,” “Bottom Line Business Case for Diversity” and “Keeping Diversity Messaging and Initiatives Legal.” The summit encouraged conversations among executives of many industries and provided insight on best practices for embracing diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

In this issue of Highlighting Diversity, we reflect on the intriguing topics and the speakers that contributed to making the summit an outstanding success, while celebrating our attorneys who continuously strive to improve the legal community with their leadership. We also are looking forward to our annual Susan B. Livingston Boot Camp for Success, which is one of our firm’s key annual diversity initiatives. Please join me in celebrating Balch’s continued support for diversity and inclusion. As always, we welcome your feedback concerning our initiatives. Please email me at dkauffman@balch.com.

Warmest regards,



Doug Kauffman
CHAIR OF DIVERSITY

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MISSION

Balch is committed to maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace for all. We understand that achieving greater diversity is essential to delivering excellent service to our clients. We are dedicated to providing a work environment where people of all backgrounds, ages, colors, genders, races, national origins, religions, sexual orientations or disabilities are valued for their perspectives, skills and talents.

Committee members include: Doug Kauffman, Leslie Allen, Matthew Ames, Michael Edwards, Amy Steindorff, Peter LeJeune, Kelly Pate, Riley Roby, Mary Samuels, Lisa Arrington, Barrie Wilson, David Miceli, Jennifer Nicaud, Tashwanda Pinchback Dixon, Max Galiana and Steven Burns.



**BALCH ATTORNEY NAMED TO THE
NATIONAL BLACK LAWYERS’
TOP 40 UNDER 40 ORGANIZATION**

KIMBERLY BELL, associate in the firm’s Birmingham, Ala., office and member of the Litigation Section, was selected into The National Black Lawyers’ Top 40 Under 40 organization. Membership in The National Black Lawyers’ Top 40 Under 40 is invitation-only and is limited to the top 40 black attorneys under the age of 40 from each state or region who have demonstrated excellence in their legal practice. The selection process included peer nominations combined with third party research. Ms. Bell’s selection is in recognition of her superior leadership, reputation, influence and performance in her legal practice.

**MINORITY PRE-LAW CONFERENCE EDUCATES ALABAMA
STUDENTS ABOUT CIVIL AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

This spring, Balch proudly sponsored the annual Minority Pre-Law Conference, hosted by the Alabama State Bar’s Young Lawyers Section, the Alabama Lawyers Association, the Capital City Bar Association and the Vernon Crawford Bar Association, to help young lawyers develop their careers in the ever-evolving practice of law. The Minority Pre-Law Conference is designed to introduce 11th and 12th grade students across Alabama to the American civil and criminal justice system. LEE JOHNSEY, associate in Balch’s Birmingham, Ala., office and member of the firm’s Creditors Rights and Bankruptcy Practice Group and Real Estate, Credit and Commercial Practice Group, serves as the treasurer of the Alabama State Bar and is heavily involved in the Minority Pre-Law Conferences held throughout the state.



» Balch attorneys and clients at Serenbe Farms cooking an organic dinner.

ATLANTA FEMALE ATTORNEYS COMBINE WOMEN'S INITIATIVE EVENT WITH MARKETING FOR "PLOT TO PLATE" EVENT

This past May, the female attorneys in Balch's Atlanta office hosted a Women's Initiative Event, "Plot to Plate," for clients and female Atlanta attorneys at Serenbe Farms, a certified organic farm nestled in the sustainable Serenbe community outside of Atlanta. Several female clients worked side by side our Atlanta attorneys in a learning and cooking environment where they enjoyed touring Serenbe and even had an opportunity to bring their fresh produce back to the kitchen for a cooking class led by a Serenbe chef. The event proved to be a wonderful women's initiative event, as well as a marketing and networking tool to help foster the relationships between the attorneys and their clients.

DIVERSITY DIALOGUE IN THE CHANGING WORKPLACE

SPEAKERS:

Lajuana Bradford, senior vice president, director of corporate diversity and public affairs at Regions Financial Corporation

Dr. Conrado Marion-Landais, Ph.D., member of Georgia Power's Diversity and Inclusion organization

Dr. Overtoun Jenda, associate provost for diversity and multicultural affairs at Auburn University

Dr. Charles M. Carson, Ph.D., associate dean and associate professor of management at the Brock School of Business at Samford University

TASHWANDA PINCHBACK DIXON, associate in the firm's Atlanta office and member of the Labor & Employment and Litigation Sections

DOUG KAUFFMAN, partner in the firm's Birmingham, Ala., office, member of the Labor & Employment Section and chair of the Diversity Committee

KELLY PATE, partner in the firm's Montgomery, Ala., office and member of Balch's Labor and Employment and Litigation Sections



ORGANIZATIONS' NEW APPROACH TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



» Tashwanda Pinchback Dixon and panelists Lajuana Bradford, Dr. Conrado Marion-Landais and Dr. Overtoun Jenda at Balch's Diversity Summit.

The first session of the Diversity Summit featured a panel discussion entitled "Organizations' New Approach to Diversity and Inclusion" led by panelists Lajuana Bradford, Dr. Conrado Marion-Landais and Dr. Overtoun Jenda. TASHWANDA PINCHBACK DIXON moderated the panel. Ms. Pinchback Dixon asked each panelist about their organizations' viewpoint of diversity and different approaches to embracing diversity and inclusion. Panelists provided helpful insight into what diversity means to their organization as a whole, various diversity approaches that have been successful for their respective organizations and outlined why other initiatives have failed. When asked what diversity looks like to their organizations, Ms. Bradford stated, "Diversity is broad. It encompasses race, religion and culture." Conversation ranged from retaining diverse employees and clients, internal initiatives to raise awareness, global diversity, gender diversity, orientation for new employees, corporate social responsibility and how organizations can hold management accountable for diversity initiatives. In reference to leadership within in Georgia Power, Dr. Marion-Landais said that it is "the responsibility of leaders is to build trust and understanding among employees." The panel sparked thought-provoking dialogue about what it means for an organization to embrace diversity and inclusion while also shedding light on pitfalls that organizations should avoid.



PROVIDING THE BOTTOM LINE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY



» Dr. Carson and Doug Kauffman at the Diversity Summit.

Dr. Charles Carson joined Balch’s “Diversity Dialogue in the Changing Workplace” to speak about “Providing the Bottom Line Business Case for Diversity.” Dr. Carson elaborated on diversity

in an emerging workforce, and presented facts, data and trends to substantiate the need for diversity focusing specifically on gender, race, ethnicity, age and able-bodiedness. In addition, Dr. Carson spoke on the various reasons why diversity and inclusion should be a matter of great importance to all organizations and businesses, citing reasons including the steady growth of the U.S. population, significant changes in college enrollment trends, an increase in Hispanic buying power and the overall globalization of business. “Cultural backgrounds and a variety of experiences help cultivate diversity of thought,” said Dr. Carson. He also outlined approaches to manage diversity and inclusion in an organization, such as developing a formal mentoring and development program, career rotation, setting realistic and challenging goals and involving white males in diversity efforts, among other items.



KEEPING DIVERSITY MESSAGING AND INITIATIVES LEGAL

DOUG KAUFFMAN, partner in the firm’s Birmingham, Ala., office and chair of Balch’s Diversity Committee, and KELLY PATE, partner in the firm’s Montgomery, Ala., office and member of Balch’s Labor and Employment and Litigation Sections, addressed topics related to the legalities behind diversity messaging and initiatives. Mr. Kauffman and Ms. Pate stated that diversity policies can present some legal challenges for businesses, and identified employee selection as a major risk area for organizations. Race and gender

cannot legally be used as a factor in selecting employees, unless the organization does a self-analysis that determines their company is underrepresented in a certain category. “The law protects employees from discrimination based on race and gender, regardless of what race and what gender you are talking about,” stated Mr. Kauffman. Failure to stay in line with the law could potentially result in a costly discrimination lawsuit if an employer hires a minority for a job solely based on gender or race.

UPCOMING EVENT: SUSAN B. LIVINGSTON BOOT CAMP FOR SUCCESS | AUGUST 6 - 7, 2015



» Participants from last year’s Susan B. Livingston Bootcamp for Success.

On August 6 - 7, 2015, Balch will host its fifth annual Susan B. Livingston Boot Camp for Success to encourage diversity in the legal profession. Balch’s mission for the boot camp is to provide a diverse group of incoming law students with keys to success for law school and insights to assist them with their future law careers. The two-day seminar will focus on explaining the various careers and

opportunities available to law school graduates from the perspectives of minorities, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups, and other students who may be less familiar with the practice of law and the legal industry.

“Some of these students who are successful in law school become potential candidates for Balch,” said DOUG KAUFFMAN, partner in the firm’s Birmingham, Ala., office and chair of Balch’s Diversity Committee. “However, the event is not merely a recruiting function or geared only to those who have an interest in working in a firm such as ours. Thus, there is a larger public service mission for the event.”

Selected students will attend the boot camp free of charge at Balch’s Birmingham, Ala., office. Any student wishing to attend the event may obtain an application by emailing bootcamp@balch.com by 4:00 p.m. CDT on July 24, 2015.