

Strength in Diversity

BY ALLEN G. KADISH AND SONIA COLÓN

ABI's Diversity Program Hosts Meeting on Work/Life Balance

Editor's Note: To learn more about ABI's Diversity & Inclusion Taskforce, please visit diversity.abi.org.



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The ABI Diversity Working Group (DWG) Mentorship Subcommittee hosted a remote meeting with mentors and mentees on Nov. 8, 2021, on work/life balance as part of its continuing series of mentorship programs. The ABI DWG Mentorship Program is in its inaugural year. The DWG aims to enhance diversity within ABI and its leadership, help create professional advancement opportunities for diverse ABI members, and otherwise promote diversity within ABI and the bankruptcy and restructuring professions.

During the 90-minute program, the 2021 mentees heard from and interviewed Ellen Ostrow, Ph.D., PCC, CMC of Lawyers Life Coach LLC, and Robyn Forman Pollack of AchieveNEXT. As the COVID-19 pandemic placed unprecedented demands and challenges on everyone in a variety of ways, the DWG Mentorship Subcommittee determined that a program on work/life balance was critical.

The program provided the mentees with direct access to professionals who are experts on both mental wellness for professionals and diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I), as well as the elimination of bias in the workplace. Mentees were able to raise and explore "workplace" issues significant to them, and that are likely also faced by their professional peers. Initial feedback indicated that the program was substantive, beneficial and a highlight of the inaugural mentorship cycle. The ABI DWG Mentorship Subcommittee was fortunate to engage in such an organic and inspiring program, appreciates the participation and guidance of the panelists, and hopes the insights shared by the panelists will help shape successful careers of future generations. Mr. Kadish, one of the DWG's original members, moderated the discussion, facilitating questions from the mentees and the mutual free-flowing of personal experiences, challenges and advice.

Ostrow is a psychologist, certified coach, strategic talent advisor and founding principal of Lawyers Life Coach LLC, and she brings particular expertise in coaching, training and advising lawyers and the law firms and corporations that employ them. Since starting her firm in 1998, she

has coached hundreds of attorneys at all levels of experience and seniority in law firms of all sizes, corporate legal departments, government agencies, nonprofits and the judiciary. Ostrow's coaching practice has enabled underrepresented women and minorities to advance within the profession.

Pollack is executive managing director and leader of the DE&I Practice at AchieveNEXT, as well as the CHRO Alliance for chief human resource officers. A business strategist with expertise in DE&I, she works to increase top-line, bottom-line and shareholder value by teaching enterprises to leverage their DE&I initiatives for growth and performance. Pollack has been actively involved in diversity issues for more than 20 years. She has lectured and written extensively on issues of DE&I, harassment, best practices, communication, team collaboration, networking, negotiation and effective leadership. Formerly, she was a business restructuring lawyer and partner with Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP in Philadelphia.

The 2021 mentees are **Danisha Brar** (Keller Benvenuti Kim LLP; San Francisco), **Rahmon J. Brown** (Hogan Lovells US LLP; Matteson, Ill.), **Melissa A. Martinez** (Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr LLP; Philadelphia), Tiara Seals (Simpson Thacher & Bartlett LLP; Houston) and **Varinder Singh** (U.S. Bankruptcy Court (E.D.N.Y.); Brooklyn).

The 2021 mentors are **Alane A. Becket** (Becket & Lee LLP; Malvern, Pa.), **Edward T. Gavin** (Gavin/Solmonese LLC; Wilmington, Del.), **Richardo I. Kilpatrick** (Kilpatrick & Associates, PC; Auburn Hills, Mich.), **Patricia A. Redmond** (Stearns, Weaver, Miller, Weissler, Alhadeff & Sitterson, PA; Miami) and **James Patrick Shea** (Shea Larsen; Las Vegas). They are all past ABI Presidents.

The Work/Life Balance Program was organized by the ABI DWG Mentorship Subcommittee: **Zhao Liu** (The Rosner Law Group LLC; Wilmington, Del.), Hon. **Martin R. Barash** (U.S. Bankruptcy Court (C.D. Cal.); Woodland Hills) and **Mariane L. Dorris** (Shuker & Dorris, PA; Orlando, Fla.). The authors of this article are also members of the subcommittee.

The inaugural DWG mentorship year was 2021. ABI members should look for opportunities to participate in the next cycle as mentors and mentees, beginning in the spring of 2022. **abi**

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