

D&I IN ACTION

Opening the Door: Examining the Intersection of Transgender Identities and Homelessness

Stradley Ronon's [Cameron Redfern](#) spotlights the disproportionate rate of homelessness for transgender Americans of color

Stradley Ronon's LGBTQ lawyers and business professionals celebrated Pride Month in June by extending and amplifying the firm's commitment to anti-racism through a critical intersectional analysis of issues impacting the transgender community. We revisited the overlooked history and underrepresented voices of transgender people of color in an effort to center the spotlight on those who are the leaders of the LGBTQ rights movement and yet remain the most vulnerable among us. In doing so, we reissued our call for the Stradley Ronon community to participate with us not just during Pride Month, but also year-round, by making a commitment to both education and action.

30%
of transgender Americans experience homelessness in their lifetime

According to a 2015 National Center of Transgender Equality survey, 30% of the 30,000 transgender Americans surveyed have experienced homelessness at some point in their life. This is a truly remarkable figure. However, homelessness is a natural consequence of the persistent housing and employment discrimination faced by transgender Americans. In addition, the combination of gender identity discrimination and racism leads to far greater rates of homelessness for transgender people of color than their white counterparts, with the rate of

homelessness among Black transgender Americans rising to 51%. Stated a different way, more than half of Black transgender survey respondents had been homeless during their lifetime.

70%
of homeless transgender Americans who sought shelter experienced abuse

The threat of homelessness is further compounded by the fact that many homeless shelters are either unsafe or entirely inaccessible to transgender people. Indeed, 70% of transgender Americans who stayed in a shelter reported some form of mistreatment due to their identity—this includes verbal harassment, physical attacks and sexual assault. For that reason, transgender people often avoid traditional homeless shelters, relying instead on the few existing transgender-inclusive homeless shelters for protection. One such shelter is Casa Ruby, located in the heart of Washington, DC.

Casa Ruby, known in the community as "Everyone's Home," is the only bilingual and multicultural organization in Washington, DC, that is entirely run by and primarily serves transgender women of color. Ruby Cortado opened the doors of Casa Ruby over 30 years ago at a time when there were no services to support her needs as a young transgender Latina immigrant. What originally began as a network of

friends is now the Casa Ruby Center, which employs 50 people and provides more than 30,000 social and human services to more than 6,000 people a year. Casa Ruby continues to be led by Ruby Cortado—a tireless advocate for transgender liberation throughout the United States.

Today, the Casa Ruby Center operates a 24-hour drop-in providing food and shelter, free sexually transmitted

continued on page 6

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Associate [Cameron Redfern](#) focuses her practice on complex civil litigation, representing corporate and institutional clients in a range of business litigation matters.

Cameron was a former McCleary Law Fellow with the Human Rights Campaign.

CELEBRATIONS OF OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

This year, we proudly amplified the voices of diverse and female members of the firm to share their stories, challenges and perspectives.

In September, we spotlighted our Hispanic and Latinx lawyers and business professionals through a series of videos focusing on different aspects of these vibrant communities. Our celebration culminated with an intimate event featuring conversations between firm attorneys and three leaders in the Hispanic community, including Gisele Fetterman, Pennsylvania's second lady; Renee Garcia, managing senior counsel at PNC Bank; and Sharon Lopez, esteemed civil rights attorney at Triquetra Law.

We celebrated Women's History Month in March by featuring our female attorneys on our social media platforms and highlighting their accomplishments, expertise, and passions. While an event to honor our female attorneys and business professionals was planned for late March, we were unable to host the event due to the pandemic. We are looking forward to (hopefully) celebrating in person in 2021.

In honor of Black History Month, we celebrated the many contributions Black Americans have made to society, culture,



FETTERMAN



GARCIA



LOPEZ

Hispanic Heritage Month panel, from left: Gisele Fetterman, Pennsylvania's second lady; Renee Garcia, managing senior counsel at PNC Bank; and Sharon Lopez, esteemed civil rights attorney at Triquetra Law.



Stradley Ronon celebrated International Women's Day by encouraging all our staff to wear purple as a symbol of women's equality.

and, of course, law. Stradley Ronon lawyers hosted a panel discussion in February about the unique experiences of Black professionals in the legal landscape, which featured Tashieka Hinson, senior counsel at Vanguard, and Lilton R. Taliaferro Jr., vice president and deputy general

counsel at Independence Blue Cross.

In the upcoming year, Stradley Ronon will continue these celebrations as well as those held for Asian Pacific Heritage Month and Pride Month in the spring and Disability Awareness Month in the fall.



Black History Month panel discussion participants, from left: Kristen Gibbons-Feden, Lilton R. Taliaferro Jr., Tashieka Hinson and Stradley Ronon's Cheri Johnson.

Being Inclusive About Inclusion—How to Achieve Buy-In From Your Organization

By [Brian P. Seaman](#), *Special to The Legal Intelligencer*

Not too long ago, my firm's diversity committee hosted an after-work cocktail party that was simply (but accurately) named as an "Inclusion Happy Hour." Our reasons for hosting this event were entirely transparent—we wanted to invite all members of the firm to join committee members in their efforts to make Stradley Ronon Stevens & Young, LLP a more inclusive place and recognize that their participation and passion are necessary for our success.

The true impact of inclusion is felt in individual moments. All of us can identify these moments in our lives and take action.

Nonetheless, during the event, an attorney pulled me aside and asked whether he was "welcome" at the party. When I pressed him on what that meant, he just said, "this is a diversity event. I'm not diverse. I'm not gay. I'm not a woman. I'm not disabled. I think I'm an ally, but I am not exactly sure what that means, and I'm not sure whether I should be here."

I stopped and took a moment to take in this statement. An intelligent and highly empathetic lawyer truly believed that he was not welcome at an event, the fundamental characteristic of inclusion. This got me thinking—how many other members of the firm—and the world—felt the same way? How many wanted to become involved in diversity and inclusion efforts but felt either excluded or unsure of how to become involved? How many ignored these

invitations because they were afraid of demonstrating their lack of knowledge in these areas? And how many failed to participate simply because they did not think that a more inclusive environment would affect their happiness or success?

These questions led me to scrutinize what more we could do to ensure everyone at Stradley Ronon—not just the diversity committee—was promoting inclusion at the firm. The answer was simple. We needed to make clear that creating an inclusive environment is not the sole responsibility of firm management or the diverse attorneys; it is instead the obligation of each and every individual that makes up the firm. Only when the efforts of the collective and the individual align can meaningful change occur.

When I pressed my colleague on why he believed his contribution was neither welcome nor requested, he presumed that he did not have the individual power or position to make meaningful change within the firm. He was also afraid of demonstrating his lack of cultural competency. While I recognized that both of these notions are valid, I pointed out that these perceptions should not and cannot stand in the way of individual responsibility for promoting inclusion.

Sadly, I have discovered over my time as the firm's chief diversity officer that my colleague's questions and concerns are widely held throughout corporate America and stand in the way of meaningful change. Often, individuals fail to take action to promote inclusion because they do not believe they have the power to affect the culture of the firm. This is simply wrong.

The true impact of inclusion is most often felt in individual moments—in a moment when a junior associate is asked to join a well-established group for lunch, when a partner asks a colleague to join a pitch team and to perform meaningful work on that project, or when an employee asks her co-worker about her life experience and truly listens, even if for a short period of time. All of us can—and must—identify these moments in our lives and take individual action. The sum of those actions within a firm can be remarkable.

continued on page 5

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Chief Diversity Officer **Brian Seaman** also authored an article featured in the *Philadelphia Business Journal*. "[How to make meaningful change against racism at your organization](#)" outlined recommendations to jump-start an organization's efforts to combat systemic racism and ensure its public statements are the beginning of their anti-racism efforts and not the end.

SUCCESS SNAPSHOT



Diversity Committee members **Danielle Banks** and **Gretchen Santamour** were recognized by the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* "Best of the Bar: Philadelphia's Top Lawyers."

Diversity Committee members named to *Best Lawyers In America*:

- **Danielle Banks** – Litigation – Labor and Employment
- **Craig R. Blackman** – Insurance Law
- **Steven B. Davis** – Insurance Law
- **Ellen Rosen Rogoff** – Mass Tort Litigation/Class Actions – Defendants
- **William R. Sasso** – Corporate Law



Deborah Hong was named to the 2020 "Most Effective Dealmakers" list by *The Legal Intelligencer*.

DIVERSITY TOWN HALL

On Oct. 8, 2020, the Diversity Committee hosted the first session of "Understanding Inclusivity: A Series Devoted to Understanding and Combatting Systemic Injustice." This series is designed to provide an ongoing opportunity for all Stradlians to discuss and learn more about current diversity and inclusion topics, with a specific focus on identifying and combatting institutional racism. Future sessions will be held quarterly and will vary as to both topic and format. The next session will take place on Feb. 17, 2021, and focus on the topic of privilege and responsibility.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

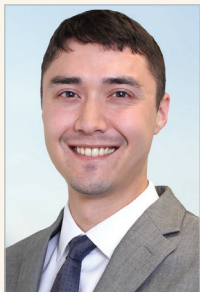
Stradley Ronon is committed to inclusion and equity—not only because it's the right thing to do, but also because it fosters the type of culture we want to build within the firm. Making this type of change requires every firm citizen to develop a robust base of knowledge regarding systemic racism and bigotry. With that in mind, a group of Stradley Ronon attorneys and business professionals collected a list of resources on these topics that impacted them personally. This list is equally suited for those interested in elevating their existing understanding and those just beginning their journey to becoming an advocate for justice and accountability. The Diversity Committee highly encourages everyone to select one resource from the list and then to discuss it with a friend or colleague.

[Click here to view the list.](#)



Stradley Ronon kicked off its virtual summer associate program on July 6, welcoming to the firm 11 law students based in Philadelphia and Washington, DC, including the 2020 recipients of Stradley Ronon's Diversity Fellowship who split their summers with firm clients Vanguard and the Investment Company Institute.

NOTHING CAN STOP THE POWER OF A COMMITTED AND DETERMINED PEOPLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR SOCIETY — JOHN LEWIS



Chris Hirokawa is a first-year associate in Stradley Ronon's Investment Management Group.

Looking back on your time as a summer associate at Stradley Ronon, what was your most memorable experience?

One of my favorite experiences was sitting in on the appellate arguments in the *Fields v. Speaker of the PA House of Reps* matter. While we read plenty of appellate opinions in law school, I had neither witnessed appellate arguments before nor had an opportunity to “talk shop” both before and after the oral arguments with the attorneys who were

actually arguing the case. After talking to [Karl Myers](#) and [Spencer Short](#), it was fascinating to watch the strategies play out in real time.

What inspired you to be a lawyer?

I've always had an interest in the law, and after a few years of working in New York, I realized that I often gravitated to projects that involved figuring out legal puzzles. Whether it was a splashy copyright infringement issue, discussions on a single clause in a company's bylaws or space technology export regulations, I enjoyed figuring out how all the rules fit together to influence our daily lives—especially when the rules seemed banal at first glance. When I got to law school, I knew that this was the right profession for me.

Being Inclusive About Inclusion

continued from page 3

To ensure maximum buy-in, it is imperative to welcome individuals into inclusion efforts without scrutiny as to why they did not become involved earlier. Often, the failure of nondiverse individuals to become involved in diversity and inclusion is not because these individuals are racists, sexists or bigots. It is instead likely because those individuals never critically evaluated how their race, gender, sexual orientation and disability status may have affected their lives and successes, either positively or negatively. These individuals did not become involved because these efforts did not directly affect them. However, instead of critiquing past inaction, firms should welcome them now and retain and support their passion for becoming an ally of inclusion.

Conversely, firms must respect and recognize that certain individuals may choose to opt out of inclusion efforts. This is especially true of underrepresented and diverse individuals who may feel like the burden of these efforts has been placed squarely on them or who may feel a responsibility to champion issues they are not passionate about. Firms must create environments where opportunities exist and where everyone

understands their individual role in creating an inclusive workplace. One of the most effective ways to achieve buy-in from all members of your organization is to be strategic about changing firm habits and culture, since the importance of participation is hard to ignore. Here are three techniques that can build inclusion into the DNA of your firm:

First, make it a requirement that all department, administrative and practice group meetings actively embrace diversity and inclusion. This can take the form of including an agenda item at every meeting where a member of your diversity group reports on the status of the firm's efforts or leads a discussion on a specific diversity topic. It can involve setting ground rules to ensure that the conversation is not dominated by any one individual (or group of individuals) and that interruptions are not tolerated. Or it may involve merely reviewing the invited participants at each meeting to ensure that the group is diverse.

Second, embolden members of your firm to speak up and take action when they witness anti-inclusive behavior. I always recommend the three **Cs**—**C**ut in and stop the behavior, **C**hallenge the speaker (either immediately or in private), and **C**omfort the affected individual. Not all of these options fit every situation, but every situation requires action on the part of witnesses. It is not enough for a member of your firm to refrain from

using anti-inclusive language; that individual must speak up in any instance where that language is used. It is also crucial as a firm to communicate that no one will face reprimand for speaking up in these situations.

Third, recognize contributions to inclusion when considering compensation or advancement. While every firm would prefer that all of their members actively engage in diversity and inclusion efforts voluntarily, there will always be those who ask why they should or need to participate. To provide that incentive and indicate that diversity and inclusion contributions will be considered in the same way that marketing efforts, pro bono hours or mentorship contributions are considered. And be sure to provide an opportunity in self-evaluation forms for attorneys to describe the specific efforts they have made to promote inclusion at the firm. Sometimes simply asking the question year after year will encourage participation.

So back to my colleague, the one who questioned whether he belonged at an inclusion event—I now speak with him almost every week about diversity issues. He is a vocal proponent of inclusion. He takes personal responsibility for making the firm a place where everyone is treated with respect and has an equal opportunity to succeed. He is completely bought in. And I have a feeling he will be the first to RSVP to the next Inclusion Happy Hour.

Reprinted with permission from the Nov. 18, 2020 edition of *The Legal Intelligence*, © 2020 ALM Media Properties, LLC. All rights reserved. Further duplication without permission is prohibited. For information, contact 877.257.3382, reprints@alm.com or visit www.almreprints.com. #TLI-12012020-467944

Stradley Ronon Commits to Mansfield Certification

Stradley Ronon is proud to announce it is currently working to become “Mansfield Certified” by July 2021. By doing so, Stradley Ronon is joining other top law firms across the country to advance diversity at all levels and to ensure a level playing field for the next generation of lawyers. As part of the firm’s initiatives, Stradley Ronon will ensure that at least 30% of candidates for leadership positions, new hire and lateral openings, equity partnership promotions and pitch opportunities are women, people of color and queer people.

“It is essential now more than ever to pledge our commitment to advancing our diverse attorneys and cultivating an inclusive environment for all—and Mansfield provides the framework to do just that,” said [Brian Seaman](#), chief diversity officer at Stradley Ronon. “We know that measurable results can

have positive outcomes, and together as a firm, we are committed to ensuring that all individuals feel included and have the same opportunity to prosper within the firm.”

Inspired by the NFL’s Rooney Rule, which is designed to increase the number of candidates of color considered by teams for head coach vacancies, the Mansfield Rule promotes female and diverse lawyers into leadership positions within law firms or companies. The Mansfield Rule was named after Arabella Mansfield, the first woman admitted to practice law in the U.S.

Under the Mansfield Rule, Diversity Lab will conduct a review of Stradley Ronon’s progress over the course of the year, confirm that it has met these goals, and qualify Stradley Ronon as “Mansfield-certified.” The certification period runs from July 2020 to July 2021.

The process of becoming Mansfield certified will be spearheaded by Stradley Ronon’s Mansfield Task Force. This group is charged with creating the specific initiatives and programs designed to enhance the firm’s recruitment and retention of diverse and female attorneys and to ensure that the leadership of the firm reflects these inclusive values. As part of the firm’s “[Diversity and Inclusion in Action](#)” campaign, the firm has also taken steps to achieve racial justice; dismantle racist laws, policies and practices; and to diversify firm leadership, all of which will support the goals of Mansfield. Some of those actions include assembling an anti-racism task force, identifying and targeting pro bono legal matters to support, partnering with diverse organizations through financial resources and providing impactful training regarding systematic racism.

Stradley Ronon Diversity Fellowship Program

The [Stradley Ronon Diversity Fellowship](#) program is designed to celebrate diversity in the legal profession and support the development of exceptional, diverse law students into outstanding Stradley Ronon lawyers.



Our 2020 diversity fellows spent several weeks at Stradley Ronon honing their professional skills through practical training and substantive assignments before going in-house for the remainder of the summer program

As a Stradley Ronon Diversity Fellow, students have the opportunity to gain hands-on experience working both at a firm and in-house by splitting their summer between Stradley Ronon and a firm client. In addition to gaining practical experience, fellows receive mentorship and financial support in the form of a \$10,000 scholarship.

at firm clients Vanguard and the Investment Company Institute.

Questions regarding the fellowship can be directed to Kristin Smith, legal recruiting manager, at kristin.smith@stradley.com or [Brian Seaman](#), chief diversity officer, at bseaman@stradley.com.

Transgender Homelessness

continued from cover

infection testing and mental health counseling, as well as a short-term living program and a long-term transitional living program. The pressure to continue to provide these vital services has never been more important than during the COVID-19 crisis. Unlike other shelters, Casa Ruby continues to keep its doors open—and continues to need support.

Consider acting by making a donation to the Casa Ruby Community Center to support an LGBTQ population that is among the most vulnerable. Homeless transgender people of color need support more than ever. With the commitment of caring people, vital services and housing support can remain available to those in need.

For more information, visit casaruby.org.



For more information on Stradley Ronon's diversity and inclusion efforts, please contact [Brian Seaman](mailto:bseaman@stradley.com) at bseaman@stradley.com or 215.564.8171 or visit www.stradley.com/diversity.

Information contained in this publication should not be construed as legal advice or opinion or as a substitute for the advice of counsel. The enclosed materials may have been abridged from other sources. They are provided for educational and informational purposes for the use of clients and others who may be interested in the subject matter.



www.stradley.com/diversity
Pennsylvania | Washington, DC | New York
New Jersey | Illinois | Delaware