

# Valecia M. McDowell

LITIGATION TEAM AND CO-CHAIR, DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

## Becoming Economically Viable While Serving the Community

Lawyers don't view their occupation as a profession anymore and it shows. Instead, they view the practice of law as just another job. They "punch-in" when they roll out of bed with iPhones in hand and never really punch-out. The modern lawyer is too often driven solely by the tiny increments of time charged to a client. These practitioners forget their civic responsibilities, are irresponsible in their ethical obligations, and rarely spare the time necessary to fully weigh their clients' concerns as they rush from one engagement to the next. As a result, communities suffer from a dearth of leadership, clients suffer from lack of thoughtful analysis, and we suffer as we try to desperately squeeze in one more conference call while on vacation with our families. It's untenable.

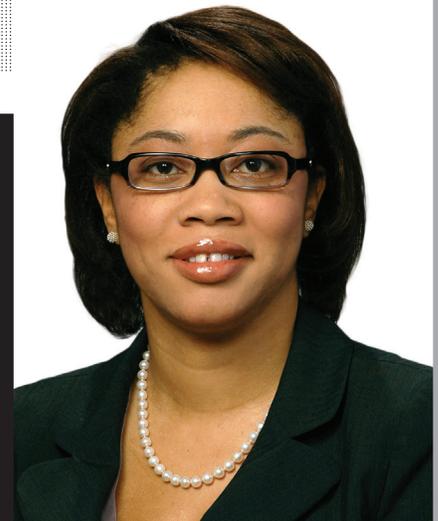
Whole lawyers are better lawyers.

As a profession, we have to find a way to be economically viable, zealous advocates without losing our way. PDJ

**How can we improve diversity in the legal field?** Our clients can bring about the greatest immediate and positive impact on diversity in the legal profession. When our clients are intentional about engaging talented women partners and partners of color to serve as client relationship managers, the profile of those lawyers will be elevated within their respective law firms and legal communities. This will serve to create many additional opportunities for women and minority associates within the pipeline. Moreover, this will serve as the clearest demonstration of the "business case" for law firms to invest in diversity hiring, retention, and promotion. In the end, if our clients want to see this change, they can make it happen.

**What are major factors in law and the legal profession today? How is the law and legal profession changing?** Fee sensitivity, including the desire for alternative and fixed fee arrangements, is a major factor that is driving change and altering the way law firms and clients conduct business with one another. Firms that can successfully adapt to this new environment will thrive and their clients will receive quality services at anticipated and reasonable rates. This dynamic is driving important shifts in how firms hire, staff cases, and approach case resolution, among many other things.

“ LAWYERS DON'T VIEW THEIR OCCUPATION AS A PROFESSION ANYMORE AND IT SHOWS. INSTEAD, THEY VIEW THE PRACTICE OF LAW AS JUST ANOTHER JOB. ”



### Moore & Van Allen

HEADQUARTERS:  
Charlotte, North Carolina

WEBSITE:  
[www.mvalaw.com](http://www.mvalaw.com)

BUSINESS:  
Law firm

EMPLOYEES:  
580

EDUCATION:  
BA, JD, Duke University

MY PHILOSOPHY:  
I can accomplish everything I need to with a little bit of creativity and a whole lot of hard work.

INTERESTS:  
Historical fiction, independent films, spending time with my dog Zada

DESCRIBE YOURSELF IN THREE WORDS:  
Silly, tenacious, imaginative