

# CONNECTING KATTEN

**Welcome.** In this issue of *Connecting Katten*, we highlight the international experience of some of the firm's diverse attorneys whose wide range of contacts and affiliations help Katten service its clients' needs in today's global economy. Whether advising clients in connection with their transactions in India, expanding the firm's representation of companies and investors doing business in China, or leading an international bar association, Katten's minority attorneys play a key role in the firm's growth and in helping our clients succeed in the world's fastest growing marketplaces.



Vincent A.F. Sergi  
National Managing Partner



Leslie D. Minier  
Chief Diversity Officer  
Co-Chair, Diversity Committee



Theresa L. Davis  
Co-Chair, Diversity Committee

## Upcoming Events

December 30	Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms (Chicago Committee) Sweet Home Chicago reception (Chicago)
January 3	Council on Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO) retirement celebration for General Motors Corporation Associate General Counsel E. Christopher Johnson (Arlington, Va.)
January 12	Lunch with Judge Ann Williams, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit (Chicago)
January 14	New York Minority Attorney Networking Series Event (New York)
February 3	CLEO panel on issues faced by minority partners in law firms (Washington, D.C.)
February 4	Chicago Committee Program, "Career Mapping for Minority Partners" (Chicago)
February 18	UCLA School of Law 2009 Law Firm Diversity Reception (Los Angeles)
February 25	Chicago Committee Membership Meeting and Town Hall (Chicago)
February 26	Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) South/Southwest Region Diversity Dinner (Dallas)
March 11	Chicago Committee Professional Development/Diversity Administrators Meeting (Chicago)
March 12	Anti-Defamation League 16th Annual Women of Achievement Awards Dinner (Chicago)
March 18	MCCA Midwest Region Diversity Dinner (Chicago)
March 19-20	MCCA 8th Annual CLE Expo (Chicago)
March 25	Chicago Committee Program, "Mastering the Fine Art of Finances" (Chicago)
March 27-29	National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) Southeast Regional Conference (Nashville, Tenn.)
March/April	DC Minority Attorney Networking Series Event (Washington, D.C.)
Spring (TBD)	Joffrey Spring Affinity Night (Chicago)
April 1-4	American Association for Affirmative Action 35th Annual Conference, "Winning the Fight for Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion" (Lincolnshire, Ill.)
April 1-4	National Association for Law Placement (NALP) Annual Education Conference (Washington, D.C.)
April 16-18	MCCA 6th Annual General Counsel Invitational Golf & Spa Classic Weekend (Miami)
April 21-22	Conference Board Women's Leadership Conference, "Winning Strategies for Success" (New York)
April 23	Corporate Counsel Women of Color One-Day Career Strategies Conference for Law Firm Associates (New York)
April 29	Chief Diversity Officer Forum (Atlanta)
May 13-14	Conference Board Diversity Conference (Chicago)
May 14	MCCA Western Region Diversity Dinner (San Francisco)
May (TBD)	Minority Summer Associate Welcome Reception (Chicago)
June 5	NALP Diversity Summit (Chicago)
June 16	MCCA Mid-Atlantic Region Diversity Dinner (Washington, D.C.)
August 13-15	NAPABA Central Region Conference (Kansas City, Mo.)
November 11	MCCA "10th Annual Creating Pathways to Diversity" Conference (New York)
November 19-22	NAPABA Annual National Convention (Boston)

December 2008

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## ConnectingKatten

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Anthony L. Paccione

Joshua S. Rubenstein

#### Washington, D.C.

Virginia A. Davis

Roger P. Furey

Eric A. Kuwana

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Chief Diversity Officer

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Stacey D. Knight

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Janu Sivanesan

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Joshua D. Wayser, Co-Chair

## Katten Sets Its Sights on China

There is a growing need for U.S. legal services in China, and a significant opportunity for U.S. law firms with bilingual and bicultural Western-trained Chinese and American lawyers.

To address this need, Katten recently added Feng Xue as a partner in the Corporate Practice and head of the firm's new China Practice, which represents both U.S. and European companies and investors doing business in China, as well as Chinese companies in their business activities in the United States. Mr. Xue possesses a wealth of experience in foreign direct investment in China, as well as private equity and M&A transactions, and spends significant time working in China and throughout Asia.

Increasingly, Mr. Xue's practice consists of representing large Chinese companies in their acquisition and expansion efforts overseas, and in the United States in particular. Over the last 10 years, Mr. Xue has handled hundreds of China-related transactions and is widely regarded as an authority on issues related to doing business in China.

"Compared with its population, China still doesn't have a sufficient number of lawyers," says Mr. Xue. "You don't see a lot of big law firms."

Chinese lawyers also tend to be less experienced with transactional work, he says.

Mr. Xue hopes that in the next two years, Katten will become the go-to firm in Chicago and the Midwest whenever a major U.S. company encounters a China-related legal issue, or when a Chinese company needs legal counseling in the United States.

### China's Cultural Challenge

Mr. Xue has worked for many years with several major international law firms in Shanghai, Beijing and Chicago. A native speaker of Mandarin, Mr. Xue says a few years ago very few Chinese lawyers spoke English. Now all the partners in most top-tier Chinese law firms speak at least some English.

Many Chinese lawyers, however, still lack the experience and perspective to advise U.S. companies doing business in China. Chinese lawyers, says Mr. Xue, are very good at study-

ing Chinese law and telling clients what is allowed. They are very straightforward, but lack creativity in their practice. Mr. Xue is trying to bridge this gap while working within the framework of what is allowed under Chinese and U.S. law through Katten's China Practice, taking a proactive approach to getting deals done in compliance with Chinese regulatory requirements.



Feng Xue

### Staying Connected

Mr. Xue sits on the boards of several Chinese companies and serves as outside counsel to dozens of private equity funds and technology companies doing business in China. He speaks and writes extensively on issues related to foreign investors' investments in China and Chinese companies' expansions and private/public financings in the United States.

In November, Mr. Xue gave a speech entitled "The Impact of Acquisitions in China as a Strategy to Maximize Trade Benefits" at the Katten-sponsored 9th Annual U.S.-China Trade Conference, presented by the U.S.-China Chamber of Commerce in Chicago.

"Acquisition by U.S. companies in China has been seriously affected by the credit crunch," says Mr. Xue. "We have U.S. private equity clients looking at Chinese companies with high growth potential that were selling for 40 times earnings until mid-2007. The Chinese stock market has been severely affected and those companies are much cheaper [now]."

The deals are flowing in the opposite direction, too. Says Mr. Xue, "I recently talked to 40 Chinese companies at the Chinese consulate in Chicago. The consulate said they get calls every day from companies that want to visit acquisition targets in the United States."

*Continued on page 5*

## International Experience Leads Sivanesan to Board Membership



**Janu Sivanesan**

For Janu Sivanesan, a partner in Katten's Commercial Finance and Corporate practices, the opportunity to serve on a corporate board was a welcome challenge.

"The ability to play a different role from the one I play day to day in my legal practice was very attractive to me," she says.

Ms. Sivanesan, who serves as a director of Hurco Cos., an Indianapolis-based manufacturer of interactive computer controls

and software, is part of a new wave of young directors who offer functional expertise that sitting CEOs and other conventional candidates are not always able to provide. As shareholders and regulators place increasingly tough demands on directors, more and more board invitations are being extended to up-and-coming candidates with particular areas of expertise. Commenting on her initial experience, Ms. Sivanesan states, "I have found that the more senior members of Hurco's board have been very enthusiastic about the fresh point of view I bring to the table."

Ms. Sivanesan has worked on numerous cross-border transactions in India, including setting up manufacturing relationships and joint venture agreements. Hurco real-

ized her international expertise would be invaluable to the company as it looked to increase sales in both India and China. No one understood that better than veteran Hurco director Richard Niner, who first recruited Ms. Sivanesan for the position. Mr. Niner is a general partner of Wind River Associates, a private investment firm and Katten client.

A personal goal to help build markets and businesses in India also strengthens Ms. Sivanesan's commitment to Hurco's expansion strategy. She emigrated from India with her family when she was just eight years old, but most of her relatives still live there. "I am truly energized about the opportunity to participate in India's growth in my own way." ■

## Katten Hosts Korean American Bar Association of Chicago's Installation of New Officers and Board Members

*By Paula S. Kim*

Katten was proud to sponsor and host the installation of the Korean American Bar Association of Chicago's (KABA) officers, board of directors and advisory board for the 2008-2010 term on November 17. As a Katten associate and board member of KABA, I was pleased that Katten was able to showcase its demonstrated dedication to diversity in the legal profession and participate in KABA's celebration of its new leadership.

One of Katten's founding partners, Melvin Katten, graciously provided welcoming remarks on behalf of the firm. Mr. Katten applauded KABA's work in the legal community and encouraged KABA members to continue making a difference in the profession. Other speakers at the installation ceremony included Consul General Sung-Hwan Son of the Republic of Korea in

Chicago, and John G. O'Brien, the president-elect of the Illinois State Bar Association.

The Honorable Neera L. Walsh administered the oath of office for the new officers and board of directors and the inaugural advisory board, which is composed of KABA's past presidents. KABA's new administration includes associates and partners from many of Chicago's largest law firms, attorneys in governmental agencies, and an administrative judge.

Charles Kim, the immediate past president of KABA and a partner at Baker & McKenzie LLP, stated that, "Just as the nation is filled with excitement and anticipation for President-elect Obama's incoming administration, I am filled with the same excitement and anticipation for KABA's new administration."

Hellin Jang, the newly installed president of KABA and an attorney at Cervantes & Cioffi LLP, added, "I am honored to work with KABA in writing another chapter of our history."

KABA consists of more than 200 attorneys, judges and law school students in the Chicagoland area. Since 1993, KABA has been a professional networking resource to its members, and has provided legal services to the public through its free legal clinic for low-income persons in conjunction with Korean American Community Services. One of KABA's recent accomplishments includes offering scholarships for the first time to law students with demonstrated financial need, academic excellence and service to the Korean American and broader communities. ■

# Whether In House or at a Large Firm, Keys to Success for Women of Color Remain the Same

By Leslie D. Minier

The American Bar Association issued a follow-up study to its groundbreaking 2006 *Visible Invisibility* study, titled *From Visible Invisibility to Visibly Successful*, which sought to identify strategies for law firms to effectively retain, advance and sustain the success of women of color in the legal profession. As part of this study, the ABA gathered information, insights and advice from 28 female law firm partners of color in order to compile the beginnings of a “blueprint” for career success:

- “Believe in yourself, and do not let anyone shake your belief in yourself.”
- “Give excellence. Get success.”
- “If you can’t find mentors, you have to make mentors.”
- “It takes a village to raise a lawyer.”
- “Network, network, network.”
- “It’s all about that book [of business].”
- “Take care of yourself.”
- “Show up. Speak up.”

Whereas the ABA’s extensive research focused on women of color in large law firms, I felt that it would be beneficial to speak with a cross-section of female attorneys of color who have followed a variety of different career paths in order to understand their views on some of the topics covered by the ABA, as well as other issues they feel are important for women of color. Not only was this informal research beneficial to me personally as a black female attorney, but it was also critical for the development of future programming for Katten’s Leadership Institute for Women of Color. Launched in 2007, the Leadership Institute for Women of Color is a program established to proactively address the issue of women of color leaving law firms by providing them with the tools necessary to ensure their long-term success as Katten attorneys.

## Confidence and the Path to Success

“Believe in yourself and strive for excellence. You have to put your best foot forward at all times, and if you do people will recognize excellence sooner or later, regardless of race or gender. While this is good advice for anyone in the legal profession, it takes on added importance

for minorities and women because even today, there are still barriers that we face and glass ceilings to be broken.” – *Judge Ann C. Williams, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit*

“You, and not anyone else, are in control of your own success, so you must be proactive and go out and get what you want. There will always be people that make assumptions about you based on race and gender. You need to know that it does not impact how you do your job and simply ignore it. You cannot control other people’s responses to you, but you can control your reactions to them and the work product that you deliver.” – *Ritu Vig, Senior Securities Counsel, Wm. Wrigley Jr. Company, and a former Katten associate*

“If you are a great lawyer who offers outstanding client service, there will be multiple paths to success available to you regardless of race or gender. The surest way to fail in the legal profession is by getting a reputation for being difficult to work with... if this happens, you’ll never be able to get or give the very best work.” – *Veta Richardson, Executive Director of the Minority Corporate Counsel Association, and formerly an in-house attorney*

## Challenges

“While I was still in private practice, there were times when it did feel like I was being judged or treated differently because I was a female and a minority attorney. Was it always to my detriment? Not necessarily. When they were, I don’t think I dealt with anything that was different from what other female and/or minority attorneys have dealt with. More often than not, it was dealing with being the only female and/or minority attorney in the room and wondering if that impacted at all the client’s or opposing counsel’s opinions or treatment of you.” – *H. Pam Chen, Associate University Counsel, University of Illinois-Chicago, and a former Katten associate*

“Minorities tend to be underestimated, but it’s something that I have always used to my advantage, for example, when I was a litigator, opposing counsel often

assumed that I would not be prepared, but more often than not, I outperformed them in the courtroom by doing my homework and essentially outworking them.” – *Maribel Mata Benedict, partner in Katten’s Public Finance Practice and former sole practitioner at Latina-owned firm*

“The issue of race and women is very front-and-center in large law firms, however in my in-house experience at Wrigley, where we have a phenomenally diverse team, I have not faced these same issues.” – *Ritu Vig*

## Mentors

“It is critical to find at least one natural mentor in the firm who you trust and respect. If you can develop a natural mentoring relationship with a female attorney of color, that is especially helpful, but the key is to find a mentor with whom you feel comfortable and who is interested in helping you develop and succeed.” – *Alais L.M. Griffin, partner in Katten’s Litigation and Dispute Resolution Practice*

## Becoming a Rainmaker

“When I graduated from law school, I was still maturing, as are most 23-year-olds, and the thought of having to one day engage in business development and do the things it takes to land clients at law firms was pretty intimidating, especially for a woman of color who stands out from the majority. For me, going in house seemed more attractive because I thought I could avoid client development. Little did I know that you still need to develop those same skills to advance your career, in house or otherwise, and to be the person people choose for the best assignments.” – *Veta Richardson*

“The surest path to success in a law firm environment is honing first your legal skills and then your ability to develop business. The combination of these talents is unstoppable.” – *Tasneem K. Goodman, Katten partner and Director of Marketing* ■

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# Promoting Diversity Through *Pro Bono* Representation of Asylum-Seekers

By Chad R. Doobay

A compelling way for attorneys to promote diversity is by representing individuals who are attempting to escape persecution abroad and are seeking the protection of asylum in the United States.

There are currently an estimated 151,200 refugees and asylum-seekers in the United States, the vast majority of whom are people of color. They come from all corners of the world, with diverse religions, cultures and heritages. They are united, however, by the need for protection from persecution.

The value of representing asylum-seekers is certainly no secret to Katten attorneys. Over the past seven years, Katten attorneys have handled 20 asylum-related matters, primarily in conjunction with the National Immigrant Justice Center, a Chicago-based advocacy organization that coordinates area efforts among attorneys representing asylum-seekers. The matters handled by Katten attorneys have included filing affirmative applications with the federal government, representing clients in U.S. Immigration Court and arguing cases before U.S. Courts of Appeals. Katten attorneys have been very successful in their cases, obtaining 14 favorable outcomes. Five matters currently remain pending.

In addition to the hope of citizenship, the most important benefit that comes

with the receipt of refugee status is the promise not to be returned to harm's way. This often means the difference between life and death.

Recently, I had the opportunity to learn firsthand the value of representing an asylum-seeker. Along with my co-counsel, associate Claire Forster, I represented a young man from the northeast African country of Chad. Chad has been embroiled in civil and political unrest for many years and is reported by international agencies as being one of the most corrupt countries in the world. The U.S. State Department acknowledges that human rights violations in Chad are commonplace.

In representing my client, I had the opportunity to learn about another part of the world and about a life experience very different from my own. Through interviews with my client, I learned about the torture he endured and the heroism required for his escape to the United States.

In gaining refugee status for my client, I

was able to help ensure that America continues to protect innocent victims of war. My client, who now lives and works in the United States and plans to attend



**Katten attorneys representing asylum-seekers**

*Top row, from left to right: Angela Wilson, Tiffani Siegel, Patrick Harrigan, Chad Doobay, Paula Kim; bottom row, from left to right: Jonathan Baum, Christina Morrison, Alison Merle, Sherina Maye, Michael Lusardi.*

college, will no doubt add to the diversity and richness of our country.

Like so many of the attorneys at Katten who have taken the opportunity to provide *pro bono* representation to asylum-seekers, I completed my *pro bono* case inspired by the power we have in the legal profession to promote the human rights of diverse populations, right here at home. ■

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## Katten Sets Its Sights on China

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### From English Literature to Chinese Law

Prior to attending law school and going into private practice in the United States, Mr. Xue worked as a senior legislative officer for the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Chinese National People's Congress, where he was involved in drafting numerous pieces of national legislation.

"I majored in English literature when I was in college in China, but it was while I was working as a legislative officer for the Chinese Congress that I became interested in law," says Mr. Xue.

Mr. Xue earned his B.A. from Beijing University and his J.D. from Duke University School of Law. He also holds a LL.M. from Duke University School of Law.

"The thing I really like about the legal profession is that, while we are at the center of all business transactions, we are still a more independent voice and can keep a cooler head than the other parties in the deal." ■

## Diversity Events

### ABA Discusses New Report on Women of Color in Law Firms at Annual Meeting

On August 9, partner Janu Sivanesan served as a panelist for the program “From Visible Invisibility to Visibly Successful: Success Strategies for Women of Color in Law Firms,” presented by the American Bar Association’s Commission on Women in the Profession at the ABA’s annual meeting in New York.

The discussion focused on actions and strategies to be employed by minority women to advance their own careers within law firms, but recognized that there are still many structural changes to be made. In particular, the panel of minority women discussed the necessity of being aware of the elements of success. Often left out of the tacit network of support within a law firm, minority women must be proactive in managing their own advancement. The discussion further addressed some stark results reported by the ABA indicating that there is close to 0% retention of minority women at the senior levels at law firms. The panel stressed the importance of immediate action by minority women in the legal profession today to provide support to current and future associates.

### Chicago Minority Associates Committee Hosts Welcome Reception for Diverse Attorneys

*By Kara J. Ervin*

On September 9, the Minority Associates Committee hosted a welcome reception for the newest diverse attorneys to join Katten’s Chicago office. Approximately 50 attorneys attended the event, which featured a WNBA basketball game between the Chicago Sky and the Washington Mystics in the Skyline Club at the UIC Pavilion. Although Katten enjoys strong working relationships with several professional sports teams, including the Chicago Bulls and the Chicago White Sox, the Committee felt that it would be in keeping with the spirit of diversity to hold this year’s welcome reception at a WNBA game. The event was a great success and afforded diverse attorneys an opportunity to mingle while enjoying an impressive victory by the Chicago Sky.

“I really enjoyed the exciting, informal setting. It allowed us to be more comfortable and meet with other attorneys in a relaxed environment,” said Christina Morrison, a first-year litigation associate.

John Huang, who joined Katten’s Commercial Finance Practice after completing a Public Interest Law Initiative (PILI) fellowship, agreed. “It was such an interesting event, it was really a lot of fun.”

### Los Angeles Attorneys Attend California Minority Counsel Program Annual Conference

From October 16-17, Los Angeles attorneys Joshua Wayser and Peter Ballance attended the California Minority Counsel Program’s (CMCP) 19th Annual Business Conference in San Francisco. Katten is a member of the CMCP, whose mission is to promote diversity among California’s attorney population. Keynote speakers for the event were Tom Mars, executive vice president and general counsel for Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., and Paula Boggs, executive vice president, secretary and general counsel for Starbucks Corporation.

One unique feature of the annual conference is CMCP’s signature program, “Corporate Connections,” which facilitates focused, intimate networking opportunities that afford corporate and public agency counsel the chance to meet with and identify diverse outside counsel for future legal work. Through this program, Messrs. Wayser and Ballance met with in-house counsel for Sempra, University of California and Longs Drugs, underscoring the importance of the firm’s commitment to diversity in its business development efforts.

## Katten Sponsors Corporate Counsel Women of Color Event

Katten's Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity proudly sponsored the Corporate Counsel Women of Color 4th Annual Career Strategies Conference, "Wealth, Health & Power," October 1-3 in Beverly Hills, Calif. Highlights included the "General Counsel Roundtable: Hot Topics and Trends in the Law," "12 Strategies on How to Survive and Thrive as a Woman of Color in Corporate America," "10 Secrets to Discover Your Best Career Yet" and "State of the Union: An Update on Diversity in the Legal Profession." Katten partner and Chief Diversity Officer Leslie Minier, and Helen Kim, a partner in the Los Angeles office, attended the conference.

## Katten Chief Diversity Officer Speaks at Minority Corporate Counsel Association Annual Conference

On November 19, the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) held its 9th Annual "Creating Pathways to Diversity" Conference in New York. This year's conference featured informative sessions covering a range of issues, from strategies for creating and revitalizing mentor programs, to best practices for overcoming challenges to the diversity pipeline. Katten partner and Chief Diversity Officer Leslie Minier served as a panelist for "Diversity and Inclusion in the AmLaw 200 and the Vault/MCCA Guide," where she discussed the findings of the groundbreaking AmLaw 200 and MCCA/Vault survey of all attorneys at top law firms.

"One surprising finding from the survey is that, for many law firms, the bar for recruiting minority associates is actually higher than it is for other applicants," notes Ms. Minier. "The study also underscores a fundamental disconnect between the way that minority and female associates view law firm diversity efforts as opposed to their white colleagues."

The session was moderated by Dr. Arin N. Reeves, president of The Athens Group, and also featured as panelists Maureen Giovannini, a consultant with Novations Group, and Michelle Mancino Marsh, a partner with Kenyon & Kenyon, LLP. Other highlights of the conference included an opening plenary session discussing the impact of DuPont's minority counsel network, which recently celebrated its 10th anniversary.

## D.C. Minority Partners and Women's Bar Association Host Panel Discussion and Networking Event

*By Lisa-Marie C. Monsanto*

On December 11, D.C. Minority Partners, in association with the Women's Bar Association of the District of Columbia (WBA), hosted "Getting Ahead and Staying There: Women of Color in Law Firms," a two-part panel discussion on strategies for success for minority women in law firms. D.C. Minority Partners is an organization of partners, shareholders and counsel from law firms throughout the Washington, D.C., area. Founded in 1917, the WBA celebrates its 91st anniversary this year, making it one of the oldest and largest voluntary bar associations in metropolitan Washington, D.C.

A lively group of approximately 35 partners and associates attended the half-day event. The first panel, "The Politics of Success," included discussions on making partner, business development and networking, finding and building mentor/mentee relationships, and overcoming stereotypes of women and minorities. The second panel, "Surviving Success," touched on issues of balancing work and family and pursuing flexible work arrangements on the partner track and beyond. The discussions were informal, informative, very positive and laced with humor. All of the participants walked away with new mentors or mentees. My new mentee said to me, "Hey, where are you from?" and I said, "Katten. And you?" Afterwards I realized she had meant, "Where is your accent from?" I learned that, like me, she hails from the Caribbean, and I was happy to have an opportunity to discuss the challenges of fitting into a different country and its culture.

Notably, the second panel encouraged women of color to stop being so afraid of showing their real personality at work, and I have to say that this did not appear to be an issue with this group of women—there was no shortage of personality in the room.

# Follow the Leader . . .

By Leslie D. Minier and Theresa L. Davis

This year, the American Bar Association (ABA) issued a follow-up report to its 2006 *Visible Invisibility* study entitled *From Visible Invisibility to Visibly Successful*. The report sought to identify strategies for law firms to achieve long-term success in the retention and advancement of women of color, and to contribute to the sustained success of women of color in the profession. As part of this study, the ABA gathered information, insights and advice from 28 female law firm partners of color in order to compile the beginnings of a “blueprint” for career success.

While the ABA’s excellent research has focused exclusively on women attorneys of color in large law firms, it is also important to understand the views and strategies of other women of color in the legal and business worlds who have faced similar issues. Understanding and learning from this broader group of women of color has been critical to the development of programming for our firm’s Leadership Institute for Women of Color.

Since its inception in 2007, the Katten Leadership Institute for Women of Color has proactively addressed the unique issues that women of color face and the reasons they leave law firm practice. By engaging our female attorneys of color in a dialogue about these issues, and by providing them with innovative opportunities for professional development, mentoring and support, we hope to provide the tools necessary to ensure the long-term success and satisfaction of women of color at the firm. A key part of the Leadership Institute’s approach has been to learn from the example of women of color working outside of large law firms, whether in corporations, academic institutions or other organizations, and adapt their strategies to the law firm context.

## Achieving Visible Success for Katten’s Female Lawyers of Color

Katten launched the Leadership Institute for Women of Color with a day of interactive workshops designed to assist

female lawyers of color from all of our offices in growing their careers to their fullest potential. A number of Chicago’s top minority female business and legal executives and academics were recruited to serve as panelists for various workshops discussing networking skills, career choices, internal and external visibility, maintaining personal strength and stamina, building support systems and marketing.

For this inaugural event, the speakers included Mellody Hobson, president of Ariel Capital Management LLC, Andrea L. Zopp, senior vice president of human resources at Exelon Corporation, Connie L. Lindsey, executive vice president of The Northern Trust Company, and University of Chicago Graduate School of Business professor Tanya Menon Gandhi. Throughout their careers, these women have experienced and overcome many of the issues and challenges that female lawyers of color in large law firms currently face. Being able to turn to such an esteemed group of women for support and advice was incredibly valuable to our lawyers.

This event was the beginning of a successful, long-term diversity initiative that is responsive to the needs of its participants. A major component of our first event was soliciting lawyer input. We wanted to know what our female lawyers thought about developments at the firm that impact them, and what tools and programming they felt they needed to maximize their success at Katten. We received plenty of feedback which we have used to develop subsequent programs.

Since Katten launched the Leadership Institute, we have made available a variety of support, mentoring and professional development programs to the firm’s female lawyers of color, alongside programs designed for both male and female minority lawyers. Most recently, we implemented a program that brought more transparency to the firm’s review process and compensation structure. The program instructed minority associates on what to expect from the process and how they can

better contribute to the process in order to enhance their own professional development and progress. Another recent program provided oral presentation training to lawyers, during which participants were videotaped and provided with feedback to help them build their confidence and improve their oral presentation skills.

Our upcoming events will be smaller, more intimate gatherings, where our female lawyers of color will be introduced to prominent women of color in the legal and business communities, such as an upcoming lunch event with Judge Ann Williams of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. These events will allow Katten women of color the opportunity for personal discussion of the obstacles and challenges that these inspiring figures have encountered and overcome.

## The Big Picture: Diversity at Katten

Katten’s national Diversity Committee guides firm leadership in implementing strategies to increase, enhance and sustain diversity within the firm and the broader legal community. Committee members include Katten’s national managing partner, its chief diversity officer and members of the board of directors and executive committee. The Diversity Committee serves as the primary advisory group to the Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, the Minority Associates Committee, the Women’s Leadership Forum and the GLBT Coalition.

With a diversity commitment statement and strategic diversity plan in place, Katten’s Diversity Committee and the various committees it oversees have implemented a number of national initiatives for both men and women that support the recruitment, retention and advancement of lawyers from diverse backgrounds. These include the establishment of a firmwide minority lawyer retreat and regular publication of the firm’s diversity newsletter, *Connecting Katten*.

Katten provides mentoring, support and resources for associates of color with a strong emphasis on their development and advancement. The firm has also made recruiting minority associates a priority. Since 2004, Katten has offered its Minority Scholarship Program, which awards three \$15,000 scholarships annually to eligible minority law students participating in our summer associate program.

Katten sponsors a variety of service programs that support diversity in the broader community and in turn enrich the lives of our lawyers and staff. In particular, our partnerships with local schools and non-profit community-based organizations in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles help students succeed academically and prepare them for continued success in the future.

Katten has also hosted and sponsored

events organized by the Black Women Lawyers' Association of Greater Chicago Inc., the Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms, and Corporate Counsel Women of Color. These organizations tackle subject matter relating to best practices for ensuring the success and promoting the advancement of women lawyers of color.

Katten has made great strides in becoming a thought leader on diversity issues in law firms. We are honored to have been selected by the Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms as the organization's new home until 2010. Our partnership with the Chicago Committee and similar organizations and our own efforts through programs like the Katten Leadership Institute for Women of Color are certain to promote the success of

minority lawyers at Katten and throughout the legal profession. ■

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This article first appeared in the September-November 2008 issue of *Women Legal*, a new quarterly publication dedicated to advancing women in the legal profession and the only magazine that provides unbiased insight into developing, retaining and advancing women lawyers. Each issue features case studies, insight, commentaries and expert contributions to highlight how forward-thinking firms and individuals have accomplished their objectives, overcome obstacles and barriers they faced, and achieved high levels of success and recognition. To subscribe, contact Michelle Elam at 309.681.0960 or melam@ark-group.com.

## Katten and Chicago Bar Association Host Joffrey Affinity Night

On October 14, Katten and the Chicago Bar Association's Alliance for Women co-hosted a special evening at the new Joffrey Tower in Chicago's theater district, where guests enjoyed a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the world premiere ballet *Age of Innocence*. The Joffrey Ballet's chief choreographer Edwaard Liang, along with fashion designer Maria Pinto, revealed the secrets behind Joffrey's newest ballet, and afterwards joined guests for a cocktail reception.



Leslie Minier, Katten partner and Chief Diversity Officer (left), with Maria Pinto and Edwaard Liang.

## Katten Sponsors Chicago Premiere of *Margaret Garner*

Katten is proud to have sponsored the American opera *Margaret Garner* during its run at the Auditorium Theatre of Roosevelt University in November. Katten co-founder Melvin Katten is a board member of the Auditorium Theatre, which is known for featuring the works of up-and-coming, diverse playwrights. *Margaret Garner*, with an explosive storyline based on one of the most significant fugitive slave accounts in pre-Civil War history, is a powerful, one-of-a-kind opera.

## Katten Event Showcases Latino Dancers from Joffrey's *The Nutcracker*

Katten, along with The Joffrey Ballet and *Café* magazine, hosted a special preview of the holiday classic *The Nutcracker* on December 15 at the new state-of-the-art Joffrey Tower. Guests were treated to an inside look at the lives of Latino *Nutcracker* cast members Raul Casasola, Suzanne Lopez and Mauro Villanueva, and the unveiling of the December issue of *Café* magazine. Following the meet and greet, guests enjoyed a cocktail reception with Latin flair.



Leslie Minier, Katten partner and Chief Diversity Officer (left), with Joffrey's Gina Santana and Christopher Conway.

# Katten Sponsors National Asian Pacific American Bar Association's 20th Annual National Convention

By Alais L.M. Griffin and Eric A. Kuwana

The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) welcomed over 1,000 judges, lawyers, in-house counsel and law students to its 20th annual National Convention in Seattle from November 19-23. NAPABA serves as a national network for Asian Pacific American (APA) lawyers and law students, and advocates for the legal needs and interests of the larger APA community.

This year's convention theme, "Building on Our Legacy: 20 Years of NAPABA," focused both on NAPABA's past accomplishments and on its continuing work promoting APAs in the legal profession. The convention featured panels on topics such as women in law, the advancement of APA lawyers in law firms, effective marketing, the subprime meltdown, doing business in Asia, and defending corporate scandals. It also included a full day of programs for in-house counsel and a keynote presentation by Microsoft's general counsel, Brad Smith, on the importance of diversity, Microsoft's diversity initiatives, and newly developed diversity requirements for outside counsel. The presence of a large number of in-house counsel, including those of many Katten clients, and a mix of social events provided exceptional networking opportunities.

Katten sponsored the convention's opening plenary session on November 21, "Moving Forward by Looking Back at 20 Years of NAPABA," and the in-house counsel dinner at Seattle's Space Needle that evening. Washington, D.C., partner Eric Kuwana made opening remarks at the plenary



From left to right: Joseph Centeno (NAPABA president-elect), Major General Antonio Taguba (convention keynote speaker) and Helen Kim (current NAPABA president and partner in Katten's Los Angeles office).

session and Chicago partner Alais Griffin also attended the event.

Helen Kim, a partner in the Los Angeles office, has served as president of NAPABA for the past year and will continue to serve on the organization's board. Katten congratulates Ms. Kim on all of her hard work at the helm of NAPABA and on the success of the convention. ■

## Katten National Managing Partner Participates in Chicago Committee's Mentorship Academy

As part of its PEAKDiversity campaign, the Chicago Committee on Minorities in Large Law Firms (Chicago Committee), a nonprofit organization consisting of 45 of Chicago's largest law firms and four of Chicago's most prominent corporations, recently launched a Mentorship Academy to facilitate networking and leadership training opportunities for minority associates and junior partners. The Mentorship Academy tackles the problem of mentorship by bringing together a junior associate, a senior associate/junior partner and an equity partner from different law firms into a three-person group. Katten National Managing Partner Vincent Sergi serves as one of

the program's inaugural class of mentors, meeting on a monthly basis with a minority junior partner and junior associate to share his valuable insight and perspective on the practice of law. In addition, Mr. Sergi attends quarterly Mentorship Academy events sponsored by the Chicago Committee. "Mr. Sergi's generous commitment of his time and experience speaks volumes about his and Katten's commitment to diversity," attests Venu Gupta, executive director of the Chicago Committee. Other participants in the Chicago Committee's Mentorship Academy include Katten associates Gail Kim, Devan Popat and Jeremy Daniel. ■

# Attorney Profiles

## Alais L.M. Griffin Partner – Chicago



Alais Griffin is a partner in Katten's Litigation Practice. She received her J.D., *cum laude*, from Northwestern University School of Law, where she served as executive editor of the *Northwestern*

*University Law Review* and was a member of the Order of the Coif, and her B.A., *cum laude*, from Harvard University.

As someone who always enjoyed persuasive writing and oral advocacy, Ms. Griffin states that she "never seriously considered anything except litigation." In her practice, she has gained extensive experience

litigating securities fraud cases, commercial disputes, product liability cases and white collar criminal matters.

Ms. Griffin recalls receiving valuable advice from a law school professor who taught her "to not only glean propositions of law from cases, but to recognize and understand that cases involve real people who care deeply about the outcomes." This type of empathy, she says, "forces you from a myopic focus on the law to an understanding of what your clients and opposing parties really want and value and how they are motivated."

Ms. Griffin has applied that insight to developing litigation strategies for her

clients, and to her work in the classroom at Northwestern University School of Law, where she teaches trial advocacy. Ms. Griffin is also actively involved in *pro bono* work, assisting with a Georgia death penalty case and interviewing detainees in New Jersey state jails for a study on the post-September 11 federal detention policy. She currently serves on the Steering Committee of the ACLU Young Advocates and on the Board of Directors of the ACLU of Illinois.

Ms. Griffin has also been interviewed by *The Chicago Lawyer* on issues of gender and diversity in law firms and is a frequent speaker on these topics.

## Helen B. Kim Partner – Los Angeles



A partner in Katten's Litigation Practice, Helen Kim represents public and private companies and their directors, officers and principal shareholders in complex commercial litigation, including the

defense of securities and other class actions, shareholder derivative suits and regulatory investigations. Ms. Kim says she is driven by the complexity of securities litigation and enjoys "the opportunity to do intellectually stimulating work with really smart people." Her securities experience includes defending the former general counsel of Refco, Inc. in numerous securities class actions and related insurance coverage litigation arising from a failure to disclose a \$400 million receivable in a bond offering and the company's initial

public offering. Other clients Ms. Kim has represented include Prudential Insurance Company of America and Morgan Stanley.

Ms. Kim learned early on the importance of not limiting yourself to looking for potential mentors exclusively among members of your racial or ethnic group. When she launched her legal career in New York, there were no other Asian American women practicing in the field of securities litigation in the city. Today, Ms. Kim is an active mentor to young attorneys. Noting that the field does not have many diverse attorneys, she encourages young minority associates to consider securities litigation, a growing area of practice, because of the intellectual challenges it offers. In addition, as a full-time working mom with two children, ages five and 16, Ms. Kim asserts that "young women shouldn't assume that they

cannot be a partner and a mother. It is possible to have it all."

Ms. Kim received her J.D. from Yale Law School, where she was a note editor of *The Yale Law Journal*, and her B.A., *cum laude*, from Harvard-Radcliffe College. She also holds an M.M. from The Juilliard School in classical piano performance.

The immediate past president of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), Ms. Kim is president-elect of the Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles. She is also a member of Katten's Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity and serves as co-editor of the ABA Litigation Section's *Securities Litigation Journal* and on the ABA's Commission on Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the Profession.

## Joshua D. Wayser Partner – Los Angeles



Joshua D. Wayser is a partner in Katten's Litigation Practice and co-chair of the firm's GLBT Coalition. His litigation practice includes a substantive concentration in the field of real estate,

representing lenders, financial institutions, developers, and property owners in all types of litigation matters, including workouts, foreclosures, bankruptcy and purchase and sale disputes. He regularly lectures on real property issues throughout the state of California, gives seminars on creditors' rights, and serves as both a Judge Pro Tem

and an arbitrator for the Los Angeles Superior Courts.

Mr. Wayser, who was married on August 24 to his long-time partner, has five adopted multiracial children ranging in age from eight months to eight years old, and still finds time to volunteer at the Gay and Lesbian Legal Services Clinic, where he counsels people with HIV/AIDS. He also is active in *pro bono* and community activities in Los Angeles: Mr. Wayser is a national trustee for the Union of Reform Judaism and past president of Beth Chayim Chadashim, the first gay and lesbian synagogue in the country.

Earlier in his career, Mr. Wayser was mentored by a lesbian partner at his former firm who helped show him how to stay true to himself while working in the mainstream. "She showed me that you can be who you are and still be successful," he recalls. He encourages young attorneys to view their diversity as a strength. "Diversity gives you an opportunity to network with like-minded people and it can be very helpful in terms of generating business."

Mr. Wayser earned his B.A. in East Asian languages and cultures from Columbia University in 1984 and his J.D. from Columbia Law School in 1988.

## Editors' Note

As editors of *Connecting Katten* and minority associates at Katten, we have been privileged to see firsthand the amazing efforts and resources that the firm, its attorneys and staff have devoted toward making Katten an increasingly more diverse working environment. At a time when our country and the rest of the world anticipate the presidency of a biracial attorney, we celebrate the many accomplishments of our firm and its position as a leader in the legal community's effort to include a variety of talented professionals within its ranks. This issue of *Connecting Katten* is a testament to the positive impact that Katten's leaders are having on our firm (through the efforts of our Diversity Committee), the legal profession (through involvement in the Chicago Committee's Mentorship Academy) and the greater society (through advocacy for asylum-seekers), and provides a snapshot of the accomplishments achieved as a result of our ongoing diversity initiatives.

### Connecting**Katten**

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