



# *The Art of Diversity*

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT

2022: A YEAR IN REVIEW

**Moore & Van Allen**



# PROGRESS IN ACTION DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

## 2022: A Year in Review

**I**n crafting this Diversity & Inclusion report, we wanted to highlight the firm's commitment to examine and memorialize the core values that have served as our foundation and will continue to define the culture of our organization. We understand that the shared values, including the value of inclusion to which we hold ourselves and each other to as we interact with our co-workers, clients, and communities shape our daily work lives. As such, we commissioned artist Sonja Griffin Evans to capture our experience of defining who we are as an organization and how we invest in our employees, clients, and the communities we serve.

As you receive this report, we hope you enjoy the images of the artist's creative process and pause to reflect on the finished painting, entitled SEWIN'. Moore & Van Allen (MVA) is pleased to reveal the finished work at the end of our report, and it will be proudly displayed in our Charleston office.



# The Art of Diversity

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

### SEWIN'

Connection to community is an essential part of the fabric of Moore & Van Allen. I can see the firm's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, not only in what you do, but who you are. I wanted to weave this idea, literally, into my work.

Titled SEWIN', my painting features a woman displaying the sweetgrass basket she is in the process of creating. As one of the oldest African crafts in America, the sweetgrass basket is an historically significant example of the cultural heritage that was brought across the Atlantic by enslaved African people. Sweetgrass basket-making has been a tradition among the Gullah community in South Carolina for over 300 years, and was designated as the official state Lowcountry handcraft in 2006.



As a Gullah artisan, I have respect for my ancestors and culture. I strive to tell their life story of perseverance and determination through my art, so that I may honor them. I know how important it is to have inclusion of our story in American history, because knowledge leads to empowerment and leadership.

I was struck by how closely MVA's core values align with my own. Look carefully at my work, and you can see these values, in words, interlaced within the white fabric wrapped around the top of my artist's hat. In a more abstract and symbolic way, the pattern of the sweetgrass basket radiates from the inside out, illustrating the connections, the inclusivity and the balance that MVA always strives to bring to its workplace and communities.

## ABOUT SONJA GRIFFIN EVANS

Born and raised in Beaufort, South Carolina, **Sonja Griffin Evans** is deeply influenced by the Lowcountry, her African American heritage, and the culture of the Gullah Sea Islands. She is known for her cultural Gullah-Geechee mixed-media artwork and keen use of vibrantly rich jewel tone colors in her paintings, and her work has been featured in national and international exhibitions. Her painting, "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory," was recently dedicated to the historical Reconstruction Era National Historic Park landmark in Beaufort, where the artist still lives.

In 2013, Sonja received the African Diaspora World Tourism Flame Keepers Award for honoring the culture and heritage of people of African descent. She was named Honoree for the Mamie Till Mobley Woman of Courage Award, and was an Onyx Award nominee. As a sought-after speaker and advocate for the arts, Sonja has been featured on television and radio broadcasts, and in publications including DuPont Registry. Among her achievements at home and abroad, she was invited to exhibit internationally on a solo three-city tour in France, and her work is often featured by the National Park Service. Sonja Griffin Evans is represented by The Red Piano Art Gallery, South Carolina's oldest professional gallery of fine art, [www.redpianoartgallery.com](http://www.redpianoartgallery.com).



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## LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

### Diversity as an Art Form

**A**t Moore & Van Allen (MVA), we understand that it's important to embrace cultural and personal differences for many reasons. It allows us to compete successfully in today's marketplace, builds rapport and understanding, and ensures a respectful workplace for practicing law and serving clients. In 2022, we continued to demonstrate our commitment to building a more inclusive, diverse culture where every individual can feel valued and thrive professionally.

MVA remains on a journey to drive profound change in equity and inclusion — something we consider to be akin to an art form. Every work of art takes time, collaboration, thoughtfulness, and vision. On behalf of the Diversity and Management Committees, we are thrilled to celebrate our collective contributions to our 2022 Diversity Report.

*Thomas L. Mitchell*

*Valecia McDowell*

*Amy Johnson*



**Tom Mitchell**  
Chair  
Management Committee



**Valecia McDowell**  
Member, Management  
Committee/ Co-Chair, Diversity  
Committee



**Amy Johnson**  
Co-Chair  
Diversity Committee

# CREATING A WORKPLACE CULTURE MASTERPIECE

with New Culture Workstreams Initiative

*"I am proud of the firm's investment in this comprehensive cultural enrichment effort. The Workstreams generated many insightful recommendations and a firm values statement that I am excited to see adopted and implemented in 2023. Through these efforts we will build upon MVA's strong culture to create an even better place to work."*

— **Tom Mitchell**  
Chair, Management Committee



Earlier this year, the firm deployed a series of Workstreams designed to address specific areas of importance identified by a firmwide cultural assessment conducted in 2021. The effort is part of the firm's ongoing Workplace Cultural Enrichment Initiative, led by three members of the Firm's Management Committee, MVA Chair **Tom Mitchell**, White Collar Regulatory Defense & Investigations Co-head **Valecia McDowell**, and Intellectual Property Team Leader **Kevin Ransom**. Each of the Workstreams was headed up by three member co-leads and comprised of additional members, associates, counsel, and staff, as appropriate for each topic.

The work of the Initiative was divided into two Phases. Phase I, which concluded in September 2022, addressed Culture and Shared Values, Onboarding and Embeddedness, Inclusion and Belonging, Formal Attorney Feedback, and Attorney Work Allocation. Phase II will launch in early 2023 and address Pathways to Advancement, Staff Satisfaction, Informal Attorney Feedback, and Mentoring.

The Phase I Workstreams leveraged a series of strategies to develop draft recommendations based on outlined objectives and priorities. They used small working groups, one-on-one interviews, and online survey platforms to collect additional information from both Workstream participants and MVA colleagues. Given the intersectionality of the Workstream focus areas, the

*(continued on page 7)*



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co-leads consulted with each other to share proposed recommendations and solicit additional feedback. Each Workstream's recommendations were then provided in full and without alteration to the firm's Management Committee for consideration. Adopted recommendations will be implemented throughout 2023.

A special thanks to Management Committee Members **Valecia McDowell** and **Kevin Ransom** for their leadership and guidance in overseeing this important work, as well as to our Workstream Co-leads **Neil Bloomfield, Courtenay Clark, Rachel Coyne, John Evans, Jeff Gray, Sonny Ha, Caitlin Horne, Amy Johnson, Sandra Lazorchek, Cynthia Lowery, Hal Levinson, Carolyn Meade, Mark Nebrig, Ed O'Keefe, Nader Raja, Meredith Reedy, Trudy Robertson, Nick Russell, Frank Schall, Nancy Smith, Ryan Smith, Zach Smith, Mary Katherine Stukes, Brad Van Hoy, Stacey Vandiford, Caroline Hubbell Yingling, Kimberly Zirkle**, and the more than 50 attorneys and staff members who participated in the Phase I working groups.



# PAINTING A BRIGHT FUTURE

## with the Annual Diversity Conference and Scholarship Program

**O**n January 14, 2022, MVA hosted another successful virtual Diversity Conference. The annual event, launched in 2019, aims to expand the firm's outreach to and engagement with first-year students from law schools across the country, and is designed to showcase important initiatives related to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

*"I'm happy I made the decision to see what BigLaw and MVA are all about, learning how to be a world-class lawyer while also having opportunities to assist on public interest and pro bono matters. I encourage my peers to step outside their comfort zones and explore new paths, because the practice of law is about constantly stretching and bettering yourself."*

— **Precious McLaughlin**  
Litigation Associate,  
2020 Diversity Scholarship Recipient



The 32 law students who attended the one-day seminar gained exposure to various MVA representatives and practice groups. Attendees also participated in interactive panels and presentations from leaders at the firm, as well as from AvidExchange, Bank of America, Truist, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg District Attorney's Office, and the judiciary.

The conference was held in conjunction with the announcement of MVA's Diversity Scholarship Program, which is open to all first-year law students. Applicants are evaluated based on academic performance, communication skills, demonstrated leadership qualities, work experience, community involvement, and life experiences that have shaped their values and professional goals. Selected candidates had the opportunity to participate in the firm's 2022 summer associate program and are eligible to earn up to \$35,000 in scholarship funds. The firm was thrilled to host Larissa Burke and Cecilia Cardelle of the Duke University School of Law, Ivey Fidelibus of the Wake Forest School of Law, and Edward Wang of the Georgetown University Law Center, who were selected as our 2022 Diversity Scholars.





# WEAVING A DIVERSE TAPESTRY

## to Achieve Workplace Equality

*"I'm proud to practice in a workplace that fosters respect. The people at MVA demonstrate a genuine commitment to diversity, and firm leaders work to ensure that individuals across all departments and offices feel supported and included. Our annual perfect score reflects every measure that is taken to make this a reality. We all understand we have unique differences, and that's what makes MVA so strong."*

— **Samuel Gilleran**  
Corporate Associate



The firm is proud to have maintained a perfect score on the 2022 Corporate Equality Index (CEI), a national benchmarking survey and report administered by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation (HRC). This distinction has earned MVA a “Best Places to Work” title as designated by the HRC for six consecutive years. The CEI evaluates workplace practices, including non-discrimination workplace protections, domestic partner benefits, transgender-inclusive healthcare benefits, competency programs, and public engagement with the LGBTQ+ community.

As a long-time supporter of HRC North Carolina, MVA also served as a sponsor of the 2022 HRC NC Dinner, hosted on July 30, 2022. The event was the first in-person dinner since the onset of the pandemic. In attendance were several MVA attorneys and invited law students from the Wake Forest School of Law.

For more information about the 2022 Corporate Equality Index or to download a free copy of the report, visit [www.hrc.org/cei](http://www.hrc.org/cei).





## ADVANCING LGBTQ+ ALLYSHIP and Supporting Mental Well Being

**I**n conjunction with PFLAG Charlotte, MVA hosted the webinar, "Fostering LGBTQ+ Allyship: A Mental Wellness Conversation," led by PFLAG Charlotte Board Member Dr. Sebastian Barr and community activist Devin Green. MVA Financial Services Member and PFLAG Charlotte Board Member **Amy Johnson** kicked off the program with opening remarks. Webinar attendees then heard personal stories, learned about the dimensions of intersectionality, reviewed LGBTQ+ terminology, and discussed ways individuals and organizations can support the mental health and wellness of LGBTQ+ professionals and team members' LGBTQ+ loved ones.

Sebastian, a licensed psychologist specializing in issues related to the transgender and gender diverse community, discussed how everyone can play a role in mental wellbeing in the workplace by preventing harm, promoting wellbeing, and appropriately addressing and managing distress. Sebastian also highlighted why promoting and encouraging authenticity, acceptance, and belonging has a positive impact on mental wellness.



# PAINTING THE TOWN IN PRIDE

## in Support of the Charlotte Pride Parade & Festival

*"MVA is a progressive legal workplace that welcomes all people. It is important that those who work here feel they have a voice internally and externally, and to support our larger community and diversity efforts throughout the Carolinas."*

— **Aishaah Foster**  
Litigation Associate



In support and celebration of the LGBTQ+ community, MVA was proud to participate in and sponsor the 2022 Charlotte Pride Festival and Parade, the city's largest street festival and annual parade. The parade and festival returned in-person this year after a two-year pandemic hiatus. The event drew more than 275,000 people over the course of the weekend with more than 40 floats and 10,000 participants marching in the parade.

Charlotte Pride, the leader in LGBTQ+ visibility in Charlotte and throughout the Carolinas, presents and collaborates on programs, projects, and activities, including the annual Charlotte Pride Festival and Parade, Charlotte Latinx Pride, Charlotte Trans Pride, Charlotte Women's Pride, Charlotte Pride Interfaith Programs, and Reel Out Charlotte, Queen City's Annual LGBTQ+ Film Festival, among others. Since its founding in 2000, Charlotte Pride has expanded its year-round programming and partnerships to better connect community members with its mission, vision, and values.

**Moore & Van Allen**  
**PRIDE**



# SCULPTING UNITY AND UNDERSTANDING

## for National Hispanic Heritage Month

*"It was beneficial and insightful to have space to explore timely and controversial issues impacting MVA and the Latin American and Hispanic communities. We did not shy away from difficult topics, including the complexities of using gender-neutral terminology in the Spanish language, which led to an important conversation about how the language functions."*

— **Becky Harasimowicz**  
Intellectual Property Counsel



In recognition and celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, the MVA Diversity Committee hosted a virtual presentation and discussion led by Queens University Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Darryl White. The program provided an overview of the significance of Hispanic Heritage Month and its mission to recognize the achievements and contributions of Hispanic American champions who have inspired others to succeed. Guests also learned about the evolution of Hispanic Latino cultural definitions, as well as the overlap and intersectionality among identities defining Hispanic Latino cultures, languages, and ethnicities.

The highlight of the program came when Darryl facilitated a dialogue with MVA Intellectual Property Counsel **Becky Harasimowicz** and Litigation Associate **Raquel Macgregor Pearkes**, who reflected on their lived experiences in supporting and championing Hispanic and Latino communities. While attending Wake Forest School of Law, both Becky and Raquel supported the Latino student association and have since established the Hispanic and Latino Lawyers Association (HaLLA) at MVA (page 20). They spoke about the importance of building and sustaining safe spaces where individuals can celebrate their identities and heritage, and their excitement about establishing such a space with HaLLA.

More than 40 guests from the firm's Charlotte and Charleston offices attended the presentation.



# A WELCOMING PALETTE

## for Asian Pacific American Lawyers

*“My first introduction to MVA was as a 2019 Summer Associate. In the intervening years, MVA has poured significant resources into amplifying its DEI initiatives. APALA is just one example of MVA’s strides in belonging and inclusion efforts. APALA provides excellent opportunities for its members to connect with our diverse community, within the firm and throughout Charlotte.”*

— **Kaitly Emerson**  
Intellectual Property Associate



The newly formed MVA Asian Pacific American Lawyers Association (APALA) business resource group is committed to empowering the firm’s employees who self-identify as Asian American, Pacific Islander, and/or Native Hawaiian. Litigation Member **Nader Raja** and Financial Services Member **Sonny Ha** lead APALA and aim to promote members’ success by fostering opportunities for collaboration, networking, mentoring, professional growth, and business development. The group strives to not only provide a platform to share advice, experiences, challenges, and cultures, but also support the firm’s DEI strategy by building relationships with community and professional organizations, including Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) student associations at law schools, to support the next generation of lawyers.

APALA membership is open to any MVA employee who is interested in supporting its mission. The group hosts regular events throughout the year, including during AAPI Heritage Month, for its members and the broader MVA community.





# CELEBRATING THE MASTERPIECES

## of a Legal Trailblazer

*"I remain very grateful for the support and guidance Moore & Van Allen provided during the production of the Chief Justice Henry Frye documentary. At a time when our society is divided and polarized, it is redemptive to see that diversity and inclusion remain essential to Moore & Van Allen's core values."*

— **Steve Crump**  
WBTV Reporter



**I**n recognition and celebration of Black History Month, the MVA Diversity Committee hosted a virtual gathering honoring the life and legacy of Chief Justice Henry Frye. A trailblazer within the legal industry, Chief Justice Frye was the first African American chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court and dedicated his life to service in the pursuit of justice.

Led by Queens University Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Darryl White, the program provided an overview of the significance of Black History Month and its mission to recognize the achievements of Black Americans throughout U.S. history. Darryl facilitated an interview featuring multi-Emmy Award winner and WBTV Reporter Steve Crump, who produced an independent documentary, sponsored in part by MVA, about Chief Justice Frye.

"Chief Justice Frye has such a humility about him — on the bench and in his community," said Darryl. "He built a reputation as being not only an incredible legal scholar, but also a dedicated family man who lived to serve others."

More than 60 guests from the firm's Charlotte and Charleston offices attended the event.



# A COLLAGE OF SUPPORT: Women Empower Women at MVA

*"WoMVA provides touchpoints throughout the year to encourage connections and a sense of camaraderie amongst our female attorneys. Our programming is a venue for attorneys in different stages of their careers and from varying backgrounds to discuss important career development issues, understand available resources, and share personal stories."*

— **Mary Katherine Stukes**  
Litigation Member and Head of  
MVA's Environmental Practice



The Women of Moore & Van Allen (WoMVA) continued to support its members through a variety of both virtual and in-person events over the course of the past year. Returning to mostly in-person gatherings by the spring of 2022, the group made up for lost time by hosting a variety of meet-ups to connect and reconnect with women colleagues throughout the firm.

In addition to hosting the WoMVA Conference (page 17) and its professional development panel (page 16), WoMVA invited colleagues to a summer networking reception to welcome summer associates in the Charlotte office, and partnered with the Women of Greer Walker to host a joint women's event at the Grand Bohemian in late summer. WoMVA gathered at the home of Health Care Senior Counsel **Kimberly Kirk** in the fall for a mixer in support of the new women attorneys who recently joined the firm. Senior WoMVA attorneys also hosted a client-focused event to watch the Charlotte Football Club take on the Orlando Soccer Club in late August.

Throughout the year, WoMVA continued to lend support to expecting mothers through the WoMVA Advocate Program, a peer-to-peer mentoring initiative that supports and guides women before, during, and after their parental leave. Topics vary depending on the individual need, and include finding reliable childcare, communicating pre- and post-parental needs to team members, and in-office lactation support.

Led by MVA Financial Services Member **Meredith Reedy** and Environmental Practice Leader **Mary Katherine Stukes**, WoMVA brings female professionals together for mentoring, networking, and career development opportunities devoted to promoting the interests and progress of women lawyers and non-legal professionals. The subgroup strives to support its members in their efforts to achieve leadership positions in the firm and the community.

# BRUSH STROKES OF WOMVA

## Supporting the Professional Success of our Women

*"I have formed important professional relationships and lifelong friendships at MVA. As an attorney who came up through the ranks at MVA with 25 years of law firm experience including time spent at other firms, I can attest to the firm's investment in its people, focus on attorney development, and commitment to mentorship and work-life balance."*

— **Sandra Lazorcheck**  
Financial Services Member



The Women of Moore and Van Allen (WoMVA) gathered in March for a virtual panel discussion about career development. Estate & Wealth Planning Member **Caitlin Horne** moderated the program, which included Financial Services Member **Lauren Biek**, Litigation Member **Sarah Negus**, Financial Services Member **Sandra Lazorcheck**, and Litigation Senior Counsel **Jamea Richardson**. Panelists participated in a candid discussion about why they have invested in MVA, what makes MVA special to them, and how they have evaluated opportunities to take different career paths, both internally and externally, throughout their careers. More than 70 attendees joined the interactive program.





# 2022 WOMVA CONFERENCE: A Portrait of Strength and Connection

*"I am proud to be part of MVA's leadership team, which has worked tirelessly over the years to create a positive workplace culture for women. It was incredibly impactful to be together in person this year, to see how much the firm has grown, and to work with our female attorneys and staff to champion our culture and core values including building future firm leaders."*

— **Cynthia Lowery**  
Financial Restructuring Member



**I**n May 2022, the Women of Moore & Van Allen (WoMVA) business resource group hosted a half-day women's conference at the Duke Mansion in Charlotte. The event, which is traditionally held on a biennial basis, returned to an in-person format after a pause due to the pandemic. MVA Chair and Managing Member **Tom Mitchell** and WoMVA Co-chairs **Meredith Reedy** and **Mary Katherine Stukes** provided opening remarks. Meredith also served as moderator of the event's plenary session, "Reflections on Finding a Successful Legal Career," while Financial Restructuring Member **Cynthia Lowery**, Corporate Member **Carolyn Meade**, and **Mary Katherine** served as featured panelists. The panelists discussed their experiences and insights related to building and sustaining a legal practice, and highlighted important best practices at various career stages. In addition, attendees participated in roundtable discussions where guests shared their personal experiences related to defining success, building confidence in a law practice, and cultivating client relationships.

The afternoon included several networking workshops, as well as a final reception where WoMVA members from across the firm reconnected and relaxed with each other and members of the firm's senior leadership.



# PAINTING THE PICTURE

## of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage

The Diversity Committee of MVA hosted a virtual presentation in celebration and recognition of AAPI Heritage Month, which is observed in May. The program, led by Queens University Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Darryl White, provided attendees with an overview of the significance of AAPI Heritage Month. Darryl's presentation highlighted the contributions and achievements of the AAPI community, as well as how the community has helped to shape U.S. history and culture. Darryl also facilitated an interactive dialogue with MVA Litigation Member **Nader Raja** and Litigation Counsel **Tiffany Payne**, who each shared and reflected on their lived experiences. Guests from the firm's Charlotte and Charleston offices attended the program.

*"It's about finding your voice and confidence while being authentic. My path has been forged through my own hustle, along with some trial and error. You have to continue finding a way to be heard and put yourself in challenging or uncomfortable situations to develop confidence. I was honored I had an opportunity to share my background. In a country as diverse as the United States, it's important to recognize as many voices as possible. We can all learn from one another."*

— **Tiffany Payne**  
Litigation Counsel



# SHOWCASING THE COLLABORATIVE STRENGTH

## of the MVA Black Attorney Resource Group

Founded in 2020, the MVA Black Attorney Resource Group (BARG) group has continued to place building fellowship among members at the center of its resource-building strategy. With in-person pandemic restrictions lifting early in the year, the group took advantage of the opportunity to convene monthly to deepen connections with one another and welcome new BARG members to the firm.

*"As the African proverb goes, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. But if you want to go far, go together.' Having BARG as the support system to develop the talents and strengths of Black attorneys beyond billable hours puts MVA head and shoulders above other firms. As a minority attorney, Big Law can feel intimidating at best and insurmountable at worst, but being able to shoulder that journey with my BARG colleagues provides that extra spark to push us farther together."*

— **Remington Jackson**  
Commercial Real Estate Associate





# DRAWING CONNECTIONS

## with MVA's Hispanic and Latino Lawyers Association

*"HaLLA provides a place to gather and develop professionally, as well as socially. It's a tremendously positive step for the firm and I look forward to participating in its growth and success. It's important that we remain attuned to the needs of this community as we grow within the firm and region."*

— **Joe Fernandez**  
Corporate Co-head, Member



**I**n July 2022, MVA formally rolled out its Hispanic and Latino Lawyers Association (HaLLA) business resource group, kicking off with two in-person gatherings. The first included the MVA summer associate class and the other was a more intimate gathering. Shortly after these initial meetings, the firm hosted an educational Hispanic/Latino Heritage Month virtual panel facilitated by Queens University Assistant Dean of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement Darryl White.

With MVA's continued support, HaLLA aims to provide focused community resources to attorneys of Hispanic and Latino descent, and ensure that all attorneys and staff feel connected and supported within the firm. The group is led by Intellectual Property Counsel **Becky Harasimowicz** and Litigation Associate **Raquel Macgregor Parkes**, who intend to foster a space in which members not only form social ties but also feel safe to discuss deeper issues affecting Hispanics and Latinos. HaLLA seeks to enhance the professional development of its members and augment the recruitment and retention of Hispanic and Latino attorneys in MVA and the larger Charlotte legal community.



# MOLDING A GENERATION OF FUTURE LAWYERS

by Supporting Students' Ambitions

*"Having the opportunity to connect with future lawyers who are on the path to the legal professional is extraordinarily rewarding. It is inspiring to see so many young students interested in a legal career and it is a privilege to share with them my lived experiences and lessons learned on my own professional path."*

— **Neil Bloomfield**  
Litigation Member



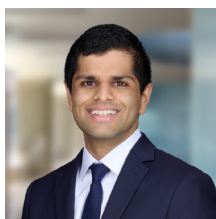
In early 2022, Moore & Van Allen Co-head of Financial Regulatory Advice & Response **Neil Bloomfield** and Litigation Associate **Aishaah Reed Foster** served as guest speakers for the Mecklenburg County Bar's 15th Annual Increasing Diversity in the Legal Profession Virtual Conference. Specifically, Neil spoke on the topic, "Getting to Law School – College Session" while Aishaah discussed, "Getting through Law School – High School Students." This one-day free conference was designed to encourage diverse college and high school students to explore a career in the legal profession. Attendees learned about the various stages on the path to becoming a lawyer through discussion panels on getting into law school, getting through law school, and the role legal professionals play in society. The conference included panels from North and South Carolina law school admissions counselors, law students, and attorneys.



# A CANVAS OF OPPORTUNITY: The Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerkship

*"I encourage everyone to apply for this program. I participated in the CLDC during the summer of 2020 and then had an opportunity to interview with numerous firms. MVA really stood out during the entire process, so I decided to join the firm as a summer associate in 2021. The commitment and character of MVA's attorneys and within Charlotte's broader legal community is so evident."*

— **Sahil Shah**  
Financial Services Associate



The firm continues to participate in the Charlotte Legal Diversity Clerkship (CLDC), a highly competitive summer program for first-year law students who advance the value of diversity. Established in 2006, the program operates with one basic goal – to improve diversity in the Mecklenburg County Bar by attracting top first-year law students with diverse backgrounds to Charlotte through corporate and law firm summer internships. To date, the CLDC program has hosted more than 140 students from law schools across the United States.

CLDC clerks spend 10 weeks in Charlotte, splitting their time with a law firm and a corporate legal department. In 2022, MVA partnered with the Truist Legal Department to host CLDC students Nate Drum of the Wake University School of Law and Elvis Mugisha of the University of North Carolina School of Law. CLDC employers provide each clerk with an unparalleled level of experience and exposure to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg legal profession. Participating students work in a variety of practice areas; expand their professional network; and participate in an assortment of legal proceedings, such as hearings, closings, depositions, and trials.

As a founding CLDC firm, MVA is proud to continue providing law students with an opportunity to experience Charlotte's legal network. MVA Litigation attorneys **Nader Raja** and **Raquel Macgregor Pearkes** participated in the CLDC while in law school and both remain active in the CLDC today as valued alumni. MVA Financial Services Associate **Sahil Shah** and Corporate Associate **Toni-Ann Hines** also participated in the CLDC program.



# CELEBRATING CHAMPIONS

## Making Their Mark

In 2022, the MVA Diversity Committee established its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Champion Award to recognize and celebrate MVA colleagues who have advanced diversity, equity, and inclusion both at the firm and in the community. Litigation Associate **Jules Carter** received the inaugural award for her leadership of the firm's Black Attorney Resource Group, activism in the community, and dedication to pro bono service. MVA Litigation Member and Diversity Committee Co-chair **Valecia McDowell** formally presented the award at the firm's annual **Sally & Bill Van Allen Public Service Luncheon**, which celebrates MVA colleagues who have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to service.

*"Jules is a DEI advocate in so many ways and it was a privilege to recognize her efforts with our inaugural Champion Award. The DEI Committee celebrates all MVA champions who are fighting for the cause of equity and inclusion and we are proud to bestow this award."*

— **Valecia McDowell**  
Diversity Committee Co-chair,  
Litigation Member





SONJA GRIFFIN EVANS  
SEWIN'  
2022

DISPLAY OF ARTWORK

The original SEWIN' can be viewed  
at Moore & Van Allen's office at  
78 Wentworth Street, Charleston,  
SC 29401.

**Moore & Van Allen**  
mvalaw.com