

# DIVERSITY

## & THE BAR

November/December 2011

PRESENTING MCCA'S 2011 DIVERSITY AWARD WINNERS

EMPLOYER OF CHOICE | THOMAS L. SAGER AWARD | INNOVATOR AWARD | EMPLOYER OF CHOICE | THOMAS L. SAGER AWARD

BY ANGELA DODSON | INNOVATOR AWARD | INNOVATOR AWARD | INNOVATOR AWARD | INNOVATOR AWARD



MCCA distinguished diversity powerhouses from five regions of the United States in 2011. Five companies received the prestigious Employer of Choice recognition. These premier companies for diversity share best practices and thoughts on increasing inclusion in the legal profession. The five law firms that earned the

esteemed Thomas L. Sager award are also profiled. The Innovator Award, MCCA's newest honor, is given to companies and firms that tried something new and succeeded, whether in recruitment and retention, mentoring, pipeline initiatives, LGBT initiatives, or client inclusion feedback.



## COVINGTON & BURLING LLP

> *Mid-Atlantic Region*

ANDREA REISTER

**C**ovington & Burling LLP, a leading international law firm, views diversity “not as an endpoint or a statistic to report but more of a way of thinking and doing business,” says Andrea G. Reister, a partner and co-chair of the firm-wide diversity committee.

In the firm’s diversity initiatives, Reister says, “The focus for us is not on a particular objective or a particular number but on achieving real inclusion and integration so that we are in the best position to provide the best services to our clients.”

The winner of the Thomas L. Sager Award for the mid-Atlantic region is a firm that represents clients in matters related to technology, white-collar allegations, litigation, transactional, government affairs, international, and life sciences. It has offices in Washington, D.C., New York, San Diego, San Francisco, and the Silicon Valley in the United States, as well as in Beijing, Brussels, and London. Covington is consistently in the top 20 on *The American Lawyer’s* prestigious A-list, based on financial performance, pro bono activity, associate satisfaction, and diversity.

One of the firm’s more unusual diversity initiatives is part of an effort to identify attorney prospects early in their careers through participation in Sponsors for Educational Opportunity Corporate Law Program in Washington, D.C.

Reister, who is based in Washington, says the program “focuses on college graduates who haven’t started law school yet and enables them to have an opportunity to work in a law firm and experience the law firm practice from the very beginning before they actually go to law school.”

While major law firms have been shrinking staffs and deferring hiring during the recession, often resulting in less diversity, Reister has pointed out that Covington has maintained its summer associate program, honored offers to incoming first-year associates, and continued to promote associates into the partnership.

In 2010, more than half of the 85 associates who joined the firm were women and 18 associates were ethnically diverse or lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. In the D.C. office, 55 percent of the 60 new associates were women and 27 percent were ethnically diverse or LGBT. Half the 72 summer associates were women and more than 41 percent were ethnically diverse or LGBT. More than 10 percent of the summer associates were African American.

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