

Alumni@Dentons

November 2020

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We are pleased to share with our extended Dentons US family this issue of Alumni@Dentons.

Drop us a line at alumni@dentons.com and let us know what you liked about this edition and what you would like to see in the future. Also, keep us posted on what you have been up to and we will be happy to share it in our next issue.

A message from our CEO

Our Clients, Ourselves

2020 has been a difficult year for many. From a global pandemic to social unrest to an economy that seems to be on the rebound one day only to be knocked back on its heels the next, we have faced no shortage of challenges.

Like you, Dentons has faced each one head on—working tirelessly to help our clients and communities outmaneuver uncertainty and to provide our colleagues as much peace of mind as possible as they deal with disruptions in their own personal lives. In navigating this year, we are stronger for it.

Our priority has been two-fold: to ensure that we continue to provide high-quality client service, while also protecting the health and safety of our professionals and business services staff members as well as their families. Across the US Region we continue to work remotely while all our offices remain open. We have learned more about virtual collaboration than we knew possible. Online events such as wine-tasting happy hours, cooking demos by our colleagues, group check-ins and a magic show for the whole family have gone a long way to mitigate the adverse effects of physical distancing. We have also been proactive in promoting the physical and mental health benefits of exercise, nutrition and sleep.

Election Day is now past and I am particularly proud of the many roles—as citizen voters, poll watchers and election judges—that members of our Firm played during election season; and of the day-to-day analysis our Public Policy team provided, and continues to offer, our clients to help them anticipate and minimize political risk.

As we head into the holiday season, I want to take a moment to express my gratitude for our alumni, many of whom are among our valued clients, and to thank you sincerely for your support and confidence in Dentons. We welcome all of you who are new to the Dentons alumni group, including those who have inherited Dentons through our recent combinations. We are proud to count you as part of our family.

We remain deeply grateful for the successes achieved in this unprecedented year, and for the bright future they foretell for our clients and all of us who call this our professional home.

Wishing you a very merry holiday season and a happy new year.



Mike McNamara

Chief Executive Officer

Dentons US

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Highlights

Remote Work: Staying Connected, Positive and Productive

Many of us at Dentons continue to work remotely and while epidemiologists scramble to understand the coronavirus' spread, other researchers are focused on the impact of isolation on psychological well-being, and specifically why some are overwhelmed by depression, anxiety and stress while others "keep calm and carry on."

"The Trajectory of Loneliness in Response to COVID-19,"

published in American Psychologist, draws a surprising conclusion. The research team reports finding that "despite some detrimental impact on vulnerable individuals, there was no large increase in loneliness" but instead "remarkable resilience in response to COVID-19." Just as it is possible "to feel lonely in a crowd of family and friends," the authors note, one can feel "connected when physically alone." They conclude that it is:

"The feeling of connection rather than the number of social contacts that tends to promote better health outcomes. [emphasis added] Within the context of a pandemic that requires social distancing for the greater good, people are able to feel that everyone is in this together. This feeling, even when physically isolated, may help to keep feelings of loneliness in check."

From day one of the pandemic, Dentons has understood that "the feeling of . . . being in this together may increase resilience"—and acted on this belief. While there is no substitute for the richness of face-to-face communication in an office setting, videoconferencing technology allows you to see facial expressions and interpret body language, and the Firm was quick to embrace virtual face-to-face interaction regardless of physical location, assigning all employees Zoom accounts and encouraging its use.

Simultaneous with the announcement of lockdown measures, the Firm launched a number of other initiatives to optimize remote working, including:

Global Virtual Town Halls – A series of Zoom meetings have provided an important opportunity for our colleagues, in every location and in all roles, to learn from one another on a range of topics, including:

- **Navigating agile working** – To inspire and inform our rethinking of day-to-day interactions and routines, non-US colleagues in regions first hit by the pandemic discussed how they were adjusting to life and work under lockdown.
- **Exciting new client engagements** – Colleagues from around the globe shared stories of how, working remotely as well as across practices and offices, they were advising clients on a wide range of COVID-19 legal matters.
- **Racism and Injustice** – In the wake of George Floyd's death, the Firm hosted a conversation, featuring colleagues from Atlanta, Oman, Cape Town and Panama City, about how we can be better allies to diverse groups and what we can do to bring about change in our communities.
- **Accelerating innovation for the New Dynamic** – A panel discussed how the pandemic is driving innovation at Dentons and creating new value for clients.

Agile Working Guidance – While many at Dentons were already “agile” practitioners when the lockdown order took effect, for most, an awareness campaign focused on best practices for working remotely was deemed necessary to help ensure a smooth transition to a totally remote work environment. A series of firmwide emails from the Global Pandemic Preparedness Task Force detailed the Firm’s expectations as to availability and responsiveness, time and task accountability, technology setup, cybersecurity and client confidentiality.

Remote Work Central – The Firm created an internal site containing a broad selection of articles, podcasts and videos offering ideas on how to optimize remote working, including tips for team collaboration and high-productivity, and strongly encouraged its use.

NextTalent: Live – Dentons launched an ongoing series of weekly Zoom calls open to our global workforce. The sessions have covered such topics as:

- Managing uncertainty
- De-stressing and recharging
- The power of sleep
- Qualities that make good leaders
- Enhancing your virtual presence
- Disarming your inner critic
- Mindset hacks to bolster resilience
- Fast, simple ways to improve your focus

Today’s Virtual Commute – Individuals from around the US region serve as guest authors of this twice-weekly, journal-style email, which offers readers a glimpse into their personal lives and the measures they are taking to combat the isolation and other challenges presented by the pandemic. The narratives are often accompanied by photos of family members, pets, home improvement projects and links to useful Internet resources. Below are some examples of what colleagues have shared:

- **Bryan Cooper** gave an account of his relocation to the suburbs of Washington, DC—and the salubrious effects of viewing nature through a window
- **Valerie Markle** spoke about the experience she and her husband faced when attempting to adopt a new dog

- **Mary Boxer** shared the news that three members of her department have had or are expecting babies this year, and talked about her morning runs through her neighborhood of Highland Park, IL, with familiar home fronts from movies like *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off* and *Risky Business*
- **Mero Marmé** described outdoor improvements to his new home, including an 18-hole mini-golf course for his son Dante
- **Brian O’Bleness** touted the Kansas City Chiefs and shared an anecdote about his ten-year-old daughter commenting on his “dressy” Zoom meeting suit

Zoom as social lifeline - Virtual happy hours and hangouts have been used to provide a sense of normalcy during this abnormal time. Regular or ad hoc, these attendance-optional meetups may be called to recognize an accomplishment, celebrate a birthday, say goodbye to a departing colleague, or kick off a holiday weekend. Just as virtual “water cooler chats” are team-builders, firm-wide Zoom gatherings have resulted in new-found connectedness across practices, offices and occupational strata. Recent events include:

- **Wine-Tasting:** A happy hour to end all happy hours was our firmwide Virtual Wine-Tasting. The event (or events, as each office hosted its own tasting) drew more than 150 wine aficionados and participants from every US office who shared their favorite varietal of cocktail of choice.
- **An Evening of Magic with Dentons:** Colleagues, client guests and family members were treated to an all-ages event featuring illusionist and trickster **Joel Ward**, who has appeared on *The Tonight Show* and *Penn & Teller’s Fool Us* and at LA’s legendary Magic Castle in Los Angeles. But the real stars were Ward’s special guest helpers, the kids in Dentons’ extended family, whose stage presence was as endearing as Ward’s sleight of hand.
- **Cooking with Colleagues:** To connect socially while gearing up for the upcoming holidays, the Firm hosted live cooking demos via Zoom that allowed colleagues to bond over chopping, dicing and mixing. The mouth-watering sessions included dueling turkey recipes with **Jana Barbe** and her husband Roy, a holiday happy hour with **Rich Dodge** and **Taylor Blease**, serving up sides with **Johnyne Garcia** and **Merri Cross**, and Dentons desserts with **Robin DeGeare** and **Lisa Sachdev**.

As we close out the year, we look forward to more opportunities for connection.

US COVID-19 50-State Tracker Updated

Our US COVID-19 50-State Tracker—a database of state and local government health and safety orders, business directives, school closures, court and agency rule changes and financial assistance programs—has been revamped to be more user-friendly and functional, including official links, where possible, to ensure awareness of the latest orders and guidance. Be sure to check out this new-and-improved tool, and to share it with your clients and contacts.

The screenshot shows the top section of the 'US COVID-19 50-State Tracker' website. It features a purple header with the Dentons logo and a navigation arrow. Below the header is a search and filter interface with the following elements:

- A dropdown menu labeled 'Select city, county or state'.
- A section labeled 'Select up to two additional cities, counties or states to compare with (optional):' containing two more dropdown menus.
- A 'Select key points (optional)' dropdown menu.
- 'Go' and 'Reset' buttons.

Small text below the search area includes a disclaimer and supported browsers: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge, Apple Safari.

Expanding During a Pandemic

Dentons adds 23 offices in 2020



Colleagues from around the world gathered virtually to welcome our new colleagues from Dentons Durham Jones Pinegar

In 2020—a time when most law firms have been standing still, contracting or withdrawing from key markets because of the pandemic—Dentons has announced 6 combinations and 23 new offices around the world.

“Our global strategy remains to connect clients to leading talent in key markets around the globe despite the current unprecedented challenges,” said Elliott Portnoy, our Global CEO. “We continue to partner with the best firms with whom we are philosophically aligned, who have a deep understanding of their clients and markets and are in and of their communities.”

NORTH AMERICA - As part of Project Golden Spike, Denton US combined with Louisville, KY-based Bingham Greenebaum Doll, Pittsburgh-based Cohen & Grigsby and, most recently, Salt Lake City-based Dentons Durham Jones Pinegar.

AFRICA - Dentons announced a proposed combination with East African Law Chambers, a leading law firm in Tanzania. The combination instantly positioned us as the largest global law firm in that country. We also launched a combination with LEAD Advogados in Angola, further advancing our strategy of becoming the leading Pan-African law firm owned and controlled by Africans, with 14 locations on the continent.

ASIA PACIFIC - Dentons launched a previously announced combination with Lee International in South Korea, making us the first global firm to have South Korean operations that are owned and controlled by Koreans. Based in Seoul, Dentons Lee has strong economic ties to Korea's conglomerates and the combination will greatly enhance Dentons' brand value in the Asia Pacific Region, as well as in nearby ASEAN and Australasia Regions.

AUSTRALASIA - Dentons combined with Kensington Swan in New Zealand to further its Australasia growth strategy. Along with previous combinations in Australia and Papua New Guinea, the launch of Dentons Kensington Swan positions Dentons as the largest global law firm in New Zealand, with a team of 100 lawyers working out of offices in Auckland and Wellington, and advances our goal of becoming the preeminent global law firm in the Australasia Region.

UKMEA - Dentons established a foothold in Ireland with the opening of an office in Dublin, a leading offshore funds center, global center of aviation finance, and where nine of the ten largest tech companies have their European headquarters.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN - Dentons Cardenas & Cardenas, a partnership formed four years ago, expanded its presence in Colombia with the opening of an office in Medellín. Dentons combined with Jiménez de Aréchaga in Uruguay and with Rattagan Macchiavello Arocena in Argentina, and opened offices in the British Virgin Islands and St. Lucia.

Winners of Associate Hackathon Marry Technology and Inclusion

Open dialogue is part of the culture here and Dentons regularly hears terrific ideas from its associates. To further encourage out-of-the-box thinking, this year the Firm borrowed a page from Silicon Valley’s innovation playbook, launching an internal hackathon open to all associates. The inaugural event was hugely; the winning team’s proposal will be adopted by the Firm, with team members slated to deliver more detailed presentations to US Region Board members and partners over the coming months.

Addressing the Firm’s commitment to diverse staffing on matters of significance, the winning proposal, The Complement Check, is a self-populating keyword search to identify diverse lawyers with specific skill sets, experience and interest. Adding to its appeal, the proposal offered a fresh and expanded use of technology already available at the Firm. In its presentation, the winning team—**Kerisha Bowen** (Washington, DC), **Julius Carter** (Chicago), **Uchenna Ekuma-Nkama** (Atlanta) and **Taaj Reaves** (Chicago)—also

identified ways Dentons can enhance messaging around its firmly-held conviction of the importance of diversity and inclusion.

The runner-up proposal, Cred Collector, a streamlined process for entering information into the CredsBank database to better capture Firm experience, was also recognized. Its team members included **Mengci Shao** (Silicon Valley), **Erin Bass** (Phoenix), **Anna Shiran Youssefi** (Oakland, CA) and **Carol Yur** (Los Angeles).

All told, 100 associates and 50 partners, serving as mentors or judges, participated in the competition, which began with an initial vetting of 22 proposed solutions to develop business, streamline client service and/or improve an existing workflow. Of those, 16 teams were invited to participate in a four-day round of “Shark Tank”-like presentations to varying panels of partners. Each day had a different theme—Clients, Efficiency,

The Winning Team



Bowen



Carter



Ekuma-Nkama

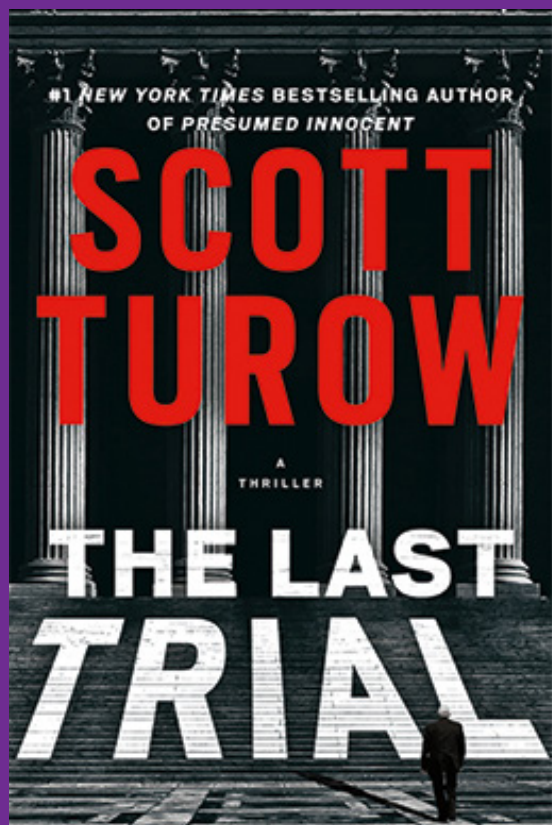


Reaves

“You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.”

— Maya Angelou

A Conversation with Scott Turow



Dentons hosted a conversation with New York Times bestselling author and Dentons partner Scott Turow about his newest book, *The Last Trial*, in which returning character and celebrated criminal defense lawyer Alejandro “Sandy” Stern decides to take on one last trial, the defense of a lifelong friend, a doctor faced with charges of insider trading, fraud and murder.

A New York Times reviewer described this first-class legal thriller as a “meticulously devised courtroom drama, rich with character detail” in which “Turow again demonstrates what he does best: roll out a complex, keenly observed legal case yet save a boatload of surprises for its ending.”

Scott is the author of many bestselling works of fiction, including *Testimony*, *Identical*, *Innocent*, *Presumed Innocent* and *The Burden of Proof*, as well as two nonfiction books, including *One L*, about his experiences at Harvard Law School. Scott’s books have been translated into more than 40 languages and over 30 million copies are in print.

In our live event, Scott was interviewed by Rachel Cannon, a partner in Dentons’ Litigation and Dispute Resolution and White Collar and Government Investigations practices.

To view a recording of the program, click [here](#).

Remembering Ruth Bader Ginsberg

The whole world mourned the passing on September 20 of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, a towering figure who, in her more than four decades as a lawyer, professor, appellate judge and associate Supreme Court justice influenced the law and society in real and permanent ways. A feminist icon, she blazed the trail for equal citizenship rights, drawing inspiration and analysis from comparative and human rights-based approaches to equality. She came to be known as “The Notorious RBG” for her passionate dissents in numerous cases. Justice Ginsberg served on the Supreme Court until her death at 87, her steely resilience in the face of serious health problems adding to the admiration many have for her.



Rubbing elbows with a future Supreme Court justice: Retired partner **Donald Lubin** shown with classmate **Ruth Bader** in the 1949 James Madison High School yearbook photo of Go-Getters Club. The future Supreme Court justice was the club's treasurer and went by the nickname “Kiki,” recalls Don, who is in the third row from the top, with his trademark glasses. Can you spot Ruth? Above is her official yearbook photo.



ALUMNI Q&A



Toni Wells

Principal, Bespoke Marketing Partners LLC

In 2016, Toni Wells, then US business development director supporting Dentons' regulatory practices, struck out on her own after 20 years of working in public and private sector organizations, including positions at legacy firm McKenna Long & Aldridge and other law firms, WilmerHale and Baker Botts. Toni formed Bespoke Marketing Partners LLC to provide marketing and business consulting services for professional service firms, and recently passed the four-year mark in this new venture. Toni assists firms with business development strategy and execution and also delivers programs on business development related topics. An important aspect of Toni's business is serving as an affiliate consultant for larger consulting firms including Diversity Lab and GrowthPlay. As an affiliate consultant at Diversity Lab, an incubator of innovative ideas to boost diversity and inclusion in the legal industry, she has partnered with law firms and legal departments to design business development strategies that address common obstacles faced by diverse lawyers. Below, Toni discusses the challenges and satisfactions of entrepreneurship, and how her experience at Dentons informs her current work.

How are you dealing with the current COVID-19 pandemic—physically, mentally and spiritually?

Overall, I am feeling grateful. My husband and I are usually extremely busy with work-related travel and kids' activities, but the pandemic has forced us to really slow down. Thankfully, both of us were already working from home so the transition wasn't so bad. And the family time has been priceless; as hard as it is at times, I will always be thankful for it. That being said, it has also been a stressful time that has changed me in some ways. I am very much an extrovert who enjoys being out and about and in the company of others. Now, in this COVID environment, I worry when I am in spaces with other people. That comfort level was taken away, so I hope we get some good vaccines on the market very soon that will help us feel safe again.

Can you describe your typical day?

A typical day could include a few coaching sessions, a team meeting on a Diversity Lab project, developing a webinar, and reading about what is going on in the legal industry. I have the great luxury of planning each day. There are very few surprises.

What do you enjoy most about what you do?

I truly enjoy the variety of projects I get to work on. In some small way, I feel like I am making an impact, especially as it pertains to working with women and diverse lawyers. I have the time and space to fully sink my teeth into projects, which I didn't fully get to do while working inside firms. For

example, I developed a program for Diversity Lab's Move the Needle (MTN) Fund, which pairs a diverse partner from a law firm with a sponsor from an MTN legal department. During the six-month program, the law firm partner has opportunities to pitch the legal department and work with their sponsor on a profile-raising activity, while the sponsor reciprocates with introductions to other in-house lawyers, either within the legal department or their connections in other legal departments. The critical piece is that the law firm will award its diverse partner origination credit (or a portion of credit if it is an existing client) for any work the partner earns from the legal department. The law firm partners were also given a business development coach to support their efforts. It has been so rewarding to see this program get off the ground. We are halfway through our first group and I am already seeing some "wins" from these new relationships. An important piece for me has been getting to work with the legal departments in a meaningful way. I have gained a lot of insight into their needs in the selection of outside counsel. It has also been extremely rewarding to see a good number of general counsels personally volunteer to serve as sponsors in this program.

How has being an entrepreneur affected your life?

Drastically, that's for sure. I never imagined becoming an entrepreneur. I worked within organizations for my entire working life. It was a HUGE leap of faith, but my family was incredibly supportive. The autonomy that comes with it is great, but there are other things, like having a consistent income and a steady project flow, that can be stressful at

times. I have been very fortunate to have had steady work over the past four years. The biggest change is how I feel mentally. I have a true sense of freedom. I have the time and the headspace to give projects my full attention. If I have a day where I am not as motivated, I can give myself a break and not feel too guilty about it.

What is it about law firm business development that has held your interest over the years?

Business development really comes down to relationship building and the selling of one's services (really oneself) which can be difficult and challenging to do. There are a lot of incredibly smart lawyers, so the distinction becomes what an individual (or collection of individuals) has to offer that is special, different, better or more valuable than the next person or firm. I truly enjoy helping lawyers figure that out for themselves. BigLaw is so special and almost unique in the sheer amount of talent that is present. And generally speaking, this group is going after a limited number of clients, so competition is tough. I love strategizing around markets, approaches and offerings. There is always something new that keeps this industry interesting.

With lockdowns still in effect all around the world, what advice do you have for maintaining the quality of client relationships while operating in a digital world?

Over the past seven months, lawyers have had to rethink traditional means of engaging in business development. As this is an extremely tough time to develop brand new relationships, the best approach is to focus on existing clients and contacts. But while going to the people you already know, you also have to be extremely thoughtful in your approach. Business development is an act of service so bringing something of value to your client is critical. Secondly, developing referral sources, both internal and external, is a good use of business development time. Other than having a direct relationship, your next best bet is to know someone with a direct relationship to your target client. Having a trusted referral source that can vouch for you and your work and make that valuable introduction is golden. Finally, we're in this unfortunate situation for the foreseeable future. Zoom fatigue is real, so getting creative about the platforms and mediums you use to reach out to prospects, existing clients or referral sources is important to making an impression and getting a response.

What should be included in an effective D&I strategy and what is the best way to effectively communicate this important work to clients?

Over the past ten years, we have seen a stronger commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion from buyers

of legal services. The recent escalation of social injustice tragedies that has occurred across the nation has shined an even brighter spotlight on the need for diverse and equitable work places where everyone feels included. We see companies going beyond pledges that too often have rung hollow to asking pointed diversity questions of their service providers and seeking assurances that diverse teams are doing their legal work. Law firms, for their part, have to demonstrate a real commitment by reporting their diversity statistics and inclusion practices and having an open and honest dialogue with clients about their weaknesses. Law firms also have to double down on their commitment to their diverse talent. It is critical that diverse lawyers have access to sponsorship early on in their career and are taught business development skills appropriate to their level as they progress. Finally, diversity and inclusion efforts are a long-term commitment that can provide a great opportunity to partner with clients in a meaningful way. Legal departments are also looking inward and examining their own progress in this area. This provides opportunities for law firms and in-house counsel to coalesce around the core values of diversity, equity and inclusion that also facilitate the deepening of client relationships.

How did your time at Dentons help prepare you for what you are doing today?

I have very fond memories of my time at Dentons. I think Dentons is one of the most innovative organizations out there. My time at Dentons has encouraged me to think much bigger than I ever thought before. I am willing to try things and learn from my failures. I still use the term "building the plane while flying it"—which I often do in my Diversity Lab work. I also push boundaries more than I ever did to accomplish the task at hand, and that is certainly needed when trying to disrupt and fast-forward the industry's progress on D&I.

What are your best memories of the Firm?

I truly enjoyed working on the retreats. There was a clear beginning, middle and end to these events and they were spectacular in scope. There were often 18-hour work days, but to see and experience the collective energy required to bring people together from all over the US, or the world, was amazing. I also enjoyed diving into practice strategy sessions and bringing various competencies together to build something great. And I relished the opportunities to learn from my colleagues, which often broadened my perspective.

Are there any aspects of working in a law firm that you miss?

I truly miss being a part of a large team with a shared purpose. I enjoyed having a familial feel when I came to work every day and I truly appreciated the opportunity to manage a team. I took great care in being responsible for the growth and development of team members. It was so rewarding for me to see people grow, get promoted and move on to other things.

Social Impact Dismantling Systemic Racism



Ben Weinberg

After the George Floyd killing, Dentons US redoubled its commitment to combating racial injustice in its many forms. We recently sat down with Pro Bono partner **Ben Weinberg** to discuss what the Firm is doing to help create a more just society, and the role our lawyers and professionals are playing in this effort.

How would you describe racial injustice work?

The most important element in describing racial justice or anti-racism work is to regard “work” as an active verb. Meaning that it is ongoing and can never be considered “finished.”

This type of work is intended both to do battle with systemic racism, and also to understand how the hardships of individual people are a product of the larger system. Applying a racial-justice lens to our legal aid and other pro bono work allows us to see these connections, which is necessary to undoing the larger institutional and systemic bases of racism.

What pro bono work is Dentons doing to support racial justice?

One notable example comes out of Montgomery, AL (the first capital of the Confederacy), where we are working with the National Center for Law and Economic Justice (NCLEJ) to dismantle a discriminatory system of fees and fines that often lands low-income Black residents in prison. Senior counsel Harold Hirshman is leading the case, and partner Sandy Hauser is the chair of the NCLEJ’s board.

Race equity work requires us to consider cases like this not in a vacuum, but as rooted in the history and policies of the United States. After the abolition of slavery, many states and municipalities enacted laws aimed at imprisoning formerly enslaved people—laws against “vagrancy,” “soliciting” or even associating in large groups. These laws were designed to exploit a provision of the Thirteenth Amendment that allows slavery and involuntary servitude “as punishment for a crime.” For decades, people unjustly imprisoned in this manner were put to work in what was essentially a system of renewed slavery.

Similarly, modern laws and regulations like those we are fighting in Montgomery exist to both criminalize and perpetuate poverty. People who cannot afford to fix every broken taillight, or who must make do with a broken-down car, get fined or ticketed. They may have to miss work to attend multiple court dates, potentially costing them wages or even their jobs. If they miss these court dates or arrive late, they may be on the hook for another substantial fine. If they cannot pay, they are thrown in jail—where they often are compelled to work for below minimum wage. And in Montgomery, as elsewhere, the people who fall victim to this vicious cycle are disproportionately people of color.

Undoing structural racism is a heavy lift. Do we also represent individuals facing the hardships of racial injustice?

Yes. You don’t always need to take on a massive case to do this type of work. You can represent individuals through projects designed to redress the harms of systemic

racism one client at a time. For example, this past April, [the Supreme Court ruled that](#) Louisiana’s practice of allowing criminal convictions based on non-unanimous jury verdicts violated the Sixth Amendment. Louisiana was the only state still engaged in this practice when it was outlawed—prospectively—by delegates to a state constitutional convention in 2018.

Almost 1,800 people—the vast majority of them Black—are serving criminal sentences based on non-unanimous verdicts. Under the Supreme Court ruling, they have until April 2021 to petition for a post-conviction release entitling them to a new trial that would require a unanimous verdict to convict. These people all need lawyers, and quickly.

That is where Dentons comes in: working with the [Promise of Justice Initiative](#), the New Orleans-based nonprofit that brought the litigation that ultimately overturned Louisiana’s unjust system and is now recruiting law firms to take on these individual cases. Led by Dentons partners **Sarah Holzschuh** and **Steve Hill**, a team of 26 Dentons lawyers and one paralegal currently represents 17 incarcerated people, a number that is likely to increase.

Louisiana’s practice was a vestige of the Jim Crow era. In 1898, a state constitutional convention changed both voting laws and the jury system, in order to “extend white supremacy to the limits of the law.” At the time, tens of thousands of Black citizens were registered to vote; only one year later, fewer than 500 were. Also prior to the convention, a criminal conviction required a unanimous jury. But faced with the prospect of having to accept African Americans on juries, thanks to a Supreme Court ruling in 1875, Louisiana enacted a new system allowing criminal convictions with just nine votes—specifically to cancel out the votes of Black jurors. It took 120 years for voters and the Supreme Court to finally rectify this blatant instrument of white supremacy, and it a huge amount of work still remains to help the hundreds of people currently suffering under it.

Law Firm Antiracism Alliance

Ben Weinberg was joined by **Mike McNamara** in representing our Firm during the two-day inaugural Law Firm Antiracism Alliance (LFAA) Summit, which brought together more than 500 attendees from more than 240 law firms that have joined LFAA for in-depth planning to effect deep and lasting reform.

Dentons is one of eight founding member firms of the LFAA, whose purpose is to leverage the resources of the private bar, in partnership with legal services organizations, to amplify the voices of communities and individuals oppressed by racism; to better use the law as a vehicle for change that benefits communities of color; and to promote racial equity in the law.

Hosted by the Shriver Center’s Racial Justice Institute (RJI), the summit featured insightful sessions led by experts in race equity work, including leaders from the RJI, the Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Mississippi Center for Justice and New York Lawyers for the Public Interest.

The lessons shared will help LFAA member firms advance their antiracism agendas and deploy their considerable pro bono capacities to support antiracism advocacy. A key goal of the LFAA’s agenda is to help us deepen our understanding of structural racialization and systems thinking, and how institutional and public policies perpetuate inequities by erecting barriers to economic and social equality for persons and communities of color while creating opportunities for white individuals and communities.



Diversity and Inclusion

Transgender Day of Remembrance

On November 20, Dentons commemorated Transgender Day of Remembrance, a date dedicated to reminding us that many transgender and non-binary people around the world face discrimination, harassment and violence just for being who they are. [Click here to watch our video.](#)



Celebrating Native American Heritage

Three Washington, DC-based members of our Native American Affinity Group—associate **Maurisa Bell**, managing director **Natasha John**, and managing associate and affinity group chair **Rose Petoskey** led a vibrant discussion ranging from federal Indian and tribal law and policy to economic development, including the increase in Native American buying power and its impact on Native and tribal communities, to Native American culture and heritage,

including language reclamation efforts. Featured speakers included jessie little doe baird, vice chairwoman of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe; Professor Matthew L.M. Fletcher, director of the Indigenous Law and Policy Center at Michigan State University College; and Joe Valandra, executive director of the Native American Contractors Association.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Our Hispanic/Latinx Organization for Leadership and Advancement (HOLA) affinity group organized an illuminating panel discussion on Hispanic/Latinx representation in the legal profession. HOLA co-chairs **Kristen Rodriguez**, a partner and member of Dentons' Litigation and Dispute Resolution practice, and **Gilberto Ocañas**, a senior advisor

in our Public Policy group, were joined by José Ramón González, executive vice president and general counsel for insurance giant CNA and chairman of the board of civil rights advocacy nonprofit LatinoJustice; and Enrique Breceda, vice president and regional general counsel for the Americas for global bioscience company Chr. Hansen.

Hispanic Heritage Month Colleague Q&A



**Adriana
Vélez-León**
Associate, Energy
Washington, DC

How does being diverse contribute to your success as a lawyer?

It allows me to bring a different and unique perspective to the table. And I am able to connect and relate with clients who, like me, have a diverse background.

Knowledge, experiences and perceptions shape the way we view and approach issues, events, people and our environment in ways that we might not even recognize. Awareness of how these elements shape the handling of legal issues and identification of solutions is critical to client service.

What is your advice for less experienced diverse lawyers?

Do not see your diversity as an impediment to reaching your goals. Do not underestimate yourself just because you look or sound different from the rest. Rather, embrace your diversity and recognize that it is one of your greatest strengths.

Who has inspired you to embrace your diversity?

My family. They have always encouraged me to speak my truth and embrace all things that make me a proud Puerto Rican.



Vanessa Camino
Legal Secretary,
New York

How does being diverse contribute to your success?

Being diverse (and bilingual) has granted me the opportunity to help others. I provided assistance as an interpreter for a U-Visa application case; listening to the women's stories empowered me to offer my assistance to the Litigation team for future applications.

What is the best advice you have received that you would like to share with your colleagues?

My grandmother says "Si no tienes nada bueno que decir, no digas nada."
("If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.")

Who has inspired you to embrace your diversity?

Sonia Sotomayor has inspired me to be strong and not let the struggles of the past define me.



Jennifer Lucero
Global Senior
Brand Manager,
Washington, DC

How does being diverse contribute to your success?

Growing up as a Mexican-American in Maryland (Prince George County to be precise) during the '80s was not as diverse as it would be today, but being seen as the minority in a sea of white and Black neighbors opened my eyes to the vast differences across cultures, incomes, etc., which contributed to my “don't judge a book by its cover” mentality, and to my ability to connect, personally and professionally, across racial and ethnic divides. This is especially important today when we are having broader conversations about improving cross-cultural understanding.

Who has inspired you to embrace your diversity?

My grandfather, with whom I spent summers in California. Although he was extremely patriotic, he was also proud of his Mexican culture, particular its food (he was a chef), religion and music. After mass on Sunday, he would always play big-band music, one of his favorite artists being Tito Puente. But it was the stories of his experiences that were amazing to me. He worked his way up the proverbial ladder from fruit picking to cutting grass to being a lawn superintendent for Van Nuys Parks and Recreation, enabling him to provide different life experiences and educational opportunities for his children. He loved timepieces and after his retirement he fixed watches and clocks for his neighbors. He instilled this combination of pride and drive in my mother, who instilled the same in me.

Those who do not know you very well would be surprised to learn that...

Although I understand un poco de español, I am not a Spanish speaker. My grandparent, although bilingual, believed in speaking the language of one's adopted country, so never spoke Spanish to my mother (although my grandfather later said this was one of his biggest regrets).

Please share some of your recent projects and/or accomplishments.

At the last global partner meeting in Cancun, I was pleasantly surprised by the importance of speaking and understanding two languages. I helped prepare materials and set up meeting rooms, communicating with Spanish-speaking hotel staff and IT support. When someone became ill, I facilitated the delivery of medication. I went offsite to pick up office supplies. Unexpected travel changes? No problem. And at mealtimes, I made sure everyone got their preferred dishes, even items not on the menu.



Sandra Davalos
Legal Secretary,
Chicago

How has being diverse contributed to your success?

You're more likely to succeed at what you enjoy and I enjoy engaging with a diverse group of people. I have dropped notes to colleagues in New York, St. Louis and Washington, DC, as well as Spain, Poland and the UK. I believe my openness to diversity contributes to the Firm's success.

Who has inspired you to embrace your diversity?

There are many people, but none more than my husband, Gabino. When we met, he was less than fluent in English and I favored Spanglish because I considered myself American! As his command of English grew, I found myself speaking more Spanish and otherwise steeping myself in Mexican culture—learning salsa singing and dancing and ultimately, rolling my r's like a true Mexican. In addition to indulging in Mexican food, drink and music, Gabino and I also embrace our parents' heritage by bringing our children to Mexico for their birthdays and holidays.



George Medina

Paralegal,
Restructuring,
Insolvency
& Bankruptcy,
New York

How does being diverse contribute to your success?

Growing up in the South Bronx taught me a great deal about conflict resolution. I was always intrigued by the speed at which conflict was escalated or deescalated. At a young age I was exposed to people who shifted my perspective about where I grew up and where I wanted to end up.

Who has inspired you to embrace your diversity?

I have a running joke with my partner, who thinks I am really 75 years-old. We have been together for more than 20 years and he has inspired me to embrace the totality of my experience; the cases I have worked on and the people I have been exposed to. In all instances, he has been a champion of my diversity, which has allowed me to serve our clients and colleagues with the highest level of service and respect I can render.

Those who do not know you very well would be surprised to learn that...

I grew up with many of the pioneers of hip-hop in the South Bronx and attended Dewitt Clinton High School there. For those who have never heard of the school, I am sure they have heard of James Baldwin, Richard Avedon, Ralph Lauren, Stan Lee and Judge Jerry Scheindland (Judge Judy's husband), who are some of the famous alumni.



Careers

Recent Laterals

Rodney Moore has joined our Employment and Labor practice as a partner and will resident in the Atlanta office. His background includes representing employers as lead counsel in federal and state court employment litigation, class and collective actions, labor arbitrations and administrative proceedings.

Michael Drobac and **Gregory Walden** joined the Public Policy practice as principal and partner, respectively, resident in the Washington, DC, office. Michael is a former director of government affairs for Netflix and also worked for three US senators. Gregory's background includes serving as chief counsel of the US Federal Aviation Administration, associate deputy attorney general with the US Department of Justice and member of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Jennifer Williams rejoined the Firm's Corporate practice as a partner, resident in the Dallas office. Prior to rejoining Dentons, Jenny served as the general counsel of ATW, a leading provider of trailers, work trucks and related parts, based in Richardson, TX.

Ashley Bell joined Dentons as a partner in the Public Policy practice, resident in the Atlanta office. Recent positions include a policy advisor to the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council in the Office of American Innovation and a regional administrator for the Small Business Administration.

Steven Mastrovich joined the Firm's Boston office, where he will divide his time between the Corporate and Real Estate practices. His 40 years of experience advising on complex capital markets, business formation, M&A and other transactions, includes founding and serving as CEO of Redimere Advisors, a real estate advisor and merchant bank, which he plans to continue.

Mark Califano joined Dentons as a partner, resident in the Washington, DC, office, where he will work on commercial litigation, regulatory law, compliance, privacy and information security matters. He is a former chief legal officer and head of business for a leading global investigations consultancy firm.

Lynn P. Harrison III has joined our Restructuring, Insolvency and Bankruptcy practice in New York, where he will concentrate on international and cross-border insolvencies. His background includes representing the Italian Extraordinary Administrator of Parmalat S.p.A., the dairy and food conglomerate, in restructuring several of the company's subsidiaries in the US and Latin America.



Kudos

The Chicago Business Journal named Managing Partner **Mary Wilson** to its 2020 Women of Influence list for her work developing future legal professionals and her commitment to community service through membership on nonprofit boards and other charitable endeavors. Mary was also selected as Managing Partner of the Year by Corporate Counsel.

Indianapolis Office Managing Partner **Meg Christensen** has been named to the Indianapolis Business Journal's 2020 Women of Influence list.

Litigation senior managing associate **Spencer Hamilton** was selected as an "On the Rise" honoree at the 2020 Texas Lawyer Legal Awards, one of 30 lawyers under age 40 recognized for their accomplishments, leadership and commitment to pro bono and community service.

The *New York Law Journal* honored New senior counsel **Michael Bamberger**, a member of the Litigation team, with its Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his 60-year career as one of the nation's foremost First Amendment lawyers. Michael has represented clients in more than 100 such cases, including before the Supreme Court.

Seven Energy's debt restructuring and acquisition by Savannah Petroleum won Deal of the Year at the inaugural IFLR Sub-Saharan Africa Awards. New York Capital Markets partners **Maria Livanos** and **Dave Natter** and managing associate **Cam Morris** worked on the matter, which was led out of our London office.

The Women's Council on Energy and Environment appointed Washington, DC, Energy counsel **Jennifer Morrissey** vice chair of its board's Leadership Advisors Committee. The WCEE provides numerous educational and networking opportunities throughout the year.

Washington Energy partner **Emma Hand** and counsel **Jennifer Morrissey** were selected by The Economic Club of Washington, DC, a prestigious organization created to strengthen ties between metro DC-area businesses and the diplomatic community, to participate in its two-year Emerging Leader program, paving the way to full membership.

Out of 30 firms with more than 600 lawyers ranked in Law360's **2020 Diversity Snapshot**, Dentons ranked sixth in promotions of partner of color, thirteenth in number of equity partners of color and number of lawyers of color on the executive committee, and nineteenth overall.

Phoenix Litigation senior managing associate **Erin Bass** received a pro bono award from the US District Court for the District of Arizona, for winning a complex and daunting prisoner's rights case.

Dentons has once again been named a **Stonewall Top Global Employer**, one of only 17 global organizations to achieve this accolade. Stonewall's annual Global Workplace Equality Index highlights the best workplace environments for LGBTQ+ people.



Transitions

Celebrating Marty Rosen



New York office colleagues gathered virtually to belatedly celebrate the retirement of Trusts, Estates and Wealth Preservation partner **Marty Rosen**. With the long-planned in-person celebration disrupted by the pandemic, colleagues logged on or dialed in to toast and celebrate, as CEO **Mike McNamara** put it, “the extraordinary leadership, vision, success and legacy of Marty,” who retired at the end of January after 70 years practicing law and accounting. Colleagues, friends and Marty’s family gathered to share the impact that he has made in the professional and personal lives of so many within our Firm.

“Every call I think we ever had, no matter what the topic was, began with a conversation about your family and ended with a conversation about how my family was doing, because you always cared deeply about that,” Global CEO **Elliott Portnoy** said to the man of the hour, adding, “And it’s to you we owe our reputation as one of the premier practices for high-net-worth individuals and families. Your tireless efforts, sophistication, integrity and commitment to excellence continues to inspire all of us. You retire as a friend and a legend who has taught all of us about what matters most in practice and, more importantly, in life.”

Echoed Global Chairman **Joe Andrew**, “Marty defines what it means to be a true Dentons lawyer—tireless in his advocacy, peerless in his patience, and great in his graciousness. He is a class act and will be sorely missed, but he has informed and built a culture that will foster many more good people in his image.”

In his retirement note to Mike, Marty said, “[I]t has been my pleasure and honor to serve as a partner for almost 20 years. When Rosen and Reade arrived at Sonnenschein on July 1, 2001, there were 400 lawyers. It is inconceivable what Joe and Elliott have done to bring the firm to where it is today... It has been my honor and pleasure to serve with all of you...”

The reality is that it has been our honor to be inspired daily by Marty’s extraordinary tenacity, personal character and commitment to our profession and to causes that make a difference in the lives of many. We look forward to Marty continuing to be a part of our Dentons family and wish him a wonderful retirement with his wife Joan and family, which he truly deserves.



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