

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

## Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity and inclusion are a cornerstone of our culture at Hodgson Russ, and we have a long history of committing to D & I initiatives. Diversity in recruiting, hiring and promoting is ingrained in our firm's culture and enables us to provide creative and insightful solutions to our clients. Hodgson Russ has established and supports diversity initiatives within the firm and throughout the communities we serve. Our Diversity and Inclusion Committee, facilitated by our Diversity Partner and Manager of Professional Development and Diversity, focuses on three main areas- Pipelines to the Law, Internal Education, and Community Support. Our committee works across all areas of the firm to share and implement best practices that will enable the firm to continuously grow and learn so that we are best able to serve our clients and one another.

### Bloomberg Law - 2023 DEI Framework

Hodgson Russ LLP is one of 55 U.S.-based law firms named to Bloomberg Law's 2023 DEI Framework. We are proud to be recognized for our level of disclosure of diversity-related metrics and distinguished performance in this critical arena. To learn more, go to: <https://pro.bloomberglaw.com/dei>

### Hodgson Russ Diversity Vision Statement

Hodgson Russ fosters a diverse and inclusive workplace where all belong and can thrive. We develop programs and structures that respect, promote, and celebrate diversity and inclusion in all aspects of what we do, including recruiting, professional development, compensation, and advancement. The firm is also committed to supporting diversity in our communities.

Hodgson Russ's diversity efforts are championed by our Diversity Committee, led by Andrew Freedman.

### Women's Initiatives

*"Making inclusion a priority is a daily commitment and I am proud that the firm realizes its focus on diversity will only strengthen our organization."* - Sujata Yalamanchili, Real Estate & Finance Partner, Winner of Business First's Power 125 Women 2018-2019, Power 150 Women 2020, Power 200 Women 2021-2022

Hodgson Russ LLP values the voices that our female attorneys and staff bring to the firm. In 1998, Hodgson Russ Partner Dianne Bennett became the only woman in the country to lead an AmLaw 250 law firm. Dianne served as president and then co-chair and chair of the firm until 2004, beginning a rich tradition of women holding key leadership positions. This long-standing commitment to female attorneys continues today; in fact, our firm has been named to *American Lawyer's* "A-List for Female Equity Partnership" multiple times. This exclusive and prestigious list in *American Lawyer* magazine surveys

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the largest 200 law firms in America and ranks them by various financial and cultural markers.

### *Women's Initiative Highlights:*

- Hodgson Russ received the “Tipping the Scales” award in 2023, as well as 2020, by the Diversity & Flexibility Alliance. We are proud that our firm was recognized for our continuous efforts to ensure that women have an integral role at the firm.
- Hodgson Russ LLP was selected as the recipient of the 2022 ATHENA Organization Award®. This award recognizes a for-profit organization that supports, develops, and honors women leaders, inspiring women to achieve their full potential and creating balance in leadership throughout Buffalo Niagara region.
- Kinsey O'Brien has been elected President of the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York, Western New York Chapter (WBASNY WNY). Kinsey's term as President begins June 1, 2023, and runs through May 31, 2024.
- Jodyann Galvin and Fallon Martin were recognized by *Girls Rule the Law* in April 2022 for their continued support of the organization's Clothes Closet for middle school mock trial teams.
- Sujata Yalamanchili, partner in our Real Estate practice, was named the recipient of the 2021 ATHENA Leadership Award®. The award honors an exceptional individual who has achieved the highest level of professional excellence, contributed time and energy to improve the quality of life for others in the community, and actively assisted others—particularly women—in realizing their full leadership potential.
- Partner Jane Bello Burke serves as an officer of the New York State Bar Association's Health Law Section since June of 2019.
- *National Law Journal* ranked Hodgson Russ among the top 50 law firms in the United States for prevalence of women partners in 2019.
- Christine Bonaguide and Sujata Yalamanchili, board members for the *WNY Women's Foundation*, along with Luisa Bostick and Jody Galvin, helped launch and are a part of the First Cohort of ALL IN, an initiative sponsored by the Western New York Women's Foundation.

### Fostering a Diverse Future: Creating a Pipeline to Law

At Hodgson Russ we know that creating access to the field of law is a complex process requiring financial support and the development of relationships that help a young person navigate high school, undergraduate education, and law school. We have developed a series of programs that expand and build on opportunities for future leaders to learn more about working in the legal system. Our Pipeline to the Law program includes supports for underrepresented students at the high school, undergraduate, and law school levels.

#### **High School Support:**

- The firm has a long term relationship with Buffalo Prep, a program that provides access and preparation for talented underrepresented youth to achieve success in college prep high schools and higher education. We provide mentors, financial support, and a scholarship to students who graduate from the Buffalo Prep program. After high school graduation, members of the firm continue to serve as mentors and offer internship opportunities to students from Buffalo

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Prep. Since 2012, Hodgson Russ has presented a college scholarship to a college-bound senior from **Buffalo Prep** with an interest in the law.

### Undergraduate Support:

- At the undergraduate level, Hodgson Russ sponsors the University of Buffalo's **Discover Law Program**, which provides a four-week immersive experience for underrepresented minority undergraduates and first-generation college students interested in pursuing a career in law. The program exposes students to critical thinking and helps them develop reading and analytical skills through an in-depth program. Hodgson Russ contributes financially, including sponsoring three named scholars in 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. In addition, we host networking events for students at the firm and provide mentors to the students in the program. As founding and continuing sponsors of this program, Hodgson Russ is pleased that we have recently hired several associates who participated in Discover Law.
- The firm supports a "Tour of the Courts" college intern through the *Say Yes Internship and Career Pathways Program*.

### Law School Support:

- At the Law School level, Hodgson Russ participates in the *Albany County Bar Association's (ACBA) Diversity Internship Program* in partnership with Albany Law School, hosting law students each semester and providing them with substantive experiences while still in school. The ACBA Diversity Internship Program entails a ten-week internship in which students work a minimum of ten hours a week, totaling approximately 100 hours. The Hodgson Russ Albany office hosts two third-year law students (spring and fall semesters).
- We sponsor and support the UB Law School's *OUTLaw* and *Students of Color* Dinner each year. In 2020, we hosted an LGBTQ+ networking event for students to ask questions and connect to practicing LGBTQ+ attorneys in the area.
- We provide mentoring opportunities for mock trial teams at both the high school and law school levels.

## A Culture of Diversity & Inclusion Learning

Hodgson Russ acknowledges that a strong law firm is always growing and expanding its understanding of the communities where it works. We consistently offer internal education programs to expose the firm to the complex diversity of our communities. Internal education programs increase the firm's understanding of important current issues, celebrate diversity at the firm and in the communities we serve, and ensure we are lifelong learners. Our internal education efforts include consistent conversations, training, and development for our staff and attorneys. We have also offered internal sessions on Cultural Humility and Redlining, as well as attended programming on creating policies that can improve racial equity in Western New York. We host a Diversity Month each year, and we celebrate, learn from, and honor the traditions and cultures of various heritages throughout the year. From exploring ancient Asian arts to hosting the West Side Bazaar, the Hodgson Russ Diversity and Inclusion Committee works to ensure that firm members are exposed to a range of cultures, heritages, and customs, which we believe develops a stronger sense of empathy and inclusion.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee is also active in our community. We support our local Pride month programs, Buffalo's Juneteenth Parade, and numerous additional community organizations and programs. While COVID has paused our ability to be physically out in the community as a large organization, we continue to serve and learn from the

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communities where we work.

### *Learning Highlights:*

- In 2020, we hosted a Diversity at Work panel featuring business leaders from M&T Bank, Delaware North and Excellus who gave perspectives about how Diversity and Inclusion is impacting their business and best practices they have learned.
- In 2019, we hosted Journey's End Refugee Services, which included a presentation to our staff and attorneys about Journey's End's mission to welcome refugees without regard to ethnic origin or creed and to assist them to become healthy, independent, contributing members of the community. Dr. Arin Reeves spoke at the firm in 2016 and again in 2019 about Unconscious Bias and Inclusive Intelligence. Dr. Reeves held several programs during her time at the firm and we continue to work to implement her best practices on a consistent basis.
- We honor diversity and inclusion at the firm and throughout the community by participating in local parades like the Pride Parade and Juneteenth Parade, by hosting Lunch & Learn documentaries and movies, and by holding internal conversations around diversity and inclusion.

## In The Community

Our firm is proud of the work our attorneys and staff do to support diverse projects and organizations in the local community.

### *Community Highlights:*

- The Diversity & Inclusion Committee spearheaded a donation drive to benefit the Resource Council of WNY, as they distributed groceries and personal items to those affected by the Tops shooting of May 14, 2022. Hodgson Russ employees donated diapers, food, pet food, and personal items, and volunteered at food distribution centers throughout the City of Buffalo.
- Hodgson Russ donated \$10,000 to the *Buffalo 05/14 Survivor Fund* to benefit victims directly impacted by the tragedy of May 14, 2022. Through this fund, 100% of the donation was received by impacted individuals.
- The Hodgson Russ Foundation donated to NativityMiguel Middle School as part of its December 2021 holiday outreach. NativityMiguel Middle School of Buffalo has provided middle school students the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty through education, transforming the lives of underserved students in a secure and nurturing environment on two single gender campuses in the City of Buffalo.
- Henry Zomerfeld was elected president of the Volunteer Lawyers Project Rising Champions for Justice Board in December 2021. His three-year term as president of the RCJ Board began in January of 2022. Rising Champions for Justice ("RCJ") is a group of young professionals dedicated to furthering the mission of Erie County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project ("VLP") to provide free legal services to low income people.
- UB Law School Students of Color named Hodgson Russ the 2020 recipient of the *Law Firm Recognition Award*. This award recognized the firm's many contributions to the betterment of our community.
- Jody Galvin received the Legal Service Award in January 2019 from the *National Federation of Just Communities*.

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- Andrew Freedman, Diversity Partner, and Anna-Lesa Calvert, Manager of Professional Development and Diversity, completed the Buffalo Niagara Diversity Academy. Course attendees worked with leaders across business sectors to exchange ideas about inclusive leadership skills, and to create actionable strategies for addressing today's diverse work environment.

