



## KMK Law Implements Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan

At KMK, we embrace the unique characteristics of all our lawyers and staff, which ultimately fosters individual success as well as the success of our firm. We believe that a diverse work environment attracts the best and the brightest people in the legal community and provides the most creative and innovative solutions for our clients. We are committed to developing and maintaining a diverse and inclusive work setting at all levels. We strive to attract people of diverse backgrounds and characteristics, including, but not limited to, race, gender, ethnicity, cultural heritage, disability, religion, and sexual orientation.

Our goal is to foster a diverse work environment that provides for creativity, productivity, a sense of inclusion, and effective leadership—where our lawyers and staff feel enriched and empowered to provide client solutions that continue to exceed expectations.

To achieve those ends, KMK Law has implemented a firm-wide Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan with a vision of being recognized as an industry leader in attracting

and retaining diverse legal talent and fostering an inclusive law firm. This Plan implements the firm's fundamental strategies with respect to fostering an inclusive and diverse environment, recruiting top diverse talent, being a community leader on diversity and inclusion, and identifying and eliminating hidden barriers to the advancement of diverse attorneys. The action items identified in the Plan to address the aforementioned hidden barriers stem from participation by firm leadership, including, among others, the Board, Managing Partner, Practice Group Leaders and Directors, in Kathleen Nalty's All-In Education Program. This Program focused on various training topics and exercises including the business case for diversity and inclusion, strategies for confronting unconscious bias, traits of inclusive leaders, and strategic planning around diversity and inclusion. ◀

## KMK Law Welcomes Kate Christoff

KMK is excited to announce that Kate Christoff will be joining the firm as the Director of Legal Recruiting and Professional Development. Kate most recently served as the Recruiting and Analytics Manager for the Center for Professional Development at the University of Cincinnati College of Law. In her new role, Kate will have many responsibilities including managing the Diversity Case Competition and assisting the Diversity & Inclusion Committee with implementing fundamental strategies and action items under the Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan. Welcome Kate!



## Diversity Case Competition for First Year Law Students to Remain Virtual in 2022



KMK Law, in partnership with the University of Cincinnati College of Law, will be hosting the 2022 Virtual Law Student Diversity Case Competition, which will be held on January 14 & 15, 2022.

“This program is a part of our ongoing commitment to inclusion and diversity at KMK Law,” said Bethany P. Recht, KMK Partner and Chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. “While we missed the opportunity to meet and network in person in 2021, we found that our virtual competition continues to provide law students with a unique opportunity to showcase their legal abilities and sharpen their professional skills just as our in-person event has in years past.”

The Competition provides underrepresented racial and ethnic minority, first year law students the opportunity to learn practical lawyering skills in a high-pressure situation involving a real-life scenario. Students will once again be competing for cash prizes by displaying their analytical, problem solving, and communications skills – all skills that are key to workplace success. The Competition continues to expose students to practicing attorneys and *Fortune* 500 corporate counsel, who will serve as coaches and judges.

For more information on the Competition, including team registration or your interest in being a judge, please contact Joe Lehnert or Bethany Recht, co-chairs of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. <<



### C-Change: Allison Westfall

Congratulations to Allie Westfall on her selection to participate in the Cincinnati USA Regional Chambers 16th C-Change Class. The program named 55 local employees to be a part of the 10-month leadership development program designed for advancing careers in Greater Cincinnati.

## KMK Law Holds Luncheon to Celebrate Juneteenth

In celebration of Juneteenth, on Friday, June 18, 2021, KMK held a luncheon for all attorneys and staff, along with a video program planned by the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. The video program included a Juneteenth Jamboree educational video from Austin PBS, KLRU-TV and a video segment contributed by the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center for the BlkFreedom Juneteenth Virtual Celebration. In support of local Black-owned businesses, food was catered by Just Q'in BBQ, along with assorted desserts from Sweets by LaDawn.

“Juneteenth,” a combination of “June” and “Nineteenth,” was first celebrated by newly freed Black people in 1866 to commemorate emancipation from slavery in the United States, with food, singing, and the reading of spirituals. Today, Juneteenth is a global celebration of Black freedom and achievement. KMK will continue to recognize the significance of the Juneteenth holiday annually and has encouraged all attorneys and staff to seek out opportunities to learn more about Black history and culture. <<

## Judge Marilyn Zayas Visits KMK Law in Celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month

On October 13, 2021, in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, KMK hosted a luncheon for all attorneys with special guest Judge Marilyn Zayas of the Ohio First District Court of Appeals—the first and only Latinx judge elected to an Ohio Court of Appeals. Judge Zayas participated in a live interview with Partner Joe Lehnert discussing her diverse heritage, her journey from being a young girl in New York City to becoming a Judge in Ohio, and various challenges faced by the Latinx community, as well as sharing with us important facts to know about Latinos and Latinas. Judge Zayas also offered advice on how current legal professionals can help elevate the next generation of young people and inspire more diversity in the legal profession. <<

# KMK Law Women & Minority Attorneys Elected to Partner

Among the seven newly elected partners, KMK Law is proud to announce the promotion of the following women and minority attorneys:



## Amanda Stubblefield Burton

Amanda practices in the firm's Litigation Group, representing clients in high-stakes matters in federal and state courts. Amanda's practice is focused on defending companies in complex commercial disputes and class-action litigation, and she has particular experience in financial-services and consumer-protection matters. Amanda also has significant experience in complex contractual disputes and constitutional litigation. She is experienced in all stages of litigation—from pre-dispute investigation and resolution, to pre-trial briefing and discovery, to appeals and settlements. Prior to joining KMK, Amanda served as a law clerk to the Hon. David L. Bunning, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky. Amanda earned her law degree from the University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law in 2014, where she graduated *magna cum laude*, and was elected into the Order of the Coif. She earned a B.A. in History, *summa cum laude*, from Eastern Kentucky University in 2011. Amanda is admitted to practice law in Ohio and Kentucky.



## Sarah Vonderbrink Geiger

Sarah practices in the firm's Litigation Group where she has experience representing a wide variety of clients in litigation, including both public and private companies, small businesses, and individuals. Sarah's practice is concentrated in the areas of class action/FLSA collective litigation, personal injury/wrongful death litigation, tort defense litigation, and general business and commercial dispute litigation. She also has experience advising trustees of mass tort settlement trusts on issues relating to trust administration. Sarah has experience in all aspects of litigation, including depositions, oral argument, motion practice, written discovery, trial preparation, trial, and appellate litigation. She has litigated cases within federal and state courts, appellate courts, and in private mediation and arbitration throughout the country. Sarah earned her J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law in 2014. She earned her B.A. from the University of Richmond, *cum laude*, in 2010. Sarah is admitted to practice law in Ohio and Kentucky.



## Shannon D. Lawson

Shannon practices in the firm's Business Representation & Transactions Group, assisting clients with all aspects of their commercial financing and equipment leasing needs. Shannon has successfully negotiated and structured numerous transactions—and has become the go-to source for clients when it comes to solving their complex legal issues within finance and leasing. His services include commercial finance, equipment leasing, and mergers and acquisitions. Shannon has extensive experience with secured transactions, asset-based loans, syndicated credit facilities, equipment financing, law firm financing and third-party legal opinions. Shannon earned his J.D. from the University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law in 2014. He earned his B.S. from Delaware State University, *cum laude*, in 2002. Shannon is admitted to practice law in Ohio.



## Emily Wurtenberger Schott

Emily assists clients with commercial real estate matters, including the acquisition, sale, financing, development and leasing of commercial properties. She represents borrowers and lenders in financing transactions, landlords and tenants in leasing matters, and purchasers and sellers in property transfers. In addition to her experience negotiating conventional financing, Emily has advised both lenders and borrowers with respect to construction and permanent loan documentation for low-income housing tax credit and new market tax credit transactions. Emily has also represented owners, architects and contractors in connection with the negotiation of construction contracts and architect agreements, particularly AIA documents. Emily earned her J.D. from Vanderbilt Law School in 2014. She earned her B.B.A. from the University of Notre Dame in 2011. Emily is admitted to practice law in Ohio and Texas.

# KMK Law 2022 Diversity Fellowship Program

KMK Law is pleased to announce that the firm will again be offering the Diversity Fellowship Program in 2022. This program furthers KMK Law's mission of recruiting and retaining a skilled, high-performing, diverse workforce. Diverse law student fellows in the Program will receive a paid summer associate position along with an additional grant up to \$10,000, as well as other professional development opportunities and resources. Additional information about the Diversity Fellowship Program will be made available soon. «

## Summer Work Experience in Law (SWEL)

KMK was proud to welcome SWEL student, Naima Miller, to the firm this summer. Naima is an undergraduate student at Ohio University and is an alumna of Walnut Hills High School. SWEL is a pipeline program designed to introduce minority students to a variety of careers in law at a young age. SWEL is an important part of KMK's diversity initiatives, and KMK aims to provide SWEL students with meaningful exposure to the firm's attorneys and their work. «

## Summer Associate Program

KMK Law held a 10-week summer associate program at the firm. The firm was pleased to welcome a diverse class of summer associates, including 2 competitors from prior Diversity Case Competitions and a KMK Diversity Fellow. «



## Leadership Cincinnati: Shannon Lawson

Congratulations to Shannon Lawson on his selection to participate in the Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber's Leadership Cincinnati Class 45. The program has named 56 participants in its next class, including representatives of large corporations, mid-sized companies, nonprofits, governments and entrepreneurs that will gain a deeper understanding of how to drive transformative change in our community.

## KMK Law is Proud to Support:



### DePaul Cristo Rey Corporate Work Study Program

KMK is proud to continue its commitment to serving as a corporate partner and employer for students at the DePaul Cristo Rey High School. Through DePaul Cristo Rey's Corporate Work Study Program, two low-income high school students work at KMK to earn money to help pay for their Catholic school college prep education. KMK has agreed to a multi-year commitment to sponsor and employ students each year, and has been doing so since 2011.



### Cincinnati Bell RiseUp Women's Series

KMK Law is proud to support the Cincinnati Bell RiseUp Series. In celebration of women leaders in arts & society, Over-the-Rhine, in partnership with 3CDC, will play host to some of the world's most inspiring women artists and thought leaders and offer programming to provide awareness of the issues women face today. The series programming is aimed to inspire women so they can RISE UP for themselves, others, and their community.

## Founders' Weekend of Service

### #KMKCares

Community service and support truly are cultural values established by our founding partners more than 65 years ago, and they remain a foundational and unifying force with the firm. KMK Law's commitment to diversity and inclusion includes partnering with local organizations to reach underserved and underrepresented in our community. This year, approximately 75 KMK Law attorneys, staff, and families participated in a Weekend of Service to honor the firm's founding partners. Together they gave 218 hours of service to the following organizations: Tikkun Farm, Dress for Success Cincinnati, People Working Cooperative, and Matthew 25 Ministries. «

## ALFA International Diversity & Inclusion Leaders Forum

The Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Committee of ALFA International (ALFAI) has created a forum comprised of ALFAI D&I advocates within its member firms. KMK Partners Bethany Recht and Joe Lehnert serve on the forum on behalf of KMK. The purpose of this forum is to help educate member firms on the activities they may take advantage of that ALFAI is undertaking regarding D&I. The forum is also used to receive feedback regarding the usefulness of the provided tools and will aid member firms with their D&I efforts. Most importantly, this forum will serve as a venue where D&I leaders within member firms can collaborate with each other, share best practices and discuss areas where they may be struggling. «



## Top Workplace

KMK Law is proud to announce that the firm has been named a Top Workplace by *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. KMK Law has been voted in TEN times as a Top Workplace in Cincinnati!

## 2021 Diversity Committee & Women's Initiative Committee

KMK recognizes the current members of the Diversity Committee and Women's Initiative Committee. Please reach out to any of these members with input or questions regarding KMK's diversity and inclusion initiatives.

### Diversity Committee

Bethany Recht (Co-Chairperson)  
Joe Lehnert (Co-Chairperson)

Shannon Lawson  
Lori Moser  
Claire Parrish  
Dave Popp  
Adrienne Roach

Meribeth Sewell  
Kal Steinberg  
Jason Stitt  
Allie Westfall

### Women's Initiative Committee

Sophia Holley (Co-Chairperson)  
Darcy Watt (Co-Chairperson)

Mike Cappel  
Sarah Vonderbrink Geiger  
Megan Hymore  
Mary Ellen Malas

Caroline Musekamp  
Adrienne Roach  
Antoinette Schindel  
Nick Simon

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