
Hughes Hubbard & Reed

Black Attorney Affinity Group Leader Brings Life Experience to Role

News & Events | Diversity

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Ashley Hodges, head of the firm's Black Attorney Affinity Group, has been a member of the Diversity Committee since spring 2016. Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, she joined the firm as a summer associate in 2013 and returned to the New York office as an associate in October 2014.

Why is diversity important to you?

As someone who is results-oriented, diversity is important to me, in part, because it produces better outcomes. Diversity of thought, experience and approach are agents that, if cultivated properly, can drive communities and organizations to innovate and solve problems in a way that is efficient, effective and forward-looking. In a law firm, diversity is particularly important because law firms are engaged to solve their clients' problems. Having diverse perspectives and skill sets among the ranks of a firm's attorneys allows the firm to better advise clients and service a wider array of clientele.

What challenges have you faced as a diverse lawyer and how did you overcome them?

My challenge as a diverse attorney may be shared by all attorneys who seek to give the best real-world advice: ensuring that I bring my life experiences — whether legal, social or business-related — to bear in my advisory role, which spans from interactions with high-profile clients to discussions with esteemed colleagues at our firm. I overcome this challenge by always taking the necessary time to assume the perspective of the advised and play out the results of my advice in a way that is informed not only by my legal analysis, but also by my prior life experiences.

Why did you get involved with the Diversity Committee?

I got involved because I see potential for HHR to enhance programs that help retain diverse attorneys. By combining my ideas with those of my colleagues on the committee, I think we can ensure HHR is a place where diverse attorneys thrive, and the firm continues to innovate and produce the best results for its clients.

What's the best way for a law firm to increase the number of diverse attorneys?

The best way is to provide meaningful mentorship to diverse attorneys at every level. A firm's commitment to mentoring diverse attorneys must come from the top levels of firm leadership, and it should be evident in all aspects of the way a firm conducts its business. Additionally, when a firm's diverse attorneys maintain a visible presence in the community, this plays an important role in the firm's ability to attract top talent.

What's the most notable accomplishment for your group in the last six months?

The group's most notable accomplishment in the last six months has been its sustained involvement in the firm's recruitment efforts. We have had the pleasure of reaching out to diverse candidates, discussing what sets HHR apart from other law firms and ensuring recruits feel at home here.

What are the short-term and long-term goals for the group?

The group's short-term goal is to increase the presence of diverse HHR attorneys at community events, with an emphasis on law school and bar association panel discussions on various legal topics and events aimed at increasing diverse pipelines into the legal profession. By first demonstrating HHR's pre-established commitment to diversity, we will secondarily attract more diverse attorneys and clientele. The group's long-term goals include increasing meaningful mentorship for diverse attorneys at every level and expanding growth and advancement opportunities for diverse attorneys within the firm.

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Ashley R. Hodges