

2015 **DIVERSITY**  
at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

## Embracing New Experiences: Tamika Montgomery-Reeves Strives to Learn and to Lead

A partner in Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati's Wilmington, Delaware, office, Tamika Montgomery-Reeves gave birth to her first child, Jackson, this past May. On maternity leave four weeks later, despite dealing with the demanding schedule of a newborn, her tenacity, optimism, and zeal for her complex amalgam of corporate and litigation work remain very much in evidence.

"My practice is a bit of a hybrid between corporate advisory work and business litigation," Tamika says. "That has proven wonderful for me, as it allows me to work on many interesting matters. For example, I have been able to advise boards on novel issues related to bylaw adoption, navigation of fiduciary duties, and a wide variety of

transactions. By the same token, I have been able to participate in groundbreaking litigation, including the Chevron forum selection bylaw litigation, which we won. I have also been involved in fast-paced M&A litigation, breach-of-fiduciary-duty challenges, contract litigation, and internal investigations. It is a great blend that keeps things fresh and exciting."



Like many young people with strong ideals and a social conscience, Tamika originally thought that she'd become a criminal defense attorney. But as she was exposed to many different areas of law in the course of her education, she realized to her surprise that corporate, not criminal, law was her true passion. "I took my first corporations class and absolutely loved it," Tamika says. "That led me to take many more corporate law classes. At the end of my second year of law school, one of my professors encouraged me to apply for a clerkship at the Delaware Court of Chancery. That is where I was fortunate enough to clerk for Bill Chandler, who was Chancellor of the court at that time."

After her clerkship with William Chandler III, who is widely recognized as one of the nation's foremost legal experts on corporate law and governance, Tamika joined Weil, Gotshal & Manges in New York, where she practiced securities and corporate governance

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### An Early Calling

No one in Tamika's family was surprised when she entered the University of Georgia School of Law in 2003, as she had set her sights on being a lawyer since the second grade. "That is when I learned about a man in our community who allegedly had been wrongly accused of a crime," Tamika says. "As my grandmother described it, he was an uneducated man of color pushed to give a false confession to a crime that no one in our community believed he committed. My grandmother talked to me about the power of knowledge and the importance of knowing your rights, having a good education, and giving back by giving a voice to the disadvantaged. Right then and there, I decided I wanted to be an attorney."

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## Building a Foundation for Success:

When asked if she has any advice to impart to younger attorneys, Tamika is quick with her reply. Here are some perspectives she offers on building a legal career:

### Create a council of mentors.

“Everyone says that you need a mentor—but you don’t just need a mentor, you need a personal small council of mentors that includes decent human beings with good judgment, whom you admire and trust, and who have your best interests at heart. They can be partners, associates, secretaries, family, or friends. And once you’ve formed your council, you need to go to them whenever you’re faced with an important professional decision or development. Listen hard, then make the decision that’s right for you.”

**Know your craft.** “Become an expert in your field. Read all the latest cases, keep up with industry articles, and attend conferences. People will notice your expertise, call you up, and rely on you.”

**Strive to learn, then lead.** “Seek out opportunities to learn—and, eventually, to lead. It’s very important to embrace new experiences, as scary as they may be.”

**Be mindful of your actions.** “Exercise good judgment in everything you do. Basically, behave as if someone is always watching. And that goes for social media, too—maybe even especially so.”

**Keep your word.** “Remember that your word is the most important thing you have. People should be able to trust your word always and completely.”

## Tamika Montgomery-Reeves *(continued from page 1)*

law. But when Bill decided to step down from the bench and enter private practice, he asked Tamika if she would be interested in joining him at his new firm, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati. Bill says that his choice was obvious: “As a law clerk, she was every judge’s dream: an excellent writer, diligent, blessed with tons of common sense, quick on her feet, and self-motivated—she would anticipate the next assignment before I had even given it to her. I knew from the start that she was destined to be a great lawyer, and I am very grateful that she chose to join me at WSGR.”

Aside from her respect for Bill and eagerness to work with him again, Tamika says, “I was very impressed with the caliber and breadth of WSGR’s client base, as well as the quality of its attorneys. I also was attracted to the firm’s entrepreneurial spirit, which made me think that it would be a good fit for me.”

### A Place Where “Big Ideas” Can Flourish

In 2011, Tamika joined Bill at the firm’s newly opened Georgetown, Delaware, office. Three years later, she was elected partner and moved to Wilmington to help open and expand a second Delaware office. “From the start, I was pleasantly surprised by the firm’s willingness to allow young people with big ideas to flourish,” she says. “This really is the type of place where you can have an impact if you vocalize your ideas, find support, which is readily available, and execute your ideas.” She cites management’s openness to suggestions from younger attorneys to foster growth in the Delaware offices as one example. “I really appreciate that the attitude is not, ‘Hey, you’ve been at the firm for 30 years, so *now* it’s OK for you to get involved with the course and development of the firm,’” she says. “A good idea is appreciated as a good idea, no matter the seniority of the speaker.”

In addition to focusing on her own career, Tamika is committed to working to increase the presence of minority and women attorneys in her field. “Early outreach is key,” she says.

“If you wait until college to encourage people to apply to law school, you might already be too late. Kids need early exposure to different career options.” This conviction has led Tamika to speak at a number of schools in her home state of Mississippi, where she strives to present a legal career as an attainable and desirable goal. “I tell them all about what I do and say, ‘Hey, I look like you, I’m from your community, and this is what your life could look like, too.’”

Always mindful of the impetus that inspired her to be a lawyer in the first place, Tamika gives back to the community in other ways as well. While at Weil, she joined the Legal Aid Society’s Prisoners’ Rights Project, where she became involved on a pro bono basis in a civil suit aimed at improving conditions in New York prisons. “We weren’t dealing with hard-core criminals at maximum-security prisons,” she says. “We were focused on state prisons’ housing inmates who had committed lesser offenses and were being abused while they were doing their time.” Ultimately, the suit was successful in getting more cameras installed in the prisons and enacting other changes aimed at reducing the abuse of inmates by officers and guards. More recently, in Wilmington, Tamika has become a member of the board of directors of the Mother Teresa House, which provides housing for indigent HIV and AIDS patients.

Between her demanding legal career and commitment to community work, Tamika admits that “it is sometimes a challenge to find enough time in the day to fit everything in.” And now, with son Jackson in the mix, the boundaries of her days are sure to be stretched even further. Still, Tamika remains optimistic that she’ll be able to strike the elusive work-life balance that’s right for her family, finding a source of inspiration in her WSGR colleagues. “I am surrounded by attorneys who have wonderful, loving families and are still wildly successful in their careers,” she says. “They give me confidence that I can do the same.”

## Q&A with Partner Vera Elson

WSGR partner Vera Elson is a second-generation Nicaraguan whose grandparents immigrated to the U.S. from Central America in 1945. Her practice is focused on intellectual property trials and strategic counseling for technology clients.

Earlier this year, Vera participated in *Law360's* Minority Powerbrokers Q&A series, where she shared her perspective on law firm diversity and issues facing minority lawyers today.

**“I prefer to see each person as a unique collection of attributes and experiences—some visible and some not immediately apparent”**

### **Q: How did you break the glass ceiling in the legal industry?**

A: By never thinking that one really existed. I am reminded of the quote from “The Matrix” where the young candidate states: “There is no spoon.” Perception is the only ceiling. As an associate, I worked very hard, first to encourage more senior attorneys to be candid and open about any perceived issue or area where I might improve, and then to take it upon myself to address the issue. Be genuinely grateful to the more senior attorneys for sharing their views on perceived areas of improvement. Once you’re on the other side of the fence and delivering evaluation results to more junior attorneys, you’ll come to appreciate that it can be as difficult to deliver a criticism as it is to receive it.

Evaluate any feedback with detachment to assess whether there is any course correction

you need to make. This early approach has served me well in that, as a matter of course, I encourage clients early in our relationship

to be as frank as possible about any hot-button issues or concerns. Often, their issues stem from some negative experience they encountered with prior counsel. By inviting clients to be open about their concerns early and often, you can avoid making those same mistakes. You also stand a far better chance of heading off any looming strategy, staffing, or budget issue before it becomes a problem.

Lastly, keep your eye on the ball and don’t be distracted by minor inequalities along the way. If, for example, your goal is to become the best trial lawyer you can be, don’t just rely on what tasks may be handed to you. Take it upon yourself (and on your own time, if necessary) to go watch local jury trials. Offer to handle depositions, study the Federal Rules of Evidence, and (I cannot stress enough) take every opportunity to speak publicly or otherwise hone your oratorical skills. Presentations and public speaking are an art form that must be constantly refined. It won’t be long before you look back and find that you’ve already blown past what others regard as a ceiling.

### **Q: What are the challenges of being a lawyer of color at a senior level?**

A: Honestly, I have never cared for the “person of color” tag. While the moniker may be politically correct, I personally have no use for it. I prefer to see each person as a unique collection of attributes and experiences—some visible and some not immediately



apparent. Certainly if you are the more diverse attorney in an otherwise relatively homogeneous firm culture, it may seem at first that others have the advantage and “blend” more easily. So one challenge you may face is that you have to work a bit harder to find the common ground you share with a colleague who, on the surface, appears to have a very different and non-overlapping set of attributes and experiences. The common ground might be sports or travel, or that you are both history buffs—but whatever it may be, it is there. You may just have to make the extra effort to tease it out. Is it fair that you have to make this extra effort? Perhaps not, but those “how to connect with people” skills tend to come in very handy when selecting and talking to a jury.

The challenges you face can also be socio-economic. Obviously someone from a well-connected and affluent family with an Ivy League education and a parent who is a Supreme Court Justice is going to have a bit of a leg up. This is life (remember the kid who never studied, but always seemed to ace the final?). But in my experience, a strong work ethic goes a long way toward leveling out

**“In my experience, a strong work ethic goes a long way toward leveling out any disparities that may have existed at the starting gate”**

any disparities that may have existed at the starting gate. As they say in show business, it takes 20 years to make an overnight success. If you enjoy the intellectual challenge your

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## Vera Elson *(continued from page 3)*

area of the law offers (in my case, intellectual property law), stay the course!

Lastly, hard work and the proverbial “nose to the grindstone” are necessary, but not sufficient. You will need to develop a book of business. Think of yourself as a start-up. When you start at a firm, you need to have a product (your work product). But you also need to market that product to your customer base (initially partners and senior associates). Your goal is to keep them coming back to you for assistance (repeat business). It is critical that they know they can rely on you. Those who come to know you as a talented and responsive lawyer will remember you if and when they leave the firm. Many will go on to careers in-house. Eventually, as talented lawyers themselves, they too will rise in their respective organizations. Make the effort to stay in touch, and voilà, good things will happen.

**“Embrace your differences. They allow you to stand out, which, if you work hard and develop marketable skills, will ultimately prove beneficial”**

### **Q: What advice would you give to a lawyer of color?**

A: Think of your particular set of characteristics and diverse heritage as an advantage—not a disadvantage. Embrace your differences. They allow you to stand out, which, if you work hard and develop marketable skills, will ultimately prove beneficial. Presume that the firm would not have hired you, or spent years investing in you, unless there were partners in

management that thought you were capable of succeeding. Hunt them out. Offer to work for partners that take the time to explain their reasoning and incisively question yours. A good mentor will pick apart your arguments and will force you to demonstrate a firm grasp of your evidence, as well as persuasively justify your conclusions. Don’t get defensive! Instead, prepare for any such encounters and be grateful that they are offering you the opportunity to demonstrate your analytical skills. This is the best possible training ground, since it won’t be long before the partner is replaced by a judge who will not hesitate to publicly grill you in open court (a highly energizing experience). And don’t presume that your best mentors will look or sound anything like you, or that they should be warm, fuzzy personalities. Gravitate to people who are acknowledged as excellent and demanding lawyers, and who can offer you new and/or challenging tasks that take you out of your comfort zone. These are the experiences that will serve you best, and eventually put you in the most favorable position to become your clients’ “go-to” adviser . . . the rest will follow.

### **Q: Describe a time you encountered discrimination in your career and tell us how you handled it.**

A: Once, as a junior associate, I had a rather gruff male senior partner at a former firm confide that he liked working with me because I was the only woman he had not made cry. While certainly an eyebrow-raising, chauvinistic comment, I gave him the benefit of the doubt and took it for the genuine (albeit backhanded) compliment that it was intended to be. In his own awkward way, he was telling me that that I was tough, and over time I came to respect that he was a strong advocate on behalf of his clients. He ended up being a good mentor from whom I learned important litigation skills. And as a bonus, relating his comment made for a good war story at gender diversity events for years thereafter. The legal profession—and particularly litigation—is very exciting and rewarding, but definitely a rough-and-tumble

business. Retain your sense of humor. It is a powerful weapon in the battle to keep things in perspective and stay focused on mastering your craft.

**“Partners at all firms need to be vigilant about not falling into a pattern of recruiting, hiring, or only working with the same ‘type’ of person, or someone who ‘reminds me of myself’”**

### **Q: What advice would you give to a law firm looking to increase diversity in its partner ranks?**

A: If the discussion is along the lines of “we need one of those,” then the firm is on the wrong track altogether. The ultimate goal is to grow and nurture a meritocracy. This is relatively easy in Silicon Valley, where the population is already diverse and clients generally don’t care if you are green and a Martian, so long as you can secure the win and/or get the deal done. But every firm has its own distinct culture. Partners at all firms need to be vigilant about not falling into a pattern of recruiting, hiring, or only working with the same “type” of person, or someone who “reminds me of myself.” Perhaps go farther afield in law school recruiting to search for that highly motivated individual who does not fit the mold. Talented associates should be encouraged to work for a variety of partners, to network, to engage in public speaking, and to participate in business development efforts to “learn the ropes,” since ultimately, partnership will likely depend at least in part on the partners’ perception of the associate as a future rainmaker.

# Diversity at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Since its inception, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati has been committed to the principle that diversity is a core component of a thriving organization. Rather than maintaining a formal diversity policy, the firm approaches diversity as a naturally integrated facet of our business culture. Internally, we incorporate diversity considerations into all talent management practices, including recruiting, hiring, reviews, partner promotions, and retention. Externally, we collaborate with law schools and on-campus groups to build a strong pipeline of diverse recruits, and we regularly partner with community organizations that promote diversity.



**Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati has built a culture in which employees of all backgrounds, viewpoints, and experiences are encouraged and empowered to achieve their maximum potential**

Through these efforts, WSGR has built a culture in which employees of all backgrounds, viewpoints, and experiences are encouraged and empowered to achieve their maximum potential.

## Leadership

At WSGR, diversity is not merely about numbers, it's about leadership. Our minority, women, and LGBT partners hold prominent roles at all levels of management, including on the following:

- Board of Directors
- Strategic Practice Development Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Compensation Committee
- Finance Committee
- WSGR Foundation's Board of Trustees
- Overall, since 2002, over 50 percent of the firm's attorneys elevated to partner have been diverse
- Currently, 40 percent of the firm's partners and more than 55 percent of the firm's associates are diverse

In addition, diverse partners hold chair positions on nearly every standing committee of the firm. At the associate level, two of the three co-chairs of the Associates Committee are currently women and numerous committee members are diverse.

## Attorney Diversity

Retention, career development, and promotion are key components of our diversity strategy. We track the diversity of associates in the nominations pipeline and those promoted to partner to ensure opportunities for diverse associates. Consider the following:

- In 2015, 40 percent of the attorneys promoted to partner were diverse

WSGR is consistently recognized by leading third-party sources as one of the most diverse law firms in the country, as discussed in greater detail on page 7.

**In 2015, we hired an exceptionally diverse summer associate class, with 44 percent of our summer associates being minority or LGBT law students and 43 percent being women**

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# Diversity at Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati *(continued from page 5)*

Against this backdrop, the firm's attorney-focused programs and events are designed to foster professional development and offer participants the opportunity to establish meaningful relationships with their colleagues. For instance, our Women's Task

LGBT summer associates. We will continue to build the law school diversity pipeline by funding scholarships for diverse students and strengthening our firm's relationships with diverse student groups on campuses.



Force hosts panels and brown bag lunches to discuss issues relevant to women associates (see the article on page 9 for more information on a recent panel discussion). In addition, the firm's minority partners host affinity-group networking receptions and other internal social activities that are designed to promote mentoring relationships.

## Recruiting

WSGR endeavors to attract, mentor, and advance the best legal talent from all backgrounds—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation—and devotes significant resources and time to sponsor events, programs, and organizations committed to building a pipeline of diverse attorneys.

In 2015, we hired an exceptionally diverse summer associate class, with 44 percent of our 70 summer associates being minority or LGBT law students and 43 percent being women. The firm hosts an annual diversity reception as well as smaller affinity group gatherings focused on minority, women, and

As discussed on page 7, the WSGR Foundation sponsors a Diversity Scholarship through the California Bar Foundation to assist incoming first-year law students from historically underrepresented groups in the legal profession who have committed to attend a California law school. Additionally, the firm sponsors Law Preview scholarships for incoming minority Stanford Law School students, supporting their attendance at a week-long, intensive course designed to prepare them for the rigors of law school.

With respect to on-campus events geared toward law students, the firm has:

- Hosted a lunch and panel discussion with Berkeley's Law Students of African Descent and La Raza groups
- Organized and participated in a panel discussion with the Boalt Hall Women's Association
- Hosted a dinner reception with Stanford's Latino Law Student and Black Law Student groups

- Supported Stanford's Minority Admit Weekend and helped the law school enroll admitted minority students
- Sponsored the National LGBT Bar Association's Lavender Law Career Fair
- Participated in the Bay Area Legal Recruiting Association's Diversity Speed Networking event for students with diverse backgrounds from various law schools in the Bay Area
- Participated in the Bay Area Diversity Career Fair

## External Affiliations

The firm is involved with many external organizations that promote diversity, including the Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Chinese American Semiconductor Professionals Association, Geek Girl, The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE), NewMe (a start-up accelerator for businesses led by underrepresented minorities in the tech industry), the Silicon Valley Japanese Entrepreneur Network, Tech Incubator Program for Startup (TIPS) Korea, Watermark (a community of executive women who have risen to the top of their fields), and Women in Sustainable Energy (WISE).

WSGR also signed the New York County Lawyers' Association statement to implement efforts to increase diversity in the legal profession.

## Best Practices Research

For five consecutive years, WSGR has partnered with Talent Advisory Board, a boutique research and management consulting firm dedicated to advancing workforce diversity, to identify the perceived and real obstacles that minorities face within large law firm environments and the diversity best practices that can help overcome these obstacles.

# WSGR Achieves Top Rankings for Law Firm Diversity

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati recently has been recognized among the leading U.S. law firms for diversity by several third-party sources. For example, the firm ranked No. 3 overall in *The American Lawyer's* 2015 Diversity Scorecard, reflecting the firm's high percentages of minority attorneys (25.9 percent) and partners (20.2 percent) and continuing our history of high rankings, including three consecutive years in which WSGR ranked No. 1 overall. The annual Scorecard is one of the best-known benchmarks measuring law firm diversity, tallying and ranking the number of Asian or Asian-American, Black or African-American, Latino or Hispanic, and self-described multiracial partners and associates at Am Law 200 and National Law Journal 250 law firms.

WSGR also ranked No. 1 on *Law360's* first-ever listing of the 100 best U.S. law firms for racial minority attorneys, which was published in May 2015. The rankings were based on several factors, including the percentage of minority partners, the percentage of minority non-partners, and the number of minority attorneys at the firm. In addition to achieving *Law360's* top ranking for minority attorneys, WSGR was recognized as the best law firm for Asian-American attorneys, one of the five best law firms for minority partners, and one of the 100 best law firms for female attorneys.

**THE AMERICAN LAWYER**  
An ALM Publication  
JUNE 2015

**WOMEN AND DIVERSITY**

**THE DIVERSITY SCORECARD**

**THE SHARE OF MINORITIES WORKING IN THE** United States at the largest law firms in 2014 remained about the same as the year before, inching up to 16.4 percent from 16.1 percent in 2013, according to our annual Diversity Scorecard. Minority representation at law firms at least has reached a plateau, the results suggest. No substantial increase in the overall percentage of minority lawyers has been measured since 2008, when the share reached 13.9 percent before falling in the recession and recovering in 2012. That is far below the approximately 37 percent of the population that are racial or ethnic minorities in the United States, according to the U.S. Census. Yet it marks some progress since 2000, when minorities overall accounted for just 9.7 percent of lawyers at the largest firms.

The total proportion of partners, both equity and non-equity, also rose incrementally last year, to 7.7 percent from 7.6 percent a year earlier and 7.3 percent in 2012. There were still 160 law firms in our survey, however, that reported no minority equity partners, and one reported no minority partners at all.

**14.4%** OF ALL LAWYERS AT LARGE FIRM ARE MINORITY.

RANK	FIRM	MINORITY PARTNERS	MINORITY ASSOCIATES	TOTAL LL
1	Wells Fargo	24.2%	24.2%	24.2%
2	Wells Fargo	23.2%	23.2%	23.2%
3	Wilson Sonsini	25.9%	20.2%	643

**THIS YEAR'S FINDINGS**

- The American Lawyer diversity survey measures the average number of full-time-equivalent Asian or Asian-American, black or African-American, Latino or Hispanic and self-described multiracial attorneys at Am Law 200 and National Law Journal 250 law firms employing 154 lawyers or more in 2014. Lawyers of Middle Eastern heritage are not counted as minorities. Each firm's rank is based on the percentage of minority lawyers in its U.S. offices added to the share of U.S.-based minority partners. The larger the number, the higher the firm's ranking. This year 220 firms reported their diversity numbers to us, 11 declined to provide diversity information.
- As has been the case since at least 2004, when we first broke out results by race and ethnicity, Asian or Asian-American attorneys were the best represented minority group, with 6.4 percent of lawyers and 2.8 percent of partners. However, the large gap between the number of Asian partners and Asian non-partners (9.3 percent) suggests that they encounter obstacles to promotion.

## Winnie Wong Named as WSGR Foundation Diversity Scholar



California Supreme Court Associate Justice Mariano-Florentino Cuéllar and Winnie Wong

The California Bar Foundation selected UC Berkeley School of Law student Winnie Wong as the 2014 WSGR Foundation Diversity Scholar. Growing up in an immigrant, working-class family and forced to overcome educational hurdles, Winnie developed a grounded work ethic and an awareness of social injustices. Drawing upon her experiences as a first-generation college student, Winnie provided college counseling to low-income, first-generation Asian American high school students. She plans on using her law degree to help students from underserved communities.

Through contributions from law firms and other donors, the California Bar Foundation's Diversity Scholarship Program provides

financial support and recognition to incoming first-year law students from groups historically underrepresented in the legal profession who have committed to attend a California law school and have a financial need and a desire to make an impact in the community. The WSGR Foundation has provided support for the program since 2008.

Established in 1990, the WSGR Foundation provides a vehicle for the firm's members to make financial contributions to the community. Since that time, the foundation has donated over \$13.5 million to nearly 700 charitable organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area and out-of-state locations near the firm's national offices.

# A Commitment to Pro Bono

As part of a larger effort to serve the community at large, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati provides pro bono legal services to countless nonprofit organizations that reflect the firm's commitment to diversity, as well as to numerous minority individuals in asylum, U-Visa, and Dream Act cases. Below we highlight our pro bono work on behalf of three organizations:



As part of WSGR's partnership with the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center, the firm provides employment counseling and litigation advice. Specifically, WSGR has reviewed and updated organization policies, advised on difficult hiring and termination decisions, and assisted with pre-litigation preparation and activities. The firm is also available to assist in the event of any actual employment-related litigation claims, including responding to any such claim, negotiating a settlement or, if need be, representing the organization through the completion of such litigation. The WSGR team that has provided assistance to the center includes general counsel Mark Parnes and employment law associates Matthew Damm and Rebecca Stuart.

Founded in 1981, the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center aims to provide a broad array of opportunities and programs, a dedicated and caring staff, a corps of volunteers, and a spirit of community that celebrates the many facets of the broad-based lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender constituency. Based in San Jose, the center is a premier resource hub and a recognized leader in promoting health, strength, diversity and inclusiveness.

## EQUAL JUSTICE SOCIETY

WSGR is serving as pro bono co-counsel to the Equal Justice Society and several other

organizations representing the plaintiffs in an educational-justice case in Kern County, located in California's Central Valley. The case alleges that Latino and African-American students in the Kern High School District are subject to disciplinary measures including suspension, involuntary transfer, and expulsion at higher rates than white students, in violation of constitutional and statutory protections under both California and federal law. Empirical research conducted by social scientists from leading universities suggests that such disparities are in part the result of intentional discrimination, implicit bias, implicit associations, stereotype threat, racial anxiety, the effects of in-group preferences, and the use of negative stereotypes.

The plaintiffs recently filed an amended complaint after the court partially granted the defendants' motions to dismiss. The WSGR team includes partner Steve Guggenheim; associates Riana Pfefferkorn, Anne Aufhauser, Joy Kim, Luke Liss, Joni Ostler, and Lauren Zweier; and paralegal Deborah Bellinger.

A national legal organization focused on restoring constitutional safeguards against discrimination, the Equal Justice Society (EJS) is transforming the nation's consciousness on race through law, social science, and the arts. Founded in 2000, EJS currently focuses its advocacy efforts on school discipline, special education, the school-to-prison pipeline, race-conscious remedies, and inequities in the criminal justice system.



WSGR attorneys have enjoyed a long relationship with MinKwon. Chul Pak, a partner in the firm's New York office, regularly consults with MinKwon's leadership on its overall strategic mission and direction, and also provides mentorship and guidance to its staff attorneys about their professional development. In addition, New York attorneys—including Jeff Bank, Justin Cohen, Tiffany Lee, and Daniel Weick—participate in

clinics to help Asian-Americans obtain various immigration relief.

Established in 1984, the New York-based MinKwon Center for Community Action has had a profound presence in the Korean American community through various grassroots organizing, education, and advocacy initiatives that address important issues such as immigration policies, voter rights, and cultural awareness. The center places a special emphasis on meeting the needs of marginalized community members who have less access to resources, including the youth, the elderly, recent immigrants, low-income residents, and limited English-proficient residents.

Additionally, the following attorneys dedicate time to serving on the boards of directors of nonprofit organizations that demonstrate a commitment to diversity, as well as legal aid organizations that serve low-income and diverse populations.

- **Asian Law Alliance** – Ethan Lee
- **Asia Clean Energy Innovation Initiative, Inc.** – Todd Glass and Scott Zimmermann
- **The Bernardo Kohler Center** – Brian Range
- **Eastside College Preparatory School** – Brad O'Brien
- **Korean American Lawyers Association of New York** – Chul Pak
- **Korean American Community Foundation of New York** – Chul Pak
- **La Raza Centro Legal** – Chrissy Filipp
- **Law Foundation of Silicon Valley** – Caz Hashemi
- **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area** – Steven Guggenheim
- **The Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County** – Elizabeth Peterson
- **The Legal Aid Society–Employment Law Center** – Doug Clark
- **Western Center on Law & Poverty** – Elizabeth Peterson



# Four Women Elected Partner

In December 2014, Calise Cheng, Farah Gerdes, Tamika Montgomery-Reeves, and Manja Sachet were among the 10 attorneys elected to the firm's partnership. Among other considerations, they were elected for their exceptional legal skills, records of achievement, leadership abilities, and commitment to client service. The promotions became effective on February 1, 2015.



Calise practices corporate and securities law in the Palo Alto office, where she advises clients ranging from start-ups to large public companies on a broad range of general corporate and transactional matters, including venture-backed private financings, initial public offerings and other securities offerings, mergers and acquisitions, corporate governance, and public company disclosure matters. She also represents venture capital firms and other institutional investors. Calise earned her J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 2006.

Based in Palo Alto, Farah's practice focuses on the representation of pharmaceutical,

biotechnology, medical device, and diagnostic companies in intellectual property transactions. She represents clients in a variety of business transactions involving IP or product rights, including IP licenses, collaboration agreements, R&D agreements, clinical trial management, manufacturing agreements, supply and distribution agreements, university licenses, mergers and acquisitions, and the formation of joint ventures and other types of strategic alliances and partnering arrangements. In addition, she advises clients on FDA regulatory and healthcare issues. Farah earned her J.D. from the University of Chicago Law School in 2005.



Tamika is based in Wilmington, Delaware, where her practice focuses on corporate governance, navigation of corporate fiduciary duties, and representation of companies and their officers and directors in stockholder class action litigation,

derivative litigation, and complex commercial litigation. Tamika specializes in conducting investigations on behalf of management, boards of directors, and special board or management committees; advising companies faced with stockholder litigation demands; and representing companies in stockholder actions and "busted deal" litigation. Tamika earned her J.D. from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2006.

Based in the firm's Seattle office, Manja is a partner in the technology transactions practice, which specializes in intellectual property issues and transactions involving the development, acquisition, use, or exploitation of technology. Manja works with emerging and mature clients in the energy innovation and clean technology, software, digital media, and information technology sectors. She was the pro bono coordinator for the Seattle office from 2008 to 2012 and remains actively involved in a variety of pro bono matters. Manja earned her J.D. from the University of Washington School of Law in 2005.



## WSGR Women Partners Offer "Strategies for Success"

As part of WSGR's efforts to provide professional development, networking, and leadership training opportunities for its women attorneys, the Associates Committee and the Women's Task Force held a panel presentation on April 27, 2015, in Palo Alto focused on "Strategies for Success." The program was broadcast live to the firm's other offices around the country.

Moderated by senior vice president Courtney Dorman, and featuring partners Colleen Bal (litigation, San Francisco), Susan Creighton (antitrust, Washington, D.C.), and Katie Martin (corporate, Palo Alto), the panel offered unique personal perspectives on diversity, as well as crafting a fulfilling and rewarding career at WSGR.

Topics addressed included ways for women lawyers to build and maintain confidence and practice expertise; the role of mentorship and networking in career development; the unique challenges of working at a law firm; the benefits of strong client relationships; and the necessity of being "intentional" when building a life—both inside and outside the firm.

"We've benefited from the women who came before us, certainly, but we're still forging the path," noted Katie Martin at the event. "There are still many paths to be built."

## Meet Our Minority Partners



**John Aguirre**  
Employee Benefits &  
Compensation  
*Palo Alto*



**Michael Coke**  
Corporate  
*Palo Alto*



**Robert Ishii**  
M&A  
*San Francisco*



**Joseph Alcorta**  
Corporate  
*Austin*



**Robert Day**  
Corporate  
*Palo Alto*



**Paul Jin**  
Antitrust  
*Washington, D.C.*



**Jon Avina**  
Corporate  
*Palo Alto*



**Cynthia Dy**  
Securities and Commercial  
Litigation  
*Palo Alto*



**Ethan Jin**  
Corporate  
*Beijing*



**Colleen Bal**  
IP Litigation  
*San Francisco*



**Vera Elson**  
IP Litigation  
*Palo Alto*



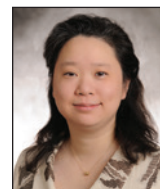
**Raj Judge**  
Corporate  
*Palo Alto*



**Gregory Broome**  
Tax  
*San Francisco*



**U.P. Peter Eng**  
IP Counseling & Patents  
*Palo Alto*



**Charlotte Kim**  
Corporate Finance  
*New York*



**Weiheng Chen**  
Corporate  
*Hong Kong*



**Mark Fitzgerald**  
Corporate  
*Washington, D.C.*



**Olivia Kim**  
IP Litigation  
*Los Angeles*



**Zhan Chen**  
Corporate  
*Shanghai*



**Parag Gheewala**  
Technology Transactions  
*Seattle*



**Tung-On Kong**  
IP Litigation  
*San Francisco*



**Denny Kwon**  
M&A  
*San Francisco*



**Chul Pak**  
Antitrust  
*New York*



**Khoon Jin Tan**  
Corporate  
*Hong Kong*



**John Randall Lewis**  
Corporate  
*San Francisco*



**Rico Rosales**  
Employment Law  
*Palo Alto*



**Jose Villarreal**  
IP Litigation  
*Austin*



**Jose Macias**  
Corporate  
*Palo Alto*



**Michael Rubin**  
Privacy & Data Protection  
*San Francisco*



**Dr. Karen Wong**  
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**Catherine Moreno**  
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*Palo Alto*



**Ignacio Salceda**  
Securities Litigation  
*Palo Alto*



**James Yoon**  
IP Litigation  
*Palo Alto*



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Corporate  
*Palo Alto*



**Robert Sanchez**  
Corporate  
*Washington, D.C.*



**Jonathan Zhu**  
Tax  
*Palo Alto*



**Dan Ouyang**  
Corporate  
*Beijing/Hong Kong*



**Yoichiro Taku**  
Corporate  
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