

Knobbe Martens

**DEI**  
Annual  
Report  
**2023**



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# Letter From the Managing Partner

Dear Clients, Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to Knobbe Martens' inaugural Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Report.

It is said that the only certainty is change, and indeed the last year brought many changes to the legal industry. What has remained constant, however, is our firm's steadfast commitment to diversity and inclusion at all levels of our firm. This commitment has been part of our DNA since our founding more than 60 years ago, and we are proud to have taken several significant steps towards strengthening it during 2023.

In March, we welcomed Terra Davis as our first Chief Diversity and Talent Development Officer. Since joining us, Terra has been instrumental in spearheading and integrating our DE&I and talent development efforts, with a focus on the recruitment, retention, and progression of diverse attorneys.

As part of these efforts, the firm has embarked on a five-year strategic DE&I plan. The plan, which is being developed with input from the highest levels of leadership across our firm, has a clear goal: For Knobbe Martens to become a recognized law firm leader in inclusive excellence in the intellectual property space by establishing a shared firm culture that values and promotes trust through open and judgment-free dialogue. The plan rests on four pillars:

- Client Engagement
- Internal Engagement
- Recruitment and Retention
- Social Impact

We are excited to embark on this plan and to join with clients and friends at law schools across the country to make Knobbe Martens a place where diversity and inclusivity thrive.

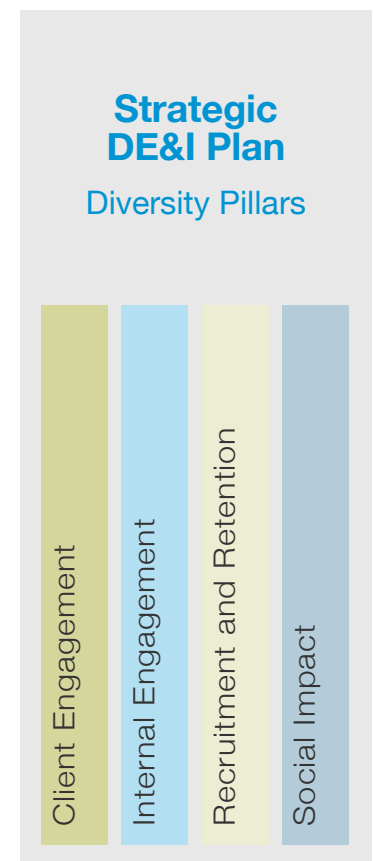
While we recognize there is much work ahead of us, we also have much to celebrate. In the pages that follow, you'll read about the outstanding efforts of our eight firmwide affinity groups to highlight the rich and diverse cultures represented at Knobbe Martens. You'll learn about the ways we are partnering with institutions across the country to expand the talent pipeline, and of the numerous organizations we support that are dedicated to DE&I. And you'll discover the many tremendous accomplishments and recognitions secured by Knobbe Martens lawyers who are members of underrepresented groups—demonstrating that Knobbe Martens is a firm where diverse talent excels.

A deep and abiding commitment to diversity is an indispensable part of our culture, reflected throughout our firm. We look forward to the opportunities ahead to work together in the coming months and years to strengthen this culture that has sustained our firm for more than six decades.

Steven Nataupsky  
*Managing Partner, Knobbe Martens*



**Steven Nataupsky**  
*Managing Partner,*  
*Knobbe Martens*



# Letter From the Diversity Committee Chair

Dear Friends,

Knobbe Martens has long believed that true innovation comes from celebrating the unique and different, and that diversity is our strength.

That belief doesn't end with words on a page—it is evident in who we are and the work we do. As this year comes to a close and we look ahead to 2024, it's worthwhile to pause and recognize the great work of those across our firm who have committed to that belief and translated it into action.

Our commitment begins with education. To that end, our Diversity Committee was pleased to host Dr. Camille Rich for a series of programs on implicit bias and microaggressions. This included a June program on bias, equity, and social justice, followed by a program in the fall on the nuances of implicit bias and microaggressions in the workplace. These sessions equipped participants with the tools to navigate the evolving landscape of the legal profession and engage in meaningful dialogue that will shape our future.

Meanwhile, our affinity groups were active throughout the year with a series of engaging and informative DE&I-focused programs and campaigns. For example, our Black Attorneys Guild hosted a presentation honoring civil rights leaders on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, as well as a screening of the Emmy Award-nominated documentary "The 1619 Project." The Guild also published weekly newsletters during Black History Month highlighting important Black inventors, thought leaders, and businesses. Our LGBTQ+ Attorney Affinity Group hosted Lambda Legal CEO Kevin Jennings for a presentation on the history of the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. And our Hispanic and Latinx Attorney Affinity Group led a social media campaign spotlighting Hispanic and Latinx inventors and IP professionals. We are looking forward to another engaging slate of programs and celebrations throughout 2024, including from the newly-formed Jewish and Indigenous Attorney Affinity Groups.

The past year witnessed the expansion of our Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship Program, which is now open to 1L and 2L law students with a demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion. We also recognize the importance of community and supporting organizations in the legal, IP, and higher education spaces doing exceptional work to grow the diversity pipeline and support underrepresented groups in the law. In the ensuing pages you'll discover how Knobbe Martens is joining with and supporting such organizations.

We are excited about our path forward, and are proud of the efforts of so many across Knobbe Martens who contribute toward our mission of supporting diversity at every level. We are tremendously thankful and appreciative of our clients, friends, and colleagues who are joining us in this important endeavor.

Baraa Kahf  
*Chair, Diversity Committee*



**Baraa Kahf**  
*Chair, Diversity Committee*

## Committee members

Baraa Kahf,  
*Diversity Committee  
Chair*

Charlene Azema

Vikas Bhargava

Rosaleen Chou

Charlie Crane

Daniel Kamkar

Christy Lea

Mark Lezama

Chang Lim

Eli Loots

Wendy Peterson

Maria Stout

Albert Suieras

Amanda Taylor

Terra Davis,  
*Chief Diversity & Talent  
Development Officer*

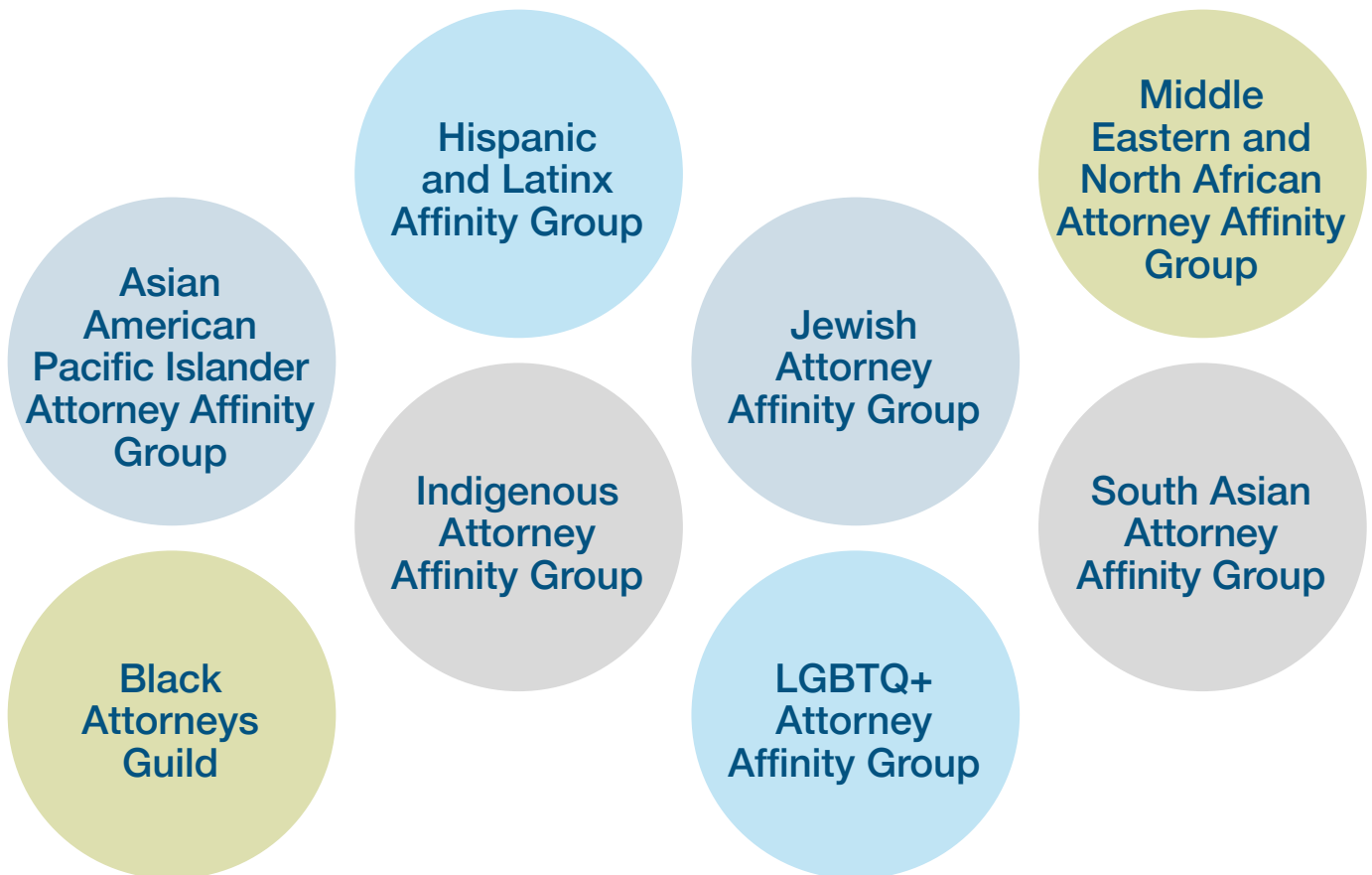
Edith Ibarra,  
*Diversity Committee  
Administrator*

# Celebrating Diversity Through our Affinity Groups

Our affinity groups hosted several events this year to spotlight the rich cultural heritage and history represented at the firm. We kicked off the year with a presentation honoring civil rights leaders of the past and present on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and ended it with a two-part training on microaggressions and implicit bias.

At the end of 2023, we added the Jewish Attorney Affinity Group, which will launch its activities in 2024.

## Our affinity groups include:



# Educational and Cultural Activities

## January

- 17 **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Luncheon** hosted by the Knobbe Martens Black Attorneys Guild



## February

- 21 **Black History Month: Perspectives from Black In-House Counsel Panel** with in-house counsel from HP, Shinko Electric America, and the USPTO hosted by the Black Attorneys Guild

## March

- 20 **Nowruz Luncheon** hosted by the Middle Eastern and North African Attorney Affinity Group
- 29 **Knobbe Martens-inspired Iftar meal in honor of Ramadan** hosted by the Diversity Committee



## April

- 27 **American Intellectual Property Law Association (AIPLA) Women in IP Law Global Networking Dinner** hosted by Knobbe Martens



## May

- 30 **AAPI Heritage Month: Understanding Our Past, Redirecting Our Future** with AAPI Equity Alliance Executive Director Manjusha P. Kulkarni hosted by the Asian American Pacific Islander Attorney Affinity Group



## June

- 9 **Microaggressions/Implicit Bias Training (Part 1): What's Your Equity Model? Understanding the Journey from Colorblindness to Social Justice** with USC Gould School of Law Professor Camille Rich hosted by the Diversity Committee
- 15 **Pride Month: Queeroes—The People Who Made LGBTQ+ History** with Lambda Legal Chief Executive Officer Kevin Jennings hosted by the LGBTQ+ Attorney Affinity Group
- 16 **Juneteenth: The 1619 Project Episode 1 Watch Party** with discussion by The University of Florida Levin College of Law Professor Kenneth Nunn hosted by the Black Attorneys Guild

## July

- 11 **Addressing AI Bias: Uncovering the Issues and Exploring Solutions** with University of Pennsylvania Penn Carey Law Professor Miguel Willis hosted by the Education Committee and Diversity Committee

## August


- 11 **South Asian Heritage Month Luncheon** hosted by the South Asian Attorneys Affinity Group

## October

- 10 **Global Inclusion Month: Combating Hate By Tapping Into Your Inner Superhero** with author Wajahat Ali hosted by the Diversity Committee

## November

- 6 **Implicit Bias and Microaggressions Training (Part 2): Improving Day-to-Day Law Firm Interactions** with USC Gould School of Law Professor Camille Rich hosted by the Diversity Committee



**Queeroes—The People who Made LGBTQ+ History**

Thursday, June 15  
at 9 am PT/12 pm ET

In-person office locations and Zoom link provided in the calendar invite.

Please join us as Lambda Legal CEO Kevin Jennings introduces some of the Queer Heroes who led the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. Kevin's talk will feature familiar stories and ones you may have never heard before. He will fill in the gaps in your history textbook, so you have a fuller appreciation for the courage and determination of those who paved the way for the freedoms we all too often take for granted. Kevin will close by looking at the current challenges LGBTQ+ communities are facing.

Hosted by the LGBTQ+ Affinity Group and the Diversity Committee  
RSVP using the Accept/Decline buttons above.  
If you have any questions, please reply to Terra Davis (terra.davis@knobbe.com).

Knobbe Martens



Please join the South Asian Affinity Group and Diversity Committee as we celebrate

**SOUTH ASIAN**  
*Heritage Month!*

August 11<sup>th</sup>

Registration is strongly encouraged.  
Questions? Please contact Terra Davis at terra.davis@knobbe.com.

Knobbe Martens



**Combating Hate By Tapping Into Your Inner Superhero**

Knobbe Martens

Wajahat Ali  
Speaker and Author

# Expanding the Pipeline

We know this work cannot be done alone. We are pleased to partner with organizations across the country, such as the Law Firm Antiracism Alliance, Foundation for Advancement of Diversity in IP Law, Barrier Breakers®, Inc., and Patent Pathways™, to expand the pipeline of diverse talent in intellectual property. These efforts included our Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship Program, which awards scholarships and a Summer Associate position to first-year and second-year law students who are demonstrating a commitment to inclusion and belonging in the legal industry. In 2022, we expanded our program to include second-year law students and doubled the amount of the first-year student scholarships, to \$30,000, while second-year scholarship recipients receive \$25,000.



*Summer Associates Sarah Haj-Maharsi and Dalton Couch*

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**“I was once told that diversity will result naturally from hiring the best, but we don’t live in such a perfect world where we can achieve equality without equity. The diversity scholarship during my summer program helped provide a step to stand on to be on the same playing field.”**

— Justin Theam

*Knobbe Martens Associate and 2020 Diversity and Inclusion Fellowship Recipient*



# Commitment Through Engagement

We are proud to support local and national organizations dedicated to diversity, equity, and inclusion through individual and firm membership and leadership positions held by Knobbe Martens attorneys.

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**American Intellectual Property Law Association**

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**Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Silicon Valley**

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**California Minority Counsel Program**

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**Corporate Counsel Men of Color**

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**Corporate Counsel Women of Color**

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**Filipino American Lawyers of Orange County**

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**Iranian American Bar Association**

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**National Asian Pacific American Bar Association**

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**Orange County Asian American Bar Association**

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**Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law**

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**Orange County Korean American Bar Association**

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**Orange County Lavender Bar Association**

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**Orange County Women Lawyers Association**

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**South Asian Bar Association of North America**

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**The National Association of Muslim Lawyers**

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**The National LGBTQ+ Bar Association**

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**Thurgood Marshall Bar Association**

# External Awards and Recognitions

Though our work within inclusion, equity, and belonging is far greater than awards, we are honored when outside organizations recognize our impact on the legal community. Some of these recognitions in 2023 include:

## Individual

**Jessica Sganga** was named among the Top 100 Lawyers by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*.

**Wendy Peterson** was a finalist and **Christy Lea** was a nominee in the *LA Times* Orange County Inspirational Women Awards.

**Maria Anderson**, **Salima Merani**, and **Lynda Zadra-Symes** were recognized in the 2023 Edition of *Chambers USA*.

**Jessica Acthsam**, **Jessica Sganga**, and **Kate McMorrow** were named 2023 Super Lawyers “Southern California Rising Stars.”

**Baraa Kahf** was named a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Visionary by the *LA Times*.



*AIPLA Women in IP*



*OCCDL – Top Legal Organization for DEI*

**Salima Merani** was added to the “Hall of Fame,” **Sabing Lee** was named a “Leading Lawyer,” and **Harnik Shukla** was recognized as a “Next Generation Partner” by the Legal 500 2023 Guide.

**Salima Merani** was named Life Sciences Lawyer of the Year at the Women in Business Law Awards.

**Charlene Azema** was named a “Top DEI Champion,” and **Bita Kianian** was named a “Top Young Lawyer” by the Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law.

**Lynda Zadra-Symes** was named among the “Most Influential Women in IP” by World IP Review.

**Maria Anderson** and **Christy Lea** were recognized among the 2023 “Women Worth Watching in Leadership” by *Profiles in Diversity Journal*®.

**Cheryl Burgess** was selected as a winner of Profiles in Diversity Journal’s inaugural “Veteran Leadership Awards.”

**Jane Dai** was recognized as a “Leader in Law” by the *San Diego Business Journal*.

**Shelia Swaroop**, **Susan Natland**, and **Baraa Kahf** were named “OC Visionaries” by the *Los Angeles Times*.

**Salima Merani** was recognized as one of the “Top 250 Women in IP” globally for 2023 by *Managing IP*.

*Profiles in Diversity Journal*® featured **Shannon Lam** in the Women Worth Watching in STEM Awards category and **Sheila Swaroop** in the Asian Leadership Awards category.

**Christy Lea**, **Kate McMorrow**, **Salima Merani**, and **Susan Natland** were shortlisted for the Women in Business Law Awards 2023 – Americas category.

**Jessica Sganga** was featured in the *Los Angeles Business Journal*’s “Women of Influence” and “Top 100 Lawyers” lists.

**Mauricio Uribe** was named a “Smart Tech Trailblazer” by *The National Law Journal*.

*Profiles in Diversity Journal*® recognized **Maria Stout** in its Latino Leadership Awards category.

**Morgan Robertson** was selected as a *Puget Sound Business Journal* “Next Gen in Law” recipient.

**Susan Natland** and **Katherine McMorrow** were named Mentorship Award Finalists in *The Recorder*’s 2023 California Legal Awards.

**Christy Lea** was recognized in the *Orange County Business Journal* Women in Business Awards.

**Maria Anderson**, **Irfan Lateef**, **Harnik Shukla**, and **Mauricio Uribe** were among five other Knobbe attorneys recognized by *Intellectual Asset Management (IAM)* magazine for their exceptional skill sets and profound insights into IP work, in the 2023 edition of the *IAM Strategy 300: The World’s Leading IP Strategists* guide. **Maria Anderson** and **Mauricio Uribe** were also named *IAM Global Leaders*.

## Firmwide

Ranked among the top five most diverse midsize law firms in *Law360*’s annual Diversity Snapshot. The firm also ranked fourth among midsize firms for representation of minorities among equity partners. The firm was one of only seven midsize firms with a positive overall diversity score in this year’s survey, placing among the top five highest Diversity Pipeline scores – a ranking of a firm’s success in recruiting and retaining partners and associates of color, measured against industry benchmarks.

Honored as a Top Legal Organization for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) by the Orange County Coalition for Diversity in the Law.



# Knobbe Martens

ORANGE COUNTY

LOS ANGELES

NEW YORK

SAN DIEGO

SAN FRANCISCO

SEATTLE

WASHINGTON, DC