



How Saying 'Yes' Helped Create a New Era for Diversity and Inclusion at Lane Powell

BY JILL R. LONG

LANE POWELL IS LEADING IN NEW WAYS. AS A FIRM WITH HISTORY IN THE Pacific Northwest dating back more than 140 years, we have a rich legacy of commitment to our clients — a commitment that extends to the community in which our attorneys and staff live and work, including fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.

We exhibit that commitment in concrete ways. In 2000, we created a diversity committee, which now includes more than 20 attorneys. Three years later, we created a summer law student diversity scholarship, the George V. Powell Scholarship, to honor the legacy of one of our founding partners. Our efforts have expanded to include mentoring programs, educational opportunities for our lawyers and more recently, membership in a leading national organization, the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD). For me, our diversity efforts became very personal when I became a Fellow with LCLD in 2014.

I didn't know much about the opportunity other than the information available on the LCLD website. LCLD's membership includes more than 250 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners from firms and organizations like Microsoft, Skadden Arps, General Mills and Kirkland Ellis. Among LCLD's many programs, the Fellows program, as described by LCLD's website is "designed to connect high-potential attorneys from preeminent organizations for a year-long professional development series that focuses on leadership, personal brand development, and relationship building." I headed off to Dallas, Texas in March 2014, excited about the theoretical ideas, but unsure of what the experience would bring.

When I walked into the conference room on the first day, I immediately understood. The room was full of 175 very accomplished, diverse lawyers from around the country. Together we learned about building deep relationships, participated in leadership training, examined our implicit biases, dissected the psychology of lawyers and so much more. Lane Powell had provided a

powerful tool for me by inviting me to be part of the LCLD community.

Inspired by my experience, I was eager to find new ways to contribute to my firm and our profession. I sat down with our firm President and pitched the idea of creating a new role at Lane Powell as a natural evolution of our longstanding investment and commitment to professional development and diversity. On November 1, 2015, I became Lane Powell's first Director of Professional Development and Diversity, standing on the shoulders of many colleagues before me who have shepherded our firm's diversity and inclusion efforts.

Lane Powell's openness to new and innovative ideas is illustrative of how we are leading in new ways. All of our firm citizens are encouraged to bring creative thinking and new ideas to work. We have exciting new initiatives around mentoring, hiring and education. All of this is done in the spirit of one of the three pillars of our diversity goals: to continue to foster an inclusive work environment where all people can bring their whole selves to work every day.

Our size is a gift in this effort. Like Portland is a small "big-city," Lane Powell is a small "big-firm," where everyone has the opportunity to know each other. The next decade of diversity and inclusion at Lane Powell will take advantage of that fact. Every initiative we create will be an opportunity for connection with our clients and our community. We strive to take the same care with each other that we take with our client's work. This philosophy will help us build an ever stronger inclusive workplace and we know the future is very bright for diversity and inclusion at Lane Powell. ■



Jill R. Long is a Shareholder and Director of Professional Development and Diversity at Lane Powell. She can be reached at 503.778.2147 or longj@lanepowell.com.