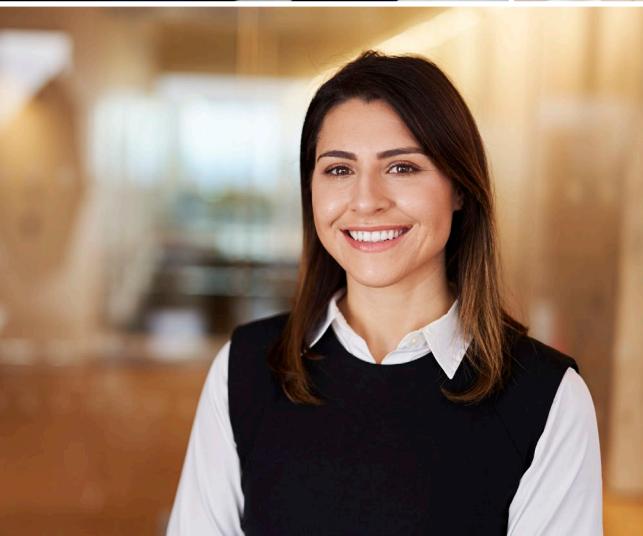


Debevoise
& Plimpton

Diversity and Inclusion



“We are committed to creating and sustaining a community that fosters full inclusion of diverse talent at all levels of the firm.”

Michael W. Blair, Presiding Partner



Diversity, Inclusion and Community Drive Our Firm

Our clients come to us for the finest legal advice and service. We provide that service by bringing to our firm the best and most diverse talent, and by working to build and sustain an inclusive community – one in which our diverse group of lawyers can grow, thrive and work as a single team, weaving together the power of the many different perspectives and experiences they bring.

The firm has been engaged in diversity and inclusion leadership efforts for many years. As an example of our focus, the firm has been on *The American Lawyer's* “A-List” every year since the creation of this honor in 2003. This annual list of the “best of the best” highlights the top 20 most well-rounded firms of the year by measuring cultural and financial data. The areas of excellence that factor into “A List” recognition are revenue per lawyer, pro bono commitment, associate satisfaction and racial and gender diversity among the firm’s partnership.



“Diversity and inclusion lie at the core of our promise of talent and service. We recruit with a lens wide open to the range of lawyers who can make us better and we provide an environment in which they can reach their full potential. We seek to build teams that can work effectively across difference, both internally and with our clients.”

Michael Gillespie
Corporate Partner and Co-Chair of Diversity & Inclusion



“I wouldn’t be where I am today without the support, guidance and mentorship of my Debevoise colleagues. As a firm, we remain committed to providing our diverse lawyers with the training, the opportunities, and the platform to thrive in their careers.”

Natalie Reid
Litigation Partner

Community and Connection

One of the greatest strengths of Debevoise & Plimpton is our community. This has been true throughout the history of the firm. More recently, we have built upon that strong foundation with specific community-building initiatives and firmwide events:

Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council. We instituted a new Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Council, a 40+ lawyer group that works with our D&I Leadership Team to encourage dialogue on important issues affecting diversity and inclusion at Debevoise.

Affinity Groups. Our Affinity Groups – Asian lawyers, Black Lawyers, First Generation Professionals, Jewish Lawyers, Latin@, LGBTQ+, Muslim Lawyers and Women’s Resource Group – play an integral role in the firm, providing an invaluable source of community.

Associate Liaison Committee. We revamped our associate liaison committee, which works with partners and senior firm administrators on a range of topics and programs important to all lawyers at the firm.

Advising Program. Through our advising program, associates have the opportunity to discuss their career development with an assigned advising partner. We reshaped the program, with the goal of ensuring that each associate has advising relationships with three partners over the course of their first four years.

Attorneys of Color Retreat. In early 2020, Debevoise hosted our largest ever Attorneys of Color Retreat where more than two dozen partners and nearly 70 associates convened for a day of panel discussions and breakout sessions covering the realities, challenges and strategies that are inherent with being an attorney of color. We recently formed a First Generation Professionals Affinity Group for lawyers who are first in their family to graduate from college or join a profession. The group offers a safe space for community, shared experiences and programs, such as Financial Literacy Workshops.

Town Halls. In the wake of the racially charged shootings in the summers of 2015 and 2016, we held two town halls and group meetings. We invited the entire firm – lawyers and administrative staff – to have an open facilitated discussion of the many different ways members of our community were impacted by these horrific events. These gatherings established a supportive environment in which to exchange perspectives and were attended by several hundred members of our firm. The overwhelmingly positive response led us to replicate these town hall meetings in 2020 in the aftermath of social, political and other events of significance to our community.

InConversations. In 2020, the firm launched its "InConversation" project, designed to enrich our collective understanding of the impact of race, racism and bias in our lives, relationships with others, and in our institutions.

We have begun the project by inviting outside speakers to Zoom events involving the entire firm community. Recent speakers have included Heather McGee, a racial justice strategist and author of the forthcoming book, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, and Richard Rothstein, historian and author of the bestselling book, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America*.

A recent InConversation featured Isabel Wilkerson, Pulitzer Prize winner and National Humanities Medal recipient. Ms. Wilkerson discussed her recent book, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*.

Diversity Speaker Series. Our Diversity Speaker Series draws to the firm senior legal executives from different fields and diverse backgrounds who come to speak with our lawyers about their professional experiences and career paths. Recent programs have featured general counsel and other senior executives from Blackstone, Goldman Sachs, Home Depot, JPMorgan Chase & Co., MetLife and Xerox, senior lawyers from Lambda Legal and the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund, as well as federal judges.

Debevoise Women’s Review. The Debevoise Women’s Review, a first-of-its-kind platform among law firms, was developed to inspire the legal and business communities to engage in discussion and collective action around gender diversity. Unlike a traditional marketing platform, the content is developed and the editorial process managed almost entirely by lawyers at the firm, most of whom are associates, allowing for an authentic, first-person perspective.

Introspection. The global racial reckoning ignited by the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others both challenged and provided an important opportunity for the firm to freshly assess its diversity and inclusion efforts and identify strategies to accelerate the rate of change. During this time of reflection, the firm examined its processes to identify and eliminate bias and build stronger bridges of understanding between our people. We have rededicated ourselves to match our diversity and inclusion aspirations with more tangible achievements. As an example, in addition to building upon our pro bono work and financial contributions to enhance racial justice efforts, we have undertaken our InConversation Speaker Series.

Focus on Personal Connection. Working remotely during the pandemic highlighted the strength and resilience of our culture and established best practices to continue our development and training efforts as well as our connectivity with each other to enhance our sense of community.



“Diversity and inclusion are an inherent part of the work environment. This includes ensuring that diverse associates see a career path for themselves at Debevoise.”

Tigist Kassahun
Corporate Associate



“When I arrived at Debevoise, I was relieved to realize that I had found a community that strives to support all of its members. Any concerns I had as a member of the LGBTQ+ community about not fitting the stereotype of a typical ‘Big Law attorney’ quickly subsided.”

Margo Watson
Alumna



Lawyer, Team and Firm Development

We have embedded diversity and inclusion within all elements of the firm's broader talent development work.

- **Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Team**

Our Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Team is chaired by two senior leaders of the firm who are former Management Committee members, Maeve O'Connor and Michael Gillespie, who work with Marc Grainger, our Global Director of Talent, and Leslie Richards-Yellen, Director of Global Diversity & Inclusion. Michael formerly headed hiring at the firm, and Maeve is currently co-chair of our global Talent Initiative, thereby increasing the integration between talent and diversity and inclusion.

- **Management Committee Sponsorship Program**

In 2016, we launched our Management Committee Sponsorship Program to foster the advancement and promotion of diverse talent. Members of the firm's Management Committee and departmental leaders are paired with top-performing mid- and senior-level diverse associates to promote and support their careers through opportunity generation, profile raising and internal leadership.

- **Addressing Implicit Bias**

We have instituted implicit bias training in all aspects of our talent cycle – recruiting, advising, staffing, evaluation – and for all levels of lawyers.

- **Practice Group Leadership**

Practice group leaders are expected to actively implement practices and procedures to encourage inclusive leadership and reduce unconscious bias. The firm implements training programs designed to educate attorneys at all levels on these concepts. This training has included internationally based, drama-infused learning on unconscious bias as well as neuroscience training on inclusive leadership practices.

- **Real-Time Informal Feedback Program**

To enhance career development for our lawyers, the firm has implemented our Real-Time Informal Feedback Program. Lawyers are taught a number of simple yet effective feedback techniques, and meet regularly to discuss their experiences in giving more frequent feedback.

- **Centralized Staffing**

We apply a centralized approach to staffing our junior litigators, with the objective of ensuring an equitable distribution of responsibilities and opportunities.



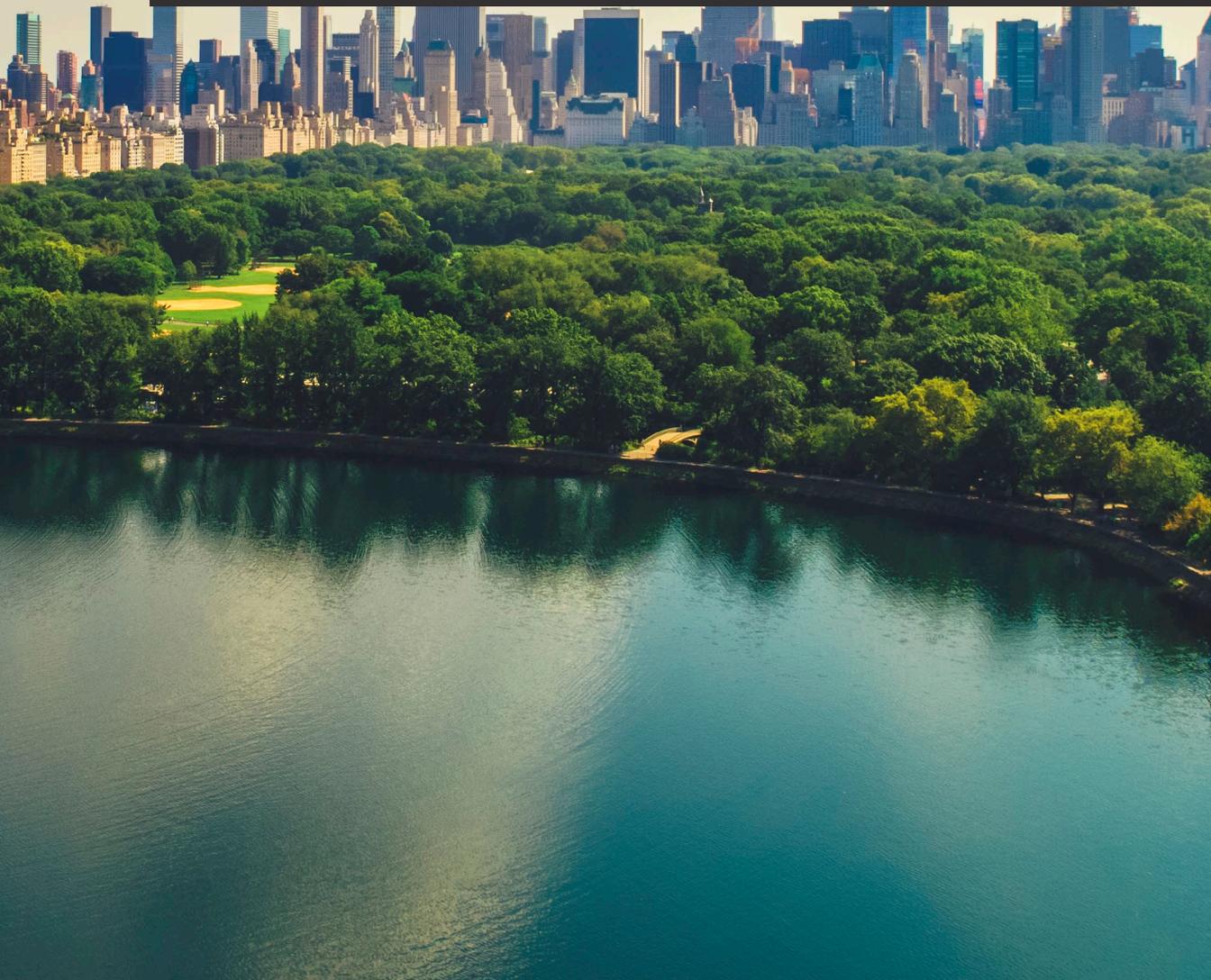
“As an Asian woman in the M&A field, where a lot of people often don’t look like me, what has been most meaningful to me is simply that I feel supported in a way that doesn’t have to do with being Asian or being a woman.”

Jennifer Chu
Corporate Partner



“Our goal is to be the very best place for talent, and that means creating inclusive teams that give everyone the opportunity to grow and to shine.”

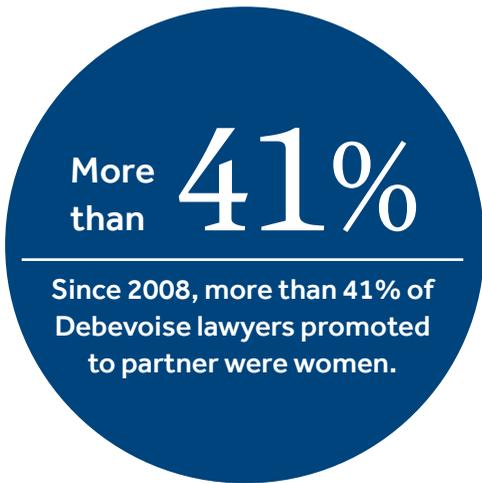
Maeve O'Connor
Litigation Partner and Co-Chair of Diversity & Inclusion



Moving Forward: By the Numbers



From 2013 to 2019, the representation of lawyers of color at the firm increased by over 80% for U.S. associates and 75% for U.S. partners.





We are single-mindedly focused on creating and sustaining a truly inclusive community of diverse professionals at all levels of our firm. To help lead us further along that critical path and after a nationwide search earlier this year, [Leslie Richards-Yellen](#) has joined the firm as Director of Global Diversity & Inclusion.

Ms. Richards-Yellen was previously director of Inclusion-Americas at an international law firm, and before that she was partner and Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer at a national law firm, where she also chaired the diversity committee. Earlier in her career, Ms. Richards-Yellen worked as a finance attorney in law firms and at a financial services company. She was president of the National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) from 2016 to 2017. She received her B.F.A. from Drake University and her J.D. from Cornell University School of Law.



It Starts With Recruiting

As part of our expansive efforts to recruit diverse talent, we reach out as early as possible in the educational pipeline by sponsoring, supporting and participating in programs that improve the educational outcomes and career paths of students of color, beginning with high school students and continuing through to new firm hires:

- **Law MENTOR Program.** Debevoise is a charter member of the Law MENTOR program, which provides high school students with exposure to law-related activities. Each year through MENTOR, Debevoise coaches a mock trial team from the High School for Law and Public Service, a public high school with a large diverse student body, which competes in the city's annual mock trial tournament.
- **Prep for Prep.** This program prepares New York City's academically gifted students of color for placement at independent schools in the city and boarding schools throughout the Northeast. Partner Sue Meng serves on the Board of Trustees.
- **Partnership for New York City Career Discovery Week.** In 2020, Debevoise participated in the inaugural Partnership for New York City Career Discovery Week and hosted a class of NYC high school sophomores for the day. We introduced them to different legal career paths, held a workshop on resumes and interviews, and led them in a mock negotiation exercise in which the students pretended to represent a rock band and an arena in negotiating the terms for a performance.
- **Sponsors for Educational Opportunities (SEO) Law Fellowship Program.** The SEO Law Fellowship Program serves to link talented, underrepresented incoming law students to global law firms. We welcome several SEO Fellows into our summer program each year.
- **Diverse Law School Student and Affinity Groups.** We sponsor diverse student groups at law schools across the country, including affinity groups such as:
 - › Black Law Students Association (BLSA)
 - › Asian Pacific American Law Student Association (APALSA)
 - › First Generation Professionals
 - › Latino Law Students Association (LaLSA)
 - › OUTLaws/Lambda (LGBTQ+)
- **Diverse Job Fairs.** We recruit for candidates at job fairs such as:
 - › Northeast BLSA Job Fair (NEBLSA)
 - › Hispanic National Bar Association Job Fair (HNBA)
 - › Lavender Law Career Fair (LGBTQ+)
- **Connection with Diverse Debevoise Lawyers.** To provide guidance to diverse candidates during our recruiting process, we connect each of them with diverse Debevoise lawyers.
- **Debevoise Diversity Reception and Social Events for Offerees.** We host a Diversity Reception and social events for diverse offerees, allowing them to make meaningful connections with future colleagues and each other.
- **Engagement between Debevoise Affinity Groups and Summer Associates.** Our affinity groups host a variety of programs for summer associates. Members also act as informal advisors for summer associates of diverse backgrounds.

Diversity and Inclusion in the Broader World

The work of creating a more diverse and inclusive firm connects us to clients and others outside the firm.

- Externally, our senior lawyers and firm leaders routinely speak at diversity events, including Bloomberg BNA’s Big Law Business “Diversity & Inclusion Summit.”
- Presiding Partner Michael Blair chaired the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity’s (LCLD) Partnership and Teams Committee. Under his leadership, the Partnership and Teams Committee initiated a secondment program. Secondments provide meaningful opportunities for diverse lawyers to establish close relationships with corporate clients. This experience will enhance the skill set and client knowledge of diverse lawyers which will promote career development.
- Many of our lawyers – including women and other lawyers of diverse backgrounds – have served in senior leadership positions at prominent bars and other professional organizations, and in a variety of public service roles. Just a few examples include the following:
 - › Senior Government and Political Positions – Mary Jo White (former SEC Chair and U.S. Attorney, S.D.N.Y.), Catherine Amirfar (former Counselor on International Law to the Legal Adviser, U.S. Department of State) and Jim Johnson (a former U.S. Treasury undersecretary, now Corporation Counsel of the City of New York)
 - › New York City Bar Association: Retired partner Barbara Paul Robinson was the first female president of the New York City Bar Association (1994-1996). She joins partner John S. Kiernan, who is immediate past president, and two other Debevoise partners who have led the Bar Association. Debevoise is a signatory of the NYC Bar’s three diversity statements.
 - › We have nine alumni serving as federal judges – an incredible number – including the following:
 - Hon. J. Paul Oetken
 - Hon. Laura Taylor Swain
 - Hon. Lorna G. Schofield
 - Hon. Gregory H. Woods
- Our firm is engaged in many pro bono projects that provide access to justice to underserved communities. One project that we are especially proud of is the Holloway Project. Our lawyers on a pro bono basis represent 30 federal prisoners who are serving extremely long mandatory sentences under a firearms law. The firm is seeking resentencing under a novel interpretation of “compassionate release,” as in 2018 Congress recognized the disproportionate impact of the firearms law and abolished it.



“When I first joined the firm over five years ago as an SEO summer intern, I was apprehensive. I had just graduated from college and didn’t really know anything about law firms – I hadn’t even started law school yet. What I came to learn was that I was quite fortunate to be placed at Debevoise, and that’s why I continued to return each summer and as a full-time associate. Debevoise was an integral part of the early years of my legal career, and I truly view the firm as my Big Law home.”

Daniel Pedraza
Alumnus



Our lawyers hold leadership positions in a range of organizations dedicated to improving the diversity of the legal profession.

- **Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD).** We take a leading role in LCLD, which provides mentoring and training of next-gen leaders with more than 300 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners. In 2018, Debevoise was named to receive both “TOP” and Compass Award badges, recognizing the firm for going above and beyond to participate and support LCLD’s mission. Presiding Partner Michael W. Blair has served on the Executive Committee of the Board and as Treasurer and continues to participate as an LCLD Member.
- **Catalyst.** Debevoise is a member of Catalyst CEO Champions for Change, a global nonprofit working with some of the world’s most powerful CEOs and leading companies to build workplaces that work for women. Partner and co-chair of Debevoise’s litigation department, Mary Beth Hogan, is a long-standing board member.
- **National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) Challenge Club.** Debevoise is a member of the NAWL Challenge Club, and in partnership with the Club, we designate high-potential women associates on the path to equity partner to network with in-house counsel, gain pitch experience and participate in mentorship sessions. Former partner Elizabeth (Beth) Pagel Serebransky is a Member at Large of NAWL’s Board. Debevoise litigation partner Arian June was named co-chair of the 2020 NAWL Spring Conference.



“We have seen again and again that the quality of our work product is higher, and the firm and our clients benefit, when the voices of lawyers from diverse backgrounds contribute to solving our clients’ most difficult challenges.”

Jonathan Lewis
Tax Partner



Recognition

Ranked in top 5%
of law firms
– 2020 *AmLaw*
Diversity Scorecard

Ranked 4th
– 2020 *American Lawyer's*
"A-List"

Ranked 5th in our category
– 2020 *Law360*
Diversity Snapshot

Recognized as one of the
"60 Best Law Firms for Women"
and named a Hall of Fame honoree
– *Working Mother* 2019



Our Commitment

We are deeply proud of the considerable success we have had in hiring diverse lawyers and law students. We know that it is the quality of our practice, and the culture and people who form our firm, that attract such great talent.

We also know that the work of building a truly diverse and inclusive firm cannot be measured just by accolades, and that numbers alone do not fully tell the tale. It is our job at Debevoise to create a professional environment in which all our lawyers can thrive and succeed.

We are intensely committed to driving change in our partnership and in the legal profession. That requires not only good intentions but effective initiatives and practices, including those outlined in this brochure. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you in more detail about our plans and practices in the course of our interviews and time with you.



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To learn more about Debevoise, our people and our culture, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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