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1. [The 2023 WIPL Awards: Law Firm Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Law Firm Team](#)

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The 2023 WIPL Awards: Law Firm Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Law Firm Team

Corporate Counsel Online

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CORPORATE COUNSEL

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Body

These teams have taken an active role in fostering diversity, equity and inclusion in the industry at large.

Greenberg Traurig

Who are the players on your team and their roles in the organization?

- Nikki Lewis Simon, Shareholder and Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
- Debra Sydnor, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Lou Brezo Scholl, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Communications
- Rita Treadwell, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager
- Mistie D. Weishaar, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Senior Manager
- Daniel Taylor, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Manager
- Alex Longoria, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator
- Johanny Salcedo, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Coordinator

Each individual has a unique role within the team; however, team members are cross-trained and continuously collaborate, coordinate, and communicate on projects and long-term programs within the team and with the full range of business operation departments within the firm in addition to legal practice and firm leadership and external organizations.

What was the driving force or key to the team's success?

Passion and collaboration are the two drivers of team success. Everyone is respected and invested in the success of the full team and of the firm. Respect and empowerment for the individual and collaboration are pillars of our firm's culture. Diversity is part of our DNA, of our origin story. This in turn allows us the proverbial seat at the table at the highest levels of the firm.

If you could give any advice on building a team, what advice would you give?

It may be understood, but diversity of experience, backgrounds, and even location provides you with the best opportunity to create and implement something truly unique, not only for your law firm but also for the legal profession in general and for diverse employees for generations to come. You need to have an open mind and look for life experience as well as professional skills and experience. We have former attorneys, former journalists, legal assistants, and even artists among us, and our demographics include a wide range of ethnicities, races, genders,

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and sexual orientations. Everyone on our team brings something different to the table and adds value in a unique way.

Spencer Fane

Who are the players on your team and their roles in the organization?

The DEI Committee is made up of a diverse cross-section of attorneys in offices located throughout the firm's national footprint, an intentionally cultivated collection of individuals with a broad range of unique and varied backgrounds and perspectives, and through open communication and collaboration with all professionals, these voices combine to guide our internal and external conversations related to providing legal representation that better aligns with the demographics of the communities we serve. Members are:

- Mary Bacon, Of Counsel
- James Crumlin, Chair, Partner
- Bill Hopkins, Partner
- Heather Morris, Partner
- Nate Orr, Partner
- Jeremy Rucker, Associate
- DeAndrea Washington, Partner
- Elizabeth Wentz, Partner

Wentz serves as the immediate past chair, being the second female partner to hold that official title.

What was the driving force or key to the team's success?

The success of our team comes from the decision to recognize and define equity and inclusivity for our firm and then make it a visible priority for all employees. The firm describes equity and inclusivity as follows:

- An outspoken commitment to empowering people of all backgrounds.
- Cultivating a sense of belonging and purpose by fostering connections, encouraging authenticity, and embracing opportunities for learning and growth.
- Being deliberate in bringing together people who possess intrinsically diverse experiences, perspectives, and ideas.
- Accepting and celebrating the opportunity we have to shape a more equitable future for the profession and taking action to realize that future.
- Creating an open and egalitarian environment where everyone has a seat at the table.

If you could give any advice on building a team, what advice would you give?

Representation matters. The diversity in leadership that Spencer Fane has achieved sends a strong message to diverse individuals who are looking to join our firm. Not only are you welcome, but there is a seat at the table for you. This is the very essence of inclusivity and what drives retention and ultimately the overall success of our value proposition to clients. Identify the individuals ready to embrace the opportunity to staunchly advocate for commitment to change and confronting the continued need to address the systemic issues that have led to the lack of diversity in the legal industry.

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