



Pictured, left to right: Thompson Hine Partners Michael Jahnke, Michael Coleman, Samir Varma, Robyn Minter Smyers

Leading the Way in **INNOVATION** **IN DIVERSITY**

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Photography provided by Thompson Hine LLP

As nations across the globe address long-standing diversity, inequality and social justice issues, organizations must assume responsibility for not only encouraging but fully embracing diverse workforces and inclusive cultures. Thompson Hine has long been dedicated to setting an example for achieving diversity within its ranks and being a champion of inclusivity in the legal profession.

“Our leadership is extremely committed to maintaining a diverse and equitable workplace,” says Thompson Hine Diversity, “We’ve developed a robust action plan with measurable metrics embedded in all of our initiatives.”

The firm has implemented an innovative recruiting process for every employed lawyer and law student considered for a position with the firm. The behavioral interview-based process is designed to eliminate bias and highlight important qualities and behaviors that indicate whether a candidate aligns with traits empirically proven to predict success at the firm. The firm uses three tools to objectively evaluate each candidate: A selection assessment based on the 16pf® Questionnaire, which is designed to align a candidate’s behavior with 16 different personality measurements, including traits such as self-reliance and openness to change; a legal writing assessment that compares a candidate’s legal writing skills with those of their industry peers; and a **behavioral interview process**, which includes one-on-one interviews and a structured panel interview. Since adopting the recruiting process in 2017, Thompson Hine has increased its population of minority and LGBTQ attorneys by 50%. Additionally, the firm’s 2018, 2019 and 2020 summer associate classes all boasted more than 60% representation of law students who identify as minorities and/or LGBTQ.

“Recruiting and meaningful engagement are vital to building a pipeline for diverse talent in the legal profession,” Thompson Hine is leveraging that pipeline to ensure that it’s not only identifying, but also meaningfully engaging with candidates before they enter the profession. And once it hires a new attorney, the firm invests in them to ensure that career development opportunities are transparent and within reach. “It’s important that all of our attorneys feel there is an equitable playing field and a clear path to advancement.”

Collaboration Is Critical

Thompson Hine’s success owes in large part to cooperative efforts with other organizations. Following a successful diversity fellowship partnership with Kelly Services, the firm expanded its offerings to include a **2L Diversity Fellowship** in collaboration with Eaton Corporation. These fellowships offer law students valuable work experience that helps strengthen their legal and professional skills.

“Collectively, if we’re all doing what we can in our spaces, we can come together to meaningfully move the needle on diversity in the legal profession,” “Collaborating across different organizations is critical.”

The firm also established the **Ohio Legal Diversity Consortium**, which unites three Northeast Ohio law schools and is accessible to law students and recent graduates throughout the state. The consortium’s primary goal is to advance the employment, professional development and connectivity of minority

law students and junior attorneys by providing resources, mentorships, mock interviews and other programs. Webinars keep students and attorneys connected virtually. The consortium was born out of the challenges the firm anticipated law students and attorneys would face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic hurdles. After seeing the 2008 recession severely and disproportionately impact a generation of minority attorneys, prompting many to leave the legal field entirely, the firm was compelled to provide support for the next generation.

“When COVID-19 happened, I had conversations with my peers at other law firms about what we should focus on to ensure we don’t have a repeat of 2008,” “As a firm, we felt obligated to actively combat the pandemic’s potential negative impact on our inclusion and diversity efforts and to help equip those underrepresented lawyers and law students who are likely to be most affected with tools to successfully navigate this challenging time.”

“The law schools are full partners in this and we’re really excited to work with them.”

Diversity Within the Firm

Thompson Hine seeks to achieve diverse representation in all roles throughout its organization. In August 2020, the firm achieved **Mansfield 3.0 certification** and is currently pursuing Mansfield 4.0 certification. The Mansfield Rule’s goal is to boost the representation of diverse lawyers in law firm leadership roles. To achieve certification, participating firms must consider a candidate pool comprising at least 30% women, attorneys of color, LGBTQ+ lawyers, and lawyers with disabilities for leadership positions. “Since embarking on the certification process, the firm has expanded its metrics tracking to not only include candidates that are considered, but those who are selected. The firm uses these metrics to analyze its recruitment, advancement and leadership statistics each year to evaluate progress and determine areas for improvement across firm demographics.”

In response to the current state of social unrest, Thompson Hine launched a **Social Justice Program Series**, which covers a variety of topics, including racial injustice, discriminatory policing and allyship. Courses are designed to increase awareness and understanding of the systemic social and racial issues that ignited this summer’s global protests. In addition, the program highlights ways allies inside Thompson Hine can positively engage with the community to address these issues. The firm is also in the process of introducing a **Social Justice Fellowship**, through which up to five associates will be seconded to organizations whose work is focused on social and/or racial justice issues.

Thompson Hine’s strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion has existed as long as the firm itself. By partnering with other like-minded organizations and developing creative initiatives such as its Diversity Fellowships, Social Justice Program Series and Ohio Legal Diversity Consortium, the firm is serving as an industry innovator and driving diversity, equity and inclusion throughout the legal profession. ❖



Thompson Hine's 2020 Summer Associate Class

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Thompson Hine, a full-service business law firm, is located at 312 Walnut St., 14th Floor, Cincinnati, OH 45202. For more information, call 513.352.6700 or visit www.thompsonhine.com.