

A woman with dark hair, wearing a grey textured sweater, is shown in profile from the chest up. She is looking towards the left at a framed photograph on a wall. The photograph depicts a diverse group of people of various ethnicities and ages. The background is softly blurred, showing what appears to be an office or meeting room with a whiteboard and other people in the distance.

Diversity & Inclusion

Spring 2021

 Frost
Brown Todd^{LLC}
ATTORNEYS

I am proud to introduce this edition of Frost Brown Todd's (FBT) Diversity & Inclusion Report. Despite the many challenges we have faced in the past year, FBT continues to make meaningful strides to ensure that our firm maintains a diverse and inclusive environment.

During the past few months, FBT has expanded its footprint and planted roots in some of the most diverse regions of the United States by opening offices in Houston, Texas, and Washington, D.C. Houston is home to more than 2.3 million people, 145 languages are spoken by Houston residents, and 90 nations have consular representation in the city. Likewise, Washington D.C.—the site of FBT's newest office—is home to more than 170 nationalities and ethnic groups. Both cities are considered cross-cultural, economic, and industrial epicenters and have long had prominent and well-established Black communities. As we grow our presence in those markets, we will continue to seek talent who reflect the diversity of those cities.

FBT also remains dedicated to creating opportunities for legal professionals of all backgrounds. For the seventh consecutive year, FBT was named a "Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality" by the Human Rights Campaign. Last year, FBT received its Mansfield Rule Certification, reaffirming its commitment to include women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ community in all parts of firm leadership. More recently, FBT launched Black@FBT, an affinity group dedicated to improving the experiences of Black business professionals and attorneys at our firm. The group is led by our Ann Arbor Member-in-Charge, Terrence Reeves. These examples are a small subset of many discussed in this report and reflect FBT's endeavors to strengthen diversity and inclusion at our firm.

James Baldwin wrote, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." Our journey to achieve diversity and inclusion at our firm has been no different. The FBT team has worked together to face many challenges during the past year, always with courage, determination, compassion, and innovation. I am proud to be a part of this community and excited to share our achievements with you.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Zenobia Harris Bivens". The signature is fluid and cursive, matching the color of the portrait's border.

Zenobia Harris Bivens
Houston Member-in-Charge

Our Vision Statement

Frost Brown Todd is committed to building and maintaining, as a central and permanent part of our culture, a diverse and inclusive team environment based on the following beliefs:

- *Each of us is unique, and being inclusive means celebrating that uniqueness and encouraging each of us to bring our whole and best selves to work every day.*
- *A diverse and inclusive culture is critical to the success of each member of our team and, therefore, to the success of our firm as well.*
- *We must never be satisfied but must be dedicated, individually and as a firm, to always seeking new and better ways to support and encourage the personal growth and professional development of all.*

WHAT'S INSIDE THE REPORT: SPRING 2021



SUPPORTING THE FUTURE

The firm promotes building a pipeline of diverse attorneys in our local legal community by supporting diverse students in their education and exploration of law. See how we are [supporting the future](#).



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & LEADERSHIP

Through various outreach programs, we connect with organizations in our communities and invest significant funding, as well as volunteer hours, toward their missions. [Read more about our community and leadership activities.](#)



INTERNAL AWARENESS, DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING

We conduct regular mandatory training for all employees on unconscious bias and inclusion, supplemented by optional workshops to help everyone develop cultural competencies. [Learn more about our internal D&I activities.](#)



AWARDS & ACCOLADES

Our goal is to be recognized for having the most inclusive environment in our markets. While we are proud of the recognition we have received to date, we acknowledge that we still have plenty of work to do. [Check out our most recent awards and accolades.](#)

Six students from four law schools awarded FBT Diversity Scholarships

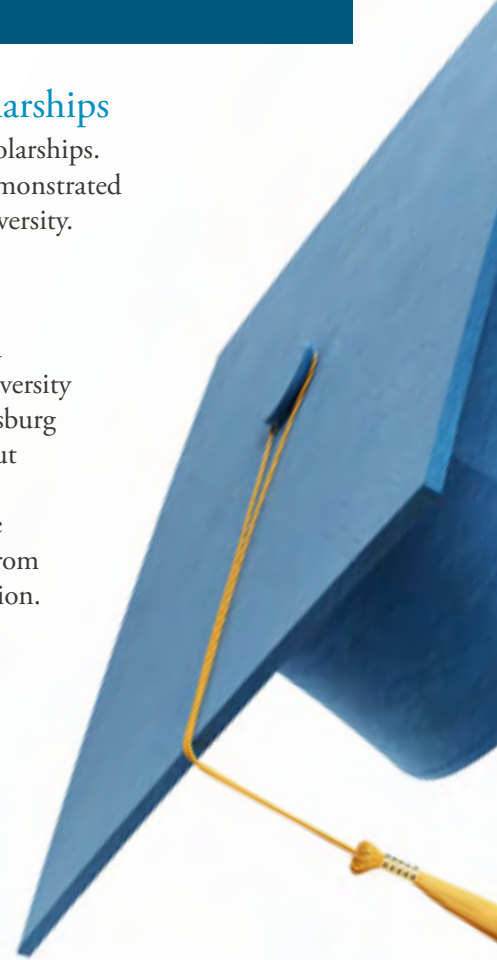
A record number of students applied for FBT's tenth annual Diversity & Inclusion Scholarships. Of the 93 applications, the scholarship committee selected the six students who best demonstrated academic excellence, service to the profession and community, and a commitment to diversity. This year's recipients include:

Kendall Beard is a 1L student at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and a graduate of Penn State University, where he majored in finance, served on the Pollock Diversity Board, was twice named to the all-conference academic team while playing for the Harrisburg campus basketball team, and helped organize campus-wide events to raise awareness about social justice issues. In 2019, Kendall was named All-Regional Outstanding Attorney on the university's mock trial team and won the Martin Luther King Oratorical Contest. He plans to work as a public defender after law school, advocating on behalf of individuals from impoverished communities who have historically been denied justice and fair representation.

Neema Ashou is a 1L student at The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, where he is a clerk for the moot court team and serves as a representative of the Middle Eastern Law Student Association. He graduated magna cum laude with honors scholar distinction from Auburn University, where he majored in geography and served as president of the Iranian Students Association, as project coordinator for the IMPACT Community Project, and as a mentor for the PLUS Diversity Program, which awarded Neema an Excellence in Leadership Award for his work with the organization. After law school, he hopes to work at a law firm or secure a federal clerkship with the goal of becoming a federal judge.

Kimberly Zenteno Valladares is a 2L student at Northern Kentucky University Chase College of Law, where she was honored with distinction as a John Marshall Harlan Diversity Scholar, competes on the trial advocacy team, and served as a representative of the Criminal Law Association and mentor to other students. Kimberly was born in the United States but grew up in Mexico until she returned stateside alone at age 16 to learn English and complete her high school education. She became the first member of her family to attend college after receiving a full scholarship to Xavier University, where she majored in criminal justice, excelled academically, and pursued leadership roles in organizations advocating for tolerance, justice, and equality. Kimberly continues to consider the kind of legal career she will pursue and hopes that her position as a summer associate this year will help to clarify her ambitions.

Charles Graham, Jr. is a 2L at the Thurgood Marshall School of Law (Texas Southern University) and a graduate of the University of Texas, where he earned two bachelor's degrees—one in government and the other in African and African diaspora studies. Charles also earned his master's in education from the University of Pennsylvania, where he graduated summa cum laude. Charles joined Teach for America where he was a special education teacher and taught African and African American history for two years in Philadelphia, PA. After serving his two-year Teach for America commitment, Charles spent five years with YES Prep Public Schools in Houston. In 2020, Charles was named a Black Lawyers Matter Scholar (National Bar Association), a NAMWOLF Scholar, a Blask Fellow, and a Diversity and Inclusion Scholar (Houston Bar Association). Charles previously clerked for Disability Rights Texas and served as a judicial intern for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. Charles hopes to gain a judicial clerkship after law school, followed by a career in private practice. Long-term, Charles plans on practicing in the areas of labor and public interests law, with a focus on education, disability and civil rights matters.



SUPPORTING THE FUTURE

Gillermo Gomez is a Harvard graduate who is currently enrolled as a 1L at Texas A&M University School of Law. After college, Guillermo worked for two years as a paralegal for Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, providing community outreach and education to the most underserved communities of Northwest Texas. Guillermo joined the Community Revitalization Project, an initiative within Legal Aid that engages disadvantaged neighborhoods and works to transform communities through community lawyering. Since 2018, Guillermo has served as treasurer of the community organization Casa Del Inmigrante Fort Worth. After law school, Guillermo plans to open his own firm focusing on immigration law with the goal of using his knowledge to develop a model to holistically address the legal issues impacting immigrant communities.

Munis Safajou is a 2L at Texas A&M University School of Law and a graduate of Brandeis University, where she earned a bachelor's in public health and Middle Eastern studies. Munis was born in Israel to Persian Bahá'í parents who fled religious persecution after Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979. Munis attended Brandeis through the Wien International Scholarship Program, a highly competitive full-merit scholarship. During college, Munis co-founded The Right to Immigration Institute, a nonprofit that seeks to train undergraduate students to become accredited representatives with the goal of aiding non-citizens navigating the complex immigration system in the United States. Munis is actively involved in her law school community, leading the school's inaugural first-generation program and serving on the Diversity Council, the Women of Color Collective, and the Student Bar Association. She is also a student ambassador, a research assistant, and a teaching assistant for legal writing. Following law school, Munis intends to practice at a large firm and contribute to the firm's corporate social responsibility efforts.



Noel Shepard, Jeff Lindemann, Neema Ashou, Kendall Beard, William Harter, Yaz Ashrawi



Gillermo Gomez



Charles Graham and Brian Michael Cooper

Mark Platt moderates AJC panel with leaders from Asian American and Pacific Islander community

On April 7, **Mark Platt**, Dallas member and regional board member of the American Jewish Community (AJC), moderated a roundtable with leaders from the Asian-American community. The panel, presented by AJC's Dallas Community of Conscience coalition and The City of Dallas Office of Equity & Inclusion, included Dallas-area leaders of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community and the special agent in charge of the FBI's hate crimes task force in Dallas.



Mark Platt

It was an important and timely discussion covering topics such as the potential for stigmatizing rhetoric towards the AAPI community stemming from the pandemic to incite hate incidents; the over 100-year history of discrimination against Asian-Americans; the underreporting of hate crimes in general and anti-AAPI hate crimes in particular; and (in a hopeful note) the increased willingness of leaders and members of the AAPI community to speak out about discriminatory language and behavior. A recording of the presentation is [available here](#).

Notably, just a few days after the panel, an op-ed jointly authored by Congresswoman Grace Meng and AJC CEO David Harris appeared in the New York Daily News. The piece, entitled "[Asians and Jews, Standing United](#)," includes a call to action to stand against anti-AAPI hate and antisemitism.

New members attend Mansfield 3.0 Client Forum

Three of FBT's new members attended the Mansfield 3.0 Client Forum in late 2020. Law firms that achieve Mansfield Rule Certification have the opportunity to send recently promoted members to a Client Forum each year to build relationships with, and learn from, influential in-house counsel from corporations in all industries, including energy and telecom companies, car manufacturers, and financial institutions. FBT, which achieved Mansfield Rule 3.0 Certification in 2020 and is currently undergoing certification under Mansfield 4.0, tapped newly elevated members **Chris Kim Kahn** (Cincinnati), **Alyse Bender Hoffer** (Cincinnati), and **Jenai Brackett** (Indianapolis) to attend the Client Forum on behalf of FBT.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Mansfield Client Forum was conducted virtually, with in-house counsel presenting on topics tailored for newly promoted members, including corporate clients' emphasis on engaging with law firms that are committed to diversity and inclusion efforts within their own firm and the legal community at large. Participants were then placed in breakout sessions with six to eight people per session, which allowed for networking and engaging discussions on the presentation topic.

"I really enjoyed participating in the Mansfield Client Forum and learned a lot from the program. The program included many good reminders of what in-house counsel love and hate from their outside counsel and practical advice on how to cross-sell colleagues. Attorneys from over thirty corporate legal departments (within a broad range of industries and locations across the country) and over seventy law firms participated in the forum and were able to network (despite the event being held virtually) through multiple breakout sessions during the day."

- **Chris Kim Kahn**, Member, Cincinnati

Jenai Brackett, Brittany Bradshaw, and Janine Webb selected for LCLD leadership programs

Indianapolis Member **Jenai Brackett** earned a competitive spot in the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity's (LCLD) Fellows Program, which recognizes and seeks to advance the next generation of leaders in the legal profession. LCLD has also selected Ann Arbor Managing Associate **Brittany Bradshaw** and Lexington Senior Associate **Janine Webb** to its Pathfinder Program for early-career attorneys on track to assume evolving leadership roles within their organizations. Louisville Member **Jason Williams**, an LCLD Fellows Program alumnus, will be working as Brittany and Janine's facilitator. Both LCLD programs are national in scope. In addition to offering leadership, relationship building and career advancement training, participants work on projects with their peers and have the opportunity to learn from recognized leaders from a variety of legal disciplines.



Jenai Brackett



Brittany Bradshaw



Janine Webb

FBT attorneys attend Lavender Law Conference

For the first time, our Diversity & Inclusion Committee sponsored two attorneys, Managing Associate **Ryan Goellner** and Member **Sam Quimby**, to attend the LGBT Bar Association's Lavender Law Conference, which was held virtually from August 12-13. Launched in 1988, the Lavender Law Conference has served as a "family reunion" for LGBTQ+ and ally legal professionals to look back at the shared history and at the future of the legal profession. The Lavender Law Conference is the largest LGBTQ+ legal conference in the country with approximately 1,700 attendees annually.

Live presentations covered topics such as "Building Racial Equity within the LGBTQ Legal Community," which addressed systemic racism and provided a platform to historically marginalized groups with intersectional identities; "Fighting the Rise of Anti-LGBTQ Legal Groups"; and "The Reactionary Attack on Transgender Rights," which discussed the outbreak of lawsuits and other legal efforts to roll back recent legal gains for transgender youths. The conference also offered on-demand programming for attendees through the end of 2020 on topics including name change procedures, the rights of intersex people, estate planning for LGBTQ families, and housing and elder law.

FBT Columbus supports advocating for equality for all Ohioans

FBT's Columbus office was recognized as a sponsor for the Ohio Allies & Advocates 2020 virtual event in December. The Ohio Allies & Advocates event was hosted by Equality Ohio. Equality Ohio works diligently to defend the rights of LGBTQ Ohioans, and our FBT Columbus team is proud to support their efforts.





FBT Louisville United for Change Committee formed in response to death of Breonna Taylor

“The tragic death of Breonna Taylor made 2020 unimaginably challenging in Louisville. The FBT Louisville office rose to the challenge about as well as we could have given the terrible circumstances. The death of George Floyd and the subsequent protests in Louisville turned violent and resulted in the shooting death of William McAtee by law enforcement in Louisville last June. Those events have obviously led to a focused local and national reexamination of diversity, inclusion and belonging.”

- Geoff White, Member-In-Charge, Louisville

In response to the tragic death of Breonna Taylor at the hands of police, **Darnell McCoy** (Managing Associate, Louisville), **Geoff White**, (Louisville Office Member-In-Charge), **Jason Williams** (Industry Team Leader, Louisville) and his wife, Judge Erica Williams, immediately met to brainstorm ideas for what leaders of the corporate legal community could and should be doing in support. They formed a steering committee, which subsequently became known as the FBT Louisville United for Change Committee.

The United for Change Committee centered its work in 2020 on learning initiatives, building stronger talent pipelines for people of color, and leading community impact projects. Specifically, the committee is creating internal, Louisville-focused educational programs to supplement FBT’s firm-wide diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and initiatives. The first event featured a local speaker and urban planner, Josh Poe, who detailed Louisville’s history of redlining. The committee is planning for two to three additional events in 2021. Additionally, the committee is working with local high schools’ pre-law programs to help expand FBT’s talent and pipeline initiatives. In 2020, the committee filmed multiple videos to assist students with the challenges of a virtual learning environment. Now, the committee has started hosting “lunch and learn” presentations for students almost every week.

The FBT Louisville United for Change Committee has also had significant involvement in community impact projects, including expanding the office’s unique partnership with the Louisville Urban League. The relationship started with the dedication of hundreds of pro bono hours to expungement matters, an initiative led by **Souhila EL Moussaoui** (Associate, Louisville) and **Tommy Gleason** (Member, Louisville). In 2020, a team of over 50 FBT friends and family volunteers made approximately 1,400 calls and mailed 1,100 letters to individuals who became eligible to vote in the 2020 presidential election. Additionally, **Maria Kroeger** (Senior Associate, Louisville) and **Amy Burnette** (Member, Louisville) forged a partnership with the McAtee Community Kitchen where our colleagues and clients donated approximately \$7,500 to provide essential “seed” capital to the organization, which the committee believes will result in meaningful volunteer opportunities. Lastly, in October 2020, the FBT Louisville United for Change Committee helped lead and orchestrate a downtown Louisville clean-up project focused on the Broadway corridor, which is home to many minority-owned businesses.

FBT institutes “Stay Interviews” aimed at retaining diverse talent

FBT will be conducting stay interviews on a regular basis between members of the firm’s Diversity & Inclusion Committee and diverse attorneys. They are designed to help the firm understand why interviewees continue working for FBT and to identify areas where the firm can improve. Organizations commonly employ exit interviews to understand areas needing improvement, but those occur after a valuable employee has decided to leave. FBT adopted stay interviews as a proactive tool for retaining our talented lawyers.

The Diversity & Inclusion Committee developed the stay interview process and aims to conduct five to eight stay interviews per quarter.

“It was great to be involved in the stay interview process as we work to implement the program firm-wide. The questions asked and the information that will be solicited from these interviews will be integral to our firm’s efforts to identify opportunities for improvement as well as trends that impact our diverse attorneys’ experiences at the firm.”

- Miles Harrison, Louisville Member, Pilot Stay Interviewee

Diversity & Inclusion Workshops

The Elephant in the Office

On October 7, a group of about 245 FBT attorneys and business professionals attended the virtual panel session “The Elephant in the Office,” led by Nashville Member-in-Charge **Tom Lee** and former FBT attorney Todd Bailey. The session focused on the challenges of mental health for legal professionals.

On January 19, Jacquesline Walker, psychotherapist and CEO at The Well Firm, led a second workshop to discuss mental health and wellness solutions, such as identifying and disrupting unproductive thought and behavioral patterns to appropriately manage and navigate daily stressors. Jacquesline was joined by FBT Benefits Manager Rebecca Hurst, who discussed the firm’s Employee Assistance Program, which provides mental health services for attorneys and business professionals.

Bias Interrupters

In November, FBT welcomed Beth Gerwe, managing director and North Texas marketplace inclusion leader at Deloitte, who presented a virtual inclusion workshop titled “Interrupters: Allyship, Inclusion and Everyday Behaviors.” During her presentation, Beth explored how we can each be an ally and can influence an inclusive culture through our everyday behaviors. She shared recent findings on inclusive leadership, how today’s workforce perceives inclusion in their organizations, and how inclusion is evolving. She also explored insights from Deloitte’s recent “State of Inclusion” survey and “Human Capital Trends” report.

Black@FBT affinity group established to support Black professionals

The firm’s Black@FBT affinity group was formed in 2020 to bolster the excellence and abilities of Black professionals by fostering community, mentorship, and business development while assisting with recruiting, developing, and retaining talent vital to the firm’s success. Led by Ann Arbor Member-in-Charge **Terrence Reeves**, Black@FBT is committed to making a difference internally by strengthening and broadening our roster of diverse talent and externally through community service, social justice activities, and pipeline initiatives within the firm’s markets.

FBT's 2020 Diversity & Inclusion and Champion of Women Awards

FBT announced its 2020 Diversity & Inclusion Awards and Champion of Women Awards in November. The following individuals were recognized for their leadership in making FBT a safe, supportive team environment and a great place to work and be for everyone:

Diversity & Inclusion Award



Victoria Beckman
(former) Member
Intellectual Property
Columbus



Ted King
Member
Bankruptcy and
Restructuring
Louisville



Denise Toliver
Legal Practice Assistant
Lexington



Nathan Phillips
Office Coordinator and
Legal Practice Assistant
Ann Arbor

Champion of Women Award



Amy Curry
Member
Real Estate
Louisville



Chris Johnson
Member
Product, Tort and
Insurance Litigation
Louisville



Zach Stillings
Senior Associate
Business Litigation
Columbus

Kim Amrine named DEI Champion by National Diversity Council

The National Diversity Council, in advance of its annual conference, recognized FBT Chief Diversity Officer **Kim Amrine** with its DEI Champion Award for her leadership in advancing diversity, equity and inclusion at the firm and beyond. This year's other DEI Champion awardees represented a broad range of industries, from transportation and technology to health care, telecom, manufacturing, and professional services companies. Kim, who was recently named chief diversity officer after serving several years as the firm's director of diversity and inclusion, has been a prime mover behind many initiatives that continue to pay dividends with respect to the culture and success of our FBT team.



Kim Amrine

FBA's Gender Equity Task Force recognizes Tessa Castner as 2021 PLEDGE Honoree

The Federal Bar Association (FBA) has included Cincinnati Managing Associate **Tessa Castner** in its 2021 class of PLEDGE (Promoting Lawyer Excellence & Driving Gender Equality) honorees in recognition of her professional accomplishments, support of other women, and dedicated service to the broader community. The PLEDGE program is overseen by the Gender Equity Task Force of the John W. Peck Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Chapter of the FBA, which honored Tessa at a virtual celebration on March 25.



Tessa Castner

FBT earns 100-percent rating on HRC's Corporate Equality Index

For the seventh consecutive year, FBT was named a “Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality” by the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). This special designation is conferred upon organizations that receive a 100-percent score on the HRC's Corporate Equality Index—a benchmarking tool that accounts for factors such as an organization's non-discrimination policies, including protections for gender identity and expression; equitable benefits for LGBTQ workers and their families; and a demonstrated commitment to promoting a culture of inclusion and corporate social responsibility.



FBT named a “Best Place for Working Parents”

The Dallas Regional Chamber (DRC) recognized FBT as a “Best Place for Working Parents” in the Dallas region. This designation, new in 2021, is conferred upon organizations whose policies, benefits, and practices promote a supportive, family-friendly work environment for all team members. FBT and the other 2021 designees were honored at the DRC's State of Early Education virtual event on February 23.



FBT named “Outstanding Diversity Organization” by Business First

FBT was the only law firm in 2021 to be recognized as an “Outstanding Diversity Organization” by Columbus Business First through its sixth annual Diversity in Business Awards program. This special honor is conferred upon organizations with a Central Ohio presence that have demonstrated a commitment to inclusive workplace practices and shown leadership in support of initiatives to foster equitable opportunities in the community.



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