

2007 Sager Award Winner Laner Muchin Embraces Diversity and Responsiveness



Joseph M. Gagliardo
Managing Partner



Violet M. Clark
Partner



The Sager Award is named after DuPont Vice President and Assistant General Counsel, Thomas L. Sager, who has been a driving force for improving the involvement of minorities and women in the legal profession.

Laner Muchin Dombrow Becker Levin and Tominberg, Ltd., a Chicago-based employment law firm, received MCCA's 2007 Midwest Region Thomas L. Sager Award in recognition of the firm's sustained commitment to improve the hiring, retention and promotion of diverse attorneys.

"This diversity gives us the ability to offer client service from a variety of perspectives," says the firm's managing partner, Joseph Gagliardo. Client service is the foundation for another commitment made by Laner Muchin – to provide quick response to clients. That's no hollow promise. Laner Muchin backs it up with a "Two Hour Commitment." It's the only law firm in the nation that promises to return all client calls within two hours or less.

"Our Two Hour Commitment is our promise to dedicate ourselves to the profession's highest level of responsiveness," says Gagliardo. "Even if one of our attorneys is at a trial or deposition, is in negotiations, or on a plane, there will be another attorney available to the client."

In a recent survey, more than 90% of Laner Muchin's clients said the Two Hour Commitment distinguishes the firm. "For the 50-plus years we've been in business," says Joe Gagliardo, "it's how we've always done it. We didn't set this standard because it's easy – it isn't. We do it because it's important to our clients, which makes it important to us."

Proving its commitment is itself a commitment at Laner Muchin. In the area of diversity, the proof is in its personnel. At the 44-attorney

firm, three quarters of its associates are women and 38% are minorities. A quarter of its partners are minorities or women, and 43% of its new hires are minorities.

"We value diversity because it brings richness and strength to our firm," says partner, Violet M. Clark. "We envision diversity as encompassing individuals' unique characteristics and experiences, including not only race, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, disability, national origin and sexual orientation, but also personalities, work styles, marital and parental status, educational background, political affiliations, and career and other life experiences."

Having a diverse team is essential for a firm that offers employment services to national clients with diverse workforces. The firm provides a full range of litigation and labor and employment services to clients representing a cross section of private and public sector employers, a number of whom are unionized. Its services run the gamut, from employment discrimination issues to collective bargaining negotiations, to immigration services.

As Joe Gagliardo sees it:

"In performing our services, we place the greatest priority on preventative, practical and creative approaches to problem-solving and improved employer, employee and union relations. We communicate with client representatives, employees, and union representatives in their language; and we relate to them in a manner that merits their respect."



Laner Muchin Dombrow Becker Levin and Tominberg, Ltd.

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