



2025 CMCP Annual Business Conference

TITLE: A1 Fierce Advocacy, Smart Strategy: A “New School” Approach for Handling Adversity

DATE & TIME: September 11, 2025; 10:45 am - 12:00 pm

LOCATION: Hyatt Regency Downtown San Francisco SOMA - 50 3rd St., SF 94134

SESSION DESCRIPTION: Resilience requires strategic thinking and strong advocacy in today's fast-paced world. This panel features leaders who have tackled challenges directly, combining careful planning with decisive action. Hear stories and learn practical tips on self-advocacy, maintaining focus under pressure, and adapting in critical situations. Whether leading a team, promoting equity, or overcoming obstacles, this session will provide actionable tools and new perspectives to help you thrive.

SPEAKERS:

- Moderator: Yolanda Jackson (Bar Association of San Francisco)
- Panelists:
 - Hannah Gordon (Hannah Gordon Advisors LLC)
 - Benedict Hur (Cooley LLP)
 - Quyen Ta (Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom LLP)
 - Carlos Vasquez (Visa Inc.)

MCLE Written Materials

Books

- Teresa M. Beck, Alicia M. Menendez & Shayna M. Steinfeld eds., *Her Story: The Resilient Woman Lawyer's Guide to Conquering Obstacles*, Book 2 (Jan. 12, 2024).
A collection of essays by women lawyers offering real-life stories, practical advice, and inspiration for thriving in legal careers.
- Globe Law & Bus. & Ctr. for Legal Leadership eds., *Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession* (2d ed.).
A broad, practice-focused anthology covering inclusion strategies useful for firm leaders and DEI professionals.

- Deborah L. Rhode, *In the Interests of Justice: Reforming the Legal Profession* (Oxford Univ. Press 2000). – A seminal critique of the profession’s accountability gaps and diversity shortfalls, with reform proposals that remain highly relevant.
 - Lauren Stiller Rikleen, *Ending the Gauntlet: Removing Barriers to Women’s Success in the Law* (Thomson West 2006).
Focuses on structural obstacles women face in law, especially in law firms. Offers practical roadmaps for change at various career levels.
 - Lauren Stiller Rikleen, *Ladder Down: Success Strategies for Lawyers from Women Who Will Be Hiring, Reviewing, and Promoting You* (ABA Book Publ’g 2016).
Advice from decision-makers on what it takes to advance.
 - Jonathan Shapiro, *Lawyers, Liars, and the Art of Storytelling* (Am. Bar Ass’n 2016).
Explores how storytelling techniques (including ethos, pathos, logos) can elevate advocacy, persuasion, and influence in legal settings.
 - Bryan Stevenson, *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (One World Essentials 2015).
A compelling memoir of high-stakes advocacy for marginalized clients, blending storytelling with moral clarity and systemic challenge.
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Articles

- Michael W. Carroll & Troy Romero, *Addressing the Lack of Diversity in the Legal Profession, at the Undergraduate Level*, Am. U. Wash. Coll. of L. Fac. Sch. & J. Articles (2011), https://digitalcommons.wcl.american.edu/facsch_lawrev/1210/.
Investigates recruitment barriers early in the pipeline and suggests interventions to cultivate future generations of diverse attorneys.
- Helia Garrido Hull, *Diversity in the Legal Profession: From Rhetoric to Reality*, 4 Colum. J. Race & L. 1 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.7916/cjrl.v4i1.2291> .
Examines why diversity efforts often fall short and proposes accountability and awareness as levers for real progress.
- Adam Kirk-Smith, *Equity, Imagination and Contested Narratives*, 44 Liverpool L. Rev. 403 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10991-023-09349-3> .
A scholarly exploration of how equity can be reimagined through storytelling and legal creativity, especially using devices like the constructive trust.
- Luis Ortega, *Principles for Equity-Centered Storytelling: Engaging in Critical Reflection to Transform and Heal Our Narratives*, Medium (June 12, 2023), <https://medium.com/@storytellersforchange/principles-for-equity-centered-storytelling-a1555b1232d1>.
Offers a framework for ethically centered storytelling that uplifts marginalized voices through asset-based, intersectional, healing-centered narratives.
- Deborah L. Rhode & Lucy Buford Ricca, *Diversity in the Legal Profession: Perspectives from Managing Partners and General Counsel*, 83 Fordham L. Rev. 2483 (2015), <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/flr/vol83/iss5/13/>.
Survey-based insights from firm leaders on barriers to inclusion and best practices for change.
- Cecil J. Thomas & Karen DeMeola, *What Gets in Our Way? The Challenges of Achieving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Legal Profession*, Connecticut Lawyer

(Mar.–Apr. 2021),

https://www.ctbar.org/docs/default-source/publications/connecticut-lawyer/ctl-vol-31/4.-march-april-21/ct-lawyer---march-april-21---de-i-column.pdf?sfvrsn=86042217_6.

An insightful reflection on structural and cultural barriers within the legal field, and the importance of honest feedback and transformation. (ctbar.org).

- Eli Wald, *A Primer on Diversity, Discrimination, and Equality in the Legal Profession or Who is Responsible for Pursuing Diversity and Why*, 24 Geo. J. Legal Ethics 1 (2011), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228213845_A_Primer_on_Diversity_Discrimination_and_Equality_in_the_Legal_Profession_or_Who_is_Responsibile_for_Pursuing_Diversity_and_Why.

Framework distinguishing formal vs. substantive diversity and assigning responsibility for meaningful action.

Reports and News

- Abeer Abu Judeh, *Lifting up Minority Lawyers*, Axios Tampa Bay (Jan. 11, 2022), <https://www.axios.com/local/tampa-bay/2022/01/11/lifting-up-minority-lawyers>. Profiles *LeDox*, a legal-tech platform designed to increase engagement and hiring of underrepresented attorneys by corporate counsel.
- Reuters, *DE&I is being hit — what will that mean for BigLaw?*, Reuters (Apr. 15, 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/dei-is-being-hit-what-will-that-mean-biglaw-2024-04-15/>. Highlights how recent layoffs disproportionately impacted attorneys of color and underscores the importance of pipeline and retention programs.
- Stanford Ctr. on the Legal Prof., *Advancing Diversity in the Legal Profession*, <https://clp.law.stanford.edu/advancing-diversity-in-the-legal-profession/>. Documents successful strategies like the *Mansfield Rule*, which requires firms to consider at least 30% diverse candidates for leadership roles and cuts against bias in advancement.