

# Covington's Emerging Leaders Attend OutNEXT Leadership Summit

**July 30, 2015**

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Covington attorneys Heather Finstuen, Eric Sonnenschein and R. Alexander Clark attended the second annual, and first global, OutNEXT LGBT Emerging Leader Summit in New York last week. Covington is a member of Out Leadership and was a sponsoring firm of the career development summit. The summit offered Covington attorneys the opportunity to develop leadership skills and meet and engage with emerging LGBT leaders across a range of industries and interest areas including the banking, accounting, consulting and non-profit sectors.

The summit gave attendees the chance to engage with some of the leading figures and civil rights heroes in the LGBT movement. Panels with Jim Obergefell, the lead plaintiff in the recent Supreme Court case which established a national right to marriage for LGBT citizens, David Mixner, a longstanding civil rights activist, and Ken Mehlman, former chair of the Republican National Committee, served to inspire the Covington attendees to further engage with LGBT issues in their work at the firm and in their pro bono efforts. The summit also featured practical career coaching panels aimed at equipping young leaders with the skills necessary to identify and pursue concrete professional goals, build relationships with sponsors, implement ideas, leverage resources and expand their potential to create positive change for the LGBT community in their careers and industries.

The summit also challenged attendees to develop leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving skills by engaging directly with many of the most pressing issues affecting the LGBT community in the "post-marriage" era. Covington attorneys participated in a "hackathon" designed to devise solutions to pressing issues in the areas of transgender rights, LGBT youth homelessness, HIV and AIDS, and global LGBT rights. Teams created detailed action plans to solve real issues facing non-profits focusing on these issues and presented their solutions to a panel of judges active in those fields. The winning team was granted seed money and support to implement its campaign.

Covington's attendees walked away from the conference with greater leadership skills, deeper relationships with colleagues in industry, and with a renewed urgency to work with others in the corporate and non-profit community to be active agents for positive change.

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