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KMK D/I NEWSLETTER

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KMK Law Hosts the Nation's First and Only Diversity Case Competition for First Year Law Students

On January 18 & 19, 2019, KMK Law, in partnership with the University of Cincinnati College of Law's Center for Professional Development, hosted the first ever Diversity Case Competition for first-year minority law students comprising 14 teams from 7 tri-state area law schools: University of Kentucky College of Law, Chase College of Law (Northern Kentucky University), Moritz College of Law (Ohio State University), Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Maurer School of Law (Indiana University), McKinney School of Law (Indiana University) and UC College of Law. The inaugural event is another example of KMK Law's commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Different from law school moot court and trial practice competitions that simulate a court hearing or trial, the case competition placed first year law students into the shoes of a law firm associate tasked with a late Friday afternoon assignment from a supervising partner for a Saturday morning meeting. That assignment required competitors to use their analytical, problem solving and



communication skills to provide legal and practical business advice to both the supervising partner and the client, including making recommendations with regard to one of the client's internal policies.

The competition also gave law students the benefit of networking with KMK Law associates, who acted as professional development coaches on the first day of the competition. Additionally, competitors were exposed to KMK Law partners and Fortune 500 corporate counsel, who played the roles of supervising partners and clients and judged the competition. KMK Law also hosted other members of the Cincinnati Legal Community to engage in networking and participate in a professional development panel for the law students.

Cash prizes were awarded to the winning teams.



First Place (\$3,000) – University of Cincinnati College of Law Team 1: Elizabeth Gatten, Sol Ouzounian



Second Place (\$2,000) – University of Cincinnati College of Law Team 4: Kanisha Ervin, Sarah Ochieng, Ja'nae Powell



Third Place (\$1,000) – The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law Team 14, Zeynep Kart, Thomas Pope, Keri Richardson

Additional information about next year's Diversity Case Competition will be made available in Fall 2019. If you are interested in being involved with the competition, please contact Julie M. Mulhern, Director of Legal Recruiting & Professional Development.

Debating #MeToo and Its Impact on Due Process



On March 1, 2019, KMK attorney Sarah Vonderbrink Geiger took to the debate stage at the 2019 ALFA International—International Client Seminar in Dana Point, CA on the issue of #MeToo and its specific impact on due process of law. The #MeToo movement has undoubtedly created a complex and divisive array of legal, business,

and social issues for clients, most notably highlighting the issue of sexual harassment and assault in the workplace. With more than 250 in-house corporate counsel, corporate executives and senior law firm partners in attendance, Sarah contributed to a meaningful discourse regarding the balance between the #MeToo movement and the costs, if any, to due process.

The debate focused on the more colloquial version of due process, which generally underlies the thrust of the arguments that the #MeToo movement negatively affects due process, although the “innocent until proven guilty” principle of legal due process certainly finds its way into the debate. Indeed, Sarah’s debate opponent argued that the #MeToo movement is built upon a presumption that the alleged victim of sexual harassment or assault should be given the benefit of the doubt and that the ensuing internal investigations start from the unfair premise that the accused is in fact culpable. Sarah responded to that critique in the debate by describing the #MeToo movement more as a balancing of the existing scales, rather than showing unqualified preference for the accuser. “By correcting a deep-rooted power imbalance, and creating a more level playing field for all parties,” Sarah argued, “the #MeToo movement is providing a semblance of this colloquial due process to the alleged victims, who have been silenced for far too long.”

A principal concern raised in the #MeToo debate has been the risk of false accusations. Concerns about false accusations of sexual assault should certainly be taken seriously, but are rare according to the statistics cited by Sarah from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, including that only 2 to 10% of sexual assault accusations could be considered false. On the other hand, Sarah’s debate opponent pointed out that sexual harassment in the workplace is not always so objectively clear, and people should not lose sight of the immediate, career and life-altering impact that a sexual harassment accusation in the workplace can have on the accused even before an investigation can be completed.

The impact of the #MeToo movement has surely been felt in the legal world. According to a 2017 Law 360 Report, 50.3% of law school graduates are women, but women make up less than 35% of lawyers at law firms, and only 20% of equity partners at those firms. “Women are rarely the decision-makers or the rainmakers, and are trying to establish themselves and to gain acceptance into the ‘old boys club,’” Sarah described during the debate, “and they have every incentive to keep workplace harassment quiet.” “But in balancing the scales at least a little, the #MeToo movement benefits this colloquial sense of due process, by giving the accuser and the accused a more fair playing field than they had before.” Critics still respond, however, that the #MeToo movement has tilted the scales so far that organizations are now more inclined to take some form of immediate action against the accused, such as a suspension or mandatory leave of absence, before an investigation is even completed.

All sides tend to agree that giving everyone a meaningful opportunity to be heard, particularly on serious matters like sexual harassment and sexual assault, can only advance due process and strengthen an organization’s culture of inclusion. However, whether or not there are costs that outweigh the advancements made by the #MeToo movement will continue to be debated.

KMK is a proud member of ALFA International and participant in the annual International Client Seminar. ALFA International is the premier network of independent law firms. Founded in 1980, ALFA International was the first and continues to be one of the largest and strongest legal networks, with 150 member firms throughout the world.



Back by Popular Demand—Chris DeSantis Returns to KMK

On April 10, 2019, organizational behavior consultant, facilitator and muse Chris DeSantis returned to KMK. During his first visit to KMK, Chris delivered a humorous presentation on the generational differences that arise in the workplace that got even the Gen Xers to be a little less skeptical about the quirky Millennials. Chris came back to build on that discussion of generational differences and also explore gender differences as they pertain to who we are today and how that works in our space, particularly with regard to our approaches to communication.

Chris asked the audience to consider how gender differences are enforced early on by how we communicate differently with young boys and girls: “Big boys don’t cry” v. “That’s not ladylike.” Boys are often encouraged to compete or to dominate (e.g. King of the Hill), while girls are encouraged more to cooperate and connect (e.g. Tea Parties). Consequently, we learn our biases and behaviors early on in life and our culture helps shape the varying degrees of masculine and feminine approaches to communication that we each possess.

Chris facilitated small group exercises by generation to discuss the many differences between the masculine and feminine approaches to a variety of issues, including problem solving, connecting, the use of humor, participation on a team, friendship, self-promotion and leadership, and how all those differences can impact the workplace. Chris challenged the audience to embrace these differences and create a space for everyone to be exposed to and understand each other’s communication approaches. Chris explained that communication across genders can be facilitated through creating more opportunities for women in leadership roles and on committees, informal socializing and policies aimed at creating a supportive environment for women.

Chris also asked that we all take inventory of our own communication preferences and identify ways in which they might inform our judgments of others. Chris emphasized a cooperative effort towards combatting our unintentional biases by seeking the help of our closest colleagues to ask for advice on improving our communication across genders and to hold us accountable when our communication preferences might give way to unintentional biases.

KMK thanks Chris for yet another worthwhile discussion as part of KMK’s continued commitment to foster a culture of diversity and inclusion at the firm.



Hispanic Chamber Cincinnati USA—Business Leads Lunches

KMK Law is a proud member of the Hispanic Chamber Cincinnati USA and supports its mission to promote the continued growth and development of the Hispanic/Latino business community in the Tri-State area. The Chamber holds monthly Business Leads Lunches at Alfio’s Buon Cibo in Hyde Park that give professionals an opportunity to promote their businesses and areas of expertise and learn about upcoming Chamber and other community events.

If you are interested in attending a future Business Leads Lunch, please contact Joe Lehnert.



African American Chamber
Greater Cincinnati | Northern Kentucky

African American Chamber of Commerce Membership

KMK Law is a proud new member of the Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky African American Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber assists our region in developing strategic partnerships and alliances for the purpose of strengthening and growing the African American business community. They offer more than 120 programs and activities each year to meet the many needs of small, emerging and large businesses.

If you are interested in attending a future African American Chamber of Commerce program please contact Marcus Phelps.



KMK Sponsors Minority Law Student Holiday Reception

On December 20, 2018, KMK hosted and sponsored the Black Lawyers Association of Cincinnati – Cincinnati Bar Association Round Table’s holiday reception for minority law students. The reception brought together local Cincinnati attorneys committed to racial and ethnic diversity and law students from regional and national law schools who were in Cincinnati for the holidays. KMK hopes that these students will bring their talents to Cincinnati after law school and looks forward to welcoming them to the Cincinnati Bar as new attorneys in the near future.



Wrappy Hour at Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank

On December 6, 2018, KMK once again teamed up with Johnson Investment Counsel (JIC) for “Wrappy Hour” at Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank in Over-the-Rhine. KMK and JIC were able to wrap roughly 10,000 diapers—just a small dent in the amount of diapers needed for the over 16,000 diaper-wearing children in the Greater Cincinnati area experiencing diaper need each month. On average, each child needs six diapers per day (and more than double that for newborns) to stay clean, dry and healthy. KMK and JIC’s efforts played a small part in the more than 750,000 diapers distributed by Sweet Cheeks in 2018. KMK is excited about the continued growth and success of Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank and looks forward to seeing it hit 1 million diapers distributed annually in 2019.

For more information on Sweet Cheeks Diaper Bank and how you can contribute and/or volunteer, please visit sweetcheeksdiaferbank.org



Dress for Success Cincinnati 2018 Fashion Show

KMK was thrilled to support yet-another sold-out annual Dress for Success Cincinnati Fashion Show held at the JACK Cincinnati Casino Ballroom on September 13, 2018. Founded in 1999, Dress for Success Cincinnati provides assistance to women in need of appropriate clothing to interview for a job, as well as a stable, safe and caring environment for women as they reclaim their lives. KMK congratulates Dress for Success Cincinnati on its 20th Anniversary this year.

For more information about donating gently-used clothing to give a woman a new start, please contact Kelley Brandstetter Tracy, who sits on the Board of Directors for Dress for Success Cincinnati.

8th Annual Handbags for Hope

On February 7, 2019, KMK attorneys once again participated in the annual Handbags for Hope event hosted by the Literacy Network to raise money to support programs combatting illiteracy. The Literacy Network also presents the Hope Award to a student, teacher or tutor who inspires the growth of literacy in the Cincinnati community.

The Literacy Network champions the development of literacy in the individual, the family, the workplace, the school and the community by raising awareness, improving access and serving as a catalyst for literacy efforts. For more information about the Literacy Network, please visit www.lngc.org.



Literacy Network
Reading. Character. Success.

KMK Sponsors 14th Annual Girls Night Out

On February 21, 2019, KMK sponsored the 14th Annual Girls Night Out to benefit Kenzie’s Closet. Formed as a non-profit organization by Brynne Coletti in December 2006, Kenzie’s Closet provides prom attire for young ladies attending accredited high schools in the Tri-State area. Services are provided at no cost to Juniors and Seniors with current financial need. Kenzie’s Closet has dressed over 4,500 young ladies for their proms.

For more information about Kenzie’s Closet, please visit www.kenziescloset.org or contact Rob Lesan, who serves as a Board Member for Kenzie’s Closet.



KMK Sponsors NKY Chamber of Commerce Women’s Initiative 10th Annual Breakfast

On January 15, 2019, KMK sponsored the sold-out Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce (NKY Chamber) Women’s Initiative 10th Annual Breakfast at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center. The NKY Chamber started the Women’s Initiative in 2008 to inspire area businesswomen in Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati to connect, grow and achieve.

For more information about the NKY Chamber and its Women’s Initiative, please contact Jim Parsons, who serves as the NKY Chamber Chair of the Board.



Chamber of Commerce

Mentoring Diverse Law Students



LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL
ON LEGAL
DIVERSITY

KMK is a member of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD), a national organization of corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners dedicated to creating a diverse legal profession. Several KMK attorneys have served as mentors to students at Northern Kentucky University Chase College of Law (Chase), and University of Cincinnati's College of Law (UC) through LCLD's law school mentoring program. Moreover, KMK has hosted LCLD's local group mentoring session that focused on the importance of professionalism for first year law students at Chase and UC.

Employing Low-Income Students at KMK



DePaul
CRISTO REY

Beginning in June 2011 and continuing today, KMK joined a handful of businesses in Cincinnati committed to serving as a corporate partner and employer for students at the new DePaul Cristo Rey High School. Through DePaul Cristo Rey's work-study program, four low-income (including many minority) high school students began working five days per week 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 four students per year.

KMK Offers New Back-Up Child and Elder Care Benefit



As part of its continued commitment to the health and wellness of its attorneys and legal professionals, and recognizing the importance of balancing work and family obligations, KMK recently rolled out a new benefit for eligible employees and all attorneys for back-up child and elder care. KMK has partnered with CorporateCARE Solutions to offer vetted in-home back-up child and elder care service, as well as an option to use a childcare facility or family member of choice. KMK added this new benefit to help relieve some of the stress associated with balancing work and family—providing a resource for when things happen and back-up care is needed for a family member.

For more information about this great new benefit, please contact Lori Moser, Director of Human Resources.

Thanks, Kudos and Congratulations

YLS Cincinnati Leadership Award



Congratulations to Shannon Lawson for being awarded the YLS Cincinnati Leadership Award by the Young Lawyers Section of the Cincinnati Bar. The YLS Cincinnati Leadership award honors an individual who takes ownership in the Cincinnati legal market as a prominent and respectable advocate for the legal

community, specifically young lawyers, and who best leads his or her peers through the challenges of the profession. KMK is proud of Shannon's contributions to the Cincinnati legal community and grateful for his leadership.

KMK Law Women's Networking Happy Hour

KMK Women Attorneys once again hosted a networking happy hour for women professionals in the Greater Cincinnati area last September at Nada. Thank you to everyone that attended the event and helped make it another huge success



Professional Development Consortium

Congratulations to Julie Mulhern for her appointment to the Planning Committee for the Professional Development Consortium (PDC) 2019 Summer Conference, which will take

place this summer in Nashville, Tennessee. The PDC is an association of individuals working at law firms, law schools, government agencies and corporations who are responsible for developing and administering training and continuing professional development for lawyers.

Preparing Diverse Youth for Leadership



KMK supports The Law and Leadership Institute, a statewide initiative to prepare students from underserved communities for post-secondary and professional success through a four-year academic program in law, leadership, analytical thinking, problem solving, writing skills, and professionalism.

2019 KMK Diversity Committee and 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 Palmer Recht (Chairperson)
- Jim Burke
- Shannon Lawson
- Rob Lesan
- Julie Mulhern
- Dave Popp
- Adrienne Roach
- Jason Stitt
- Allie Westfall

Women's Initiative Committee:

- Antoinette Schindel (Co-Chairperson)
- Claire Parrish (Co-Chairperson)
- Sarah Vonderbrink Geiger
- Sophia Holley
- Dan Izenon
- Joe Lehnert
- Mary Ellen Malas
- Julie Mulhern
- Caroline Musekamp
- Adrienne Roach
- Nick Simon
- Kelley Brandstetter Tracy

For the eighth year in a row KMK Law was named to the Enquirer Media Top Workplaces List.



At the law firm of Keating Muething & Klekamp (KMK Law[®]), we strive to stay ahead of the curve in understanding the complexities of the new economy and anticipating how our clients' business goals may be affected.

Our attorneys integrate themselves into our clients' businesses — strategizing from their point of view in order to develop sophisticated, high-value solutions that are efficient, effective, and economical. To explore the ways in which KMK attorneys can provide value-added solutions customized to your unique challenges, contact us.

KMK | Law

Keating Muething & Klekamp PLL
Attorneys at Law

One East Fourth Street | Suite 1400 | Cincinnati, Ohio 45202
P: 513.579.6400 | F: 513.579.6457 | kmklaw.com