

## Local Law School Pipeline Programs and High School Students Benefit From Sheppard Mullin Diversity & Inclusion

### Dianne Baquet Smith Recognized With Firm's First Diversity & Inclusion Award

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Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP has honored partner Dianne Baquet Smith with the firm's first Diversity & Inclusion Award, an award that recognizes the significant diversity and inclusion commitment of a Sheppard Mullin attorney. As part of the award, the firm has made a contribution to two pipeline programs: The USC Street Law Program and Loyola Law School's Young Lawyers Program. These pipeline programs expose primary, secondary, or college students to the legal profession.

The Street Law Program is a student organization at USC's Law School, whose goal is to connect law students with inner-city middle and high-school students. The primary aspect of Street Law's program is the classroom teaching session, which provides opportunities to the students and benefits the law students. Six Sheppard Mullin attorneys participate in the Street Law Program, including firm liaison and associate Olivier Theard.

The Judge Stephen O'Neil Trial Advocacy Mentoring Program (aka "Young Lawyers Program") is a collaborative effort of students of the Black Law Students Association and the La Raza Law Students Association of Loyola Law School. These two law student groups created the Young Lawyers Program to bridge the gap between the law school and youth in the communities of color that surround Loyola Law School. Five Sheppard Mullin attorneys participate in the Young Lawyers Program, including firm liaison and associate Claudia Gutierrez.

"Dianne has led the firm's diversity efforts for decades and we are thrilled to recognize her dedication to the firm's efforts and initiatives in this area," said Guy Halgren, chair of the firm's Executive Committee. "Dianne has been a diversity advocate within and outside the firm, and we are pleased to contribute on her behalf to two pipeline programs that are making a difference in our local communities."

In addition to Smith's internal Sheppard Mullin achievements and accomplishments, she is the current president of the Black Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles' Foundation, a member of the LA County Bar Association's Diversity Committee, and a founding member of the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals.

"I am honored by the firm's recognition and support," said Smith. "Diversity is important to Sheppard Mullin, to our clients, and to our profession. Serving as the firm's diversity chair has been both personally and professionally fulfilling. I am pleased that Sheppard Mullin's donation will support the vital work performed by the Street Law and Young Lawyer's programs, as our firm teams with them to address the current pipeline crisis."

Smith is a Labor and Employment group partner in the Los Angeles/Downtown office. She has extensive experience representing management in litigation of wrongful discharge, discrimination, breach of contract, breach of public policy, wage and hour, unfair labor practice, ERISA, and other types of labor and employment cases, through trial.

The Sheppard Mullin Diversity & Inclusion Award was created to recognize an individual or team of attorneys in the firm for their commitment to diversity & inclusion programs and initiatives in the legal profession. Recipients are selected based on their overall contributions and dedication to advancing the firm's mission in this area.

## **Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton LLP**

Sheppard Mullin is a full service AmLaw 100 firm with 550 attorneys in 11 offices located in the United States and Asia. Since 1927, companies have turned to Sheppard Mullin to handle corporate and technology matters, high stakes litigation and complex financial transactions. In the U.S., the firm's clients include more than half of the Fortune 100.

## **Attorneys**

Dianne Baquet Smith