

Philadelphia Fundraising Reception

Startling research in the late 1990s, by the National Association for Law Placement Foundation, suggested that virtually all women lawyers of color working in private practice left their positions at major law firms within eight years. A more recent study found that from 1998 to 2003 nearly two-thirds (64.4 percent) of minority females left their firms within 55 months of being hired.

Could this really be the case? Why are these figures so dismal, and what can law firms do to address this situation? We don't know. Virtually no other research has been done on this segment of the lawyer population.

The American Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession is concerned about this situation, and has launched a new and critical initiative: a Research Project on the Retention and Advancement of Women Attorneys of Color. We write to enlist your support of this initiative, and your participation in an upcoming Commission reception in Philadelphia honoring ABA President Dennis Archer to raise funds for this initiative.

While there has been research conducted on issues related to women and to people of color in the legal profession, there has been no comprehensive study, which has specifically focused on women attorneys of color. The Commission on Women has determined that there is a need for a comprehensive analysis on the unique concerns and experiences of Hispanic, African-American, Native American, and Asian American women in the legal profession. A brochure on the Women of Color Research Initiative is enclosed.

We ask that you show your support for this initiative by becoming a sponsor of the reception for President Archer. The reception will be held at the law office of Ballard Spahr on May 19, 2004, from 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Proceeds from this event will be used to fund the Women of Color Research Initiative.

Sponsorships are at the Gold (\$5,000), Silver (\$2,500) and Bronze (\$1,500) levels. Outlines of the benefits for each sponsorship level are enclosed. Gold sponsors, in addition to receiving recognition by President Archer, will be listed as a sponsor in all program materials produced in conjunction with the May 24-25, 2004, Women's Summit, a unique gathering of corporate general counsel and managing partners sponsored by the Commission on Women and the Office of the President. Also, a number of women of color law students will be invited to attend the reception honoring President Dennis Archer. Gold Sponsors will have the opportunity to designate up to 5 law student "fellows" on behalf of their respective law firms.

It is our expectation that this reception will help to energize the Philadelphia business and legal communities to further improve the status of women of color in the legal profession. Your tax-deductible contribution will allow the Commission on Women to begin its groundbreaking research. We hope that you will agree that this is an event worthy of support by "Firm" and that you will be a sponsor of the reception.

Please respond to the Commission on Women Staff Director, Kim Youngblood at 312/988-5497. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Roberta Liebenberg, Event Co-Chair

Amelia Boss, Event Co-Chair