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### NOTE FROM JOHN KANE

As we head into June, on behalf of the Diversity Committee and Women's Committee, I want to encourage everyone to sign up for one of our Summer of Service volunteer opportunities. After a successful first Summer of Service last year, we are excited to be partnering with many of the same organizations this year, as well as a few new ones, to assist them in their efforts to improve the communities in which we work and live. To see a list of the upcoming opportunities, [click here](#).



I also want to thank everyone who participated in our firm diversity events these last few months. At the diversity potluck lunch on February 10, every office had a great range of delicious dishes representing the many cultural heritages of our lawyers and staff. We had a strong showing at both our Stand Against Racism event on April 25 and our lunch with Darko Tresnjak, Hartford Stage's artistic director on March 18; you can read more about these two events below.

### FORMER R+C MANAGING PARTNER REFLECTS ON HIS CAREER IN *BUSINESS LAW TODAY*

The Honorable Alvin W. Thompson, former managing partner of Robinson+Cole, was interviewed for the Member Spotlight column in the January 2014 issue of *Business Law Today*, a publication of the American Bar Association (ABA). Now a judge for the U.S. District Court, District of Connecticut, Judge Thompson has devoted much of his life to public service, serving on boards of numerous organizations, both civic and charitable. Of note, his longest involvement has been as a member of the local Advisory Board of the Salvation Army. In 2008, he received the Edwin Archer Randolph Diversity Award from the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity, a nonprofit that works to advance the professional status of attorneys of color and women in law firms throughout Connecticut. In addition, he has served in various leadership roles in the ABA. In the article, Judge Thompson reflects on his career path in the legal field, in particular

what inspired him, how he dealt with being a minority, and why he focused on banking and finance as a practicing lawyer. During his tenure at Robinson+Cole, he served as managing partner for three years, the first African-American to lead a large Connecticut law firm. Interspersed within the interview are some special memories that Judge Thompson shares about his time at Robinson+Cole. Please [click here](#) to view the article.

#### **UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL AND NORTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT HONORS ERIC DANIELS WITH 2013 COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

The highest honor United Way bestows upon a volunteer is its Community Service Award. Robinson+Cole's Eric D. Daniels received this honor at the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut's annual meeting on March 25, 2014. Among the many organizations and causes to which Mr. Daniels has committed his time and skills are Achieve Hartford!, HARC, Hartford Hospital, Interval House, New Horizons, and The Bushnell. He has also served on the Board of Directors of The iQuilt Plan, a community revitalization initiative for Hartford, since his appointment in 2011 by Governor Dannel Malloy. Mr. Daniels has been involved with United Way in various capacities over the years, including serving as chair of the professional services division of the United Way Campaign in 2007 and 2008, and as chair of the 2012 Community Campaign. Currently, he co-chairs the Tocqueville Society of leadership donors.

#### **ROBINSON+COLE SPONSORS HARTFORD STAGE'S PRODUCTION OF *SOMEWHERE***

Robinson+Cole recognized its commitment to diversity, education, and community at a private reception prior to the Hartford Stage performance of *Somewhere* on April 22, 2014. Robinson+Cole, a longtime supporter of Hartford Stage, was also a production sponsor for *Somewhere*. During the reception, Managing Partner John B. Lynch Jr. presented a check for \$2,500 to Joshua Reese, executive director and CEO of Hartford's Camp Courant. The donation will help support the camp in its mission to provide a free summer sanctuary for Hartford children, allowing them to learn, have fun, and develop positive relationships.

#### **HARTFORD STAGE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR DISCUSSES *SOMEWHERE* WITH ROBINSON+COLE LAWYERS AND STAFF**

Robinson+Cole's Diversity Committee invited Darko Tresnjak, artistic director at the Hartford Stage, to the firm to discuss the play *Somewhere*, which the firm sponsored. The play, by *The Whipping Man* author Matthew Lopez, tells a dance-filled saga of a Puerto Rican family in New York in 1959. *Somewhere* centers on the musical *West Side Story*, which was storming Broadway, with a movie version on the way. This fuels the show business dreams of Inez Candelaria, who works as an usher but hopes that her children will succeed on the other side of the footlights.

#### **STAND AGAINST RACISM**

Robinson+Cole joined with YWCA associations across the nation and over 2,000 other organizations, companies, universities, hospitals, schools, governments, and other groups on Friday, April 25, to Stand Against Racism. Employees joined individuals across the country pledging to take a stand against oppression and intolerance and to celebrate the richness of human diversity. Individuals in each Robinson+Cole office put a fingerprint on a poster board that had the pledge printed on it, and the fingerprints were turned into balloons under the heading "[diversity is uplifting.](#)"

#### **HARTFORD LAWYERS COACH STUDENTS TO PRESENT SIMULATED TRIAL**

Insurance litigation lawyers J. Tyler Butts and Dominic Spinelli helped ninth and tenth grade students from Hartford Public High School's Law and Government Academy prepare for and present a simulated trial. The program, held on May 1, 2014, was part of the federal judiciary's celebration of Law Day. Mr. Butts and Mr. Spinelli coached the students on the key elements of trial, including opening and closing statements and the questioning of witnesses. The trial was presided over by Senior District Court Judge Dominic J. Squatrito and featured closing remarks from professor Richard Wilson from the University of Connecticut School of Law. Law Day was first celebrated in 1958 to provide an opportunity to reflect on the role of law in the foundation of the country and to recognize its importance for society.

#### **PROVIDENCE OFFICE SPONSORS RICH'S ANNUAL LUNCHEON**

Robinson+Cole's Providence office was a sponsor of the Rhode Island Coalition for the Homeless's (RICH) annual awards luncheon, held on March 24, 2014, in Warwick, Rhode Island. Representing the firm were Providence lawyers Patricia J. Igoe, Peter V. Lacouture, and George W. Watson. The event provided an opportunity for RICH members to celebrate their achievements, honor their community heroes, and show their commitment to ending homelessness in Rhode Island. The mission of RICH is to

"promote and preserve the dignity and quality of life for men, women, and children by pursuing comprehensive and cooperative solutions to the problems of housing and homelessness."

#### **HARTFORD LAWYER CO-CHAIRS YWCA 'IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN' EVENT**

Over 1,400 members of the Greater Hartford community gathered for YWCA Hartford Region's 19th annual In the Company of Women Luncheon at the Connecticut Convention Center in Hartford on April 8, 2014, to support YWCA's mission to eliminate racism and empower women. Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson, labor and employment lawyer, and Julie A. Trowbridge-Dillman, senior vice president of Operations & E-Business, The Travelers Companies, Inc., served as event co-chairs. Along with Ms. Cole-Johnson, Robinson+Cole lawyers Alice E. DeTora, Edward J. Samorajczyk, Virginia E. McGarrity, and Susan N. Masters attended the event. Camryn Manheim, an acclaimed actress and social activist known for her Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winning role on *The Practice* as defense attorney Ellenor Frutt, was the keynote speaker. A vocal advocate for human rights and the empowerment of women, Ms. Manheim spoke about living life generously and her experience defying the beauty myth and casting stereotypes in Hollywood.

Robinson+Cole is a proud sponsor of YWCA's In the Company of Women Luncheon. Proceeds from the luncheon help fund YWCA programs and services that improve lives of women and children in the Greater Hartford region, including child care, supportive and transitional housing, teen leadership development, racial justice awareness, economic empowerment, and financial literacy.

#### **KEISHA PALMER ELECTED TO BOARD OF HFCU**

The Hartford Federal Credit Union elected public finance lawyer Keisha S. Palmer to its board of directors on April 23, 2014, for a three-year term. This is Ms. Palmer's second term on the board.

The Hartford Federal Credit Union, a community-chartered credit union, was established in 1961 and serves Hartford, Middlesex, and Tolland counties. A nonprofit financial cooperative, it is owned by its members and governed by a volunteer board of directors elected from its membership.

#### **MANDY ECKHOFF SELECTED AS ONE OF BOSTON'S FUTURE LEADERS**

Commercial finance lawyer Amanda S. Eckhoff has been selected as one of Boston's Future Leaders by the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce. Boston's Future Leaders program identifies midlevel executives with strong leadership potential, providing them with opportunities to engage in the region's business and civic communities, enhance their professional skills, and build their networks. Participants in the program have the opportunity to learn from world-class professors at the Harvard Business School and Suffolk University's Sawyer Business School, to learn about public policy issues affecting local businesses from some of the region's foremost political leaders, and to connect with prominent executives in the business and civic communities.

#### **VIRGINIA MCGARRITY SPEAKS AT CBIA CONFERENCE**

Employee benefits lawyer Virginia E. McGarrity presented at the Connecticut Business & Industry Association's (CBIA) 2014 Human Resources Conference on March 20, 2014, in Cromwell, Connecticut. Ms. McGarrity partnered with Michelle Zettergren, senior vice president, chief sales, and marketing officer at ConnectiCare, Inc., to present "Benefits: What to Prepare for in 2015." The session provided HR professionals with key information on how to effectively manage the current health care environment. The conference attracted approximately 100 human resource professionals from across Connecticut.

#### **ROBINSON+COLE SPONSORS CRAWFORD ANNUAL DINNER**

Robinson+Cole was a sponsor of the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association's 2014 Annual Dinner on May 1, 2014. Firm lawyers Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson, Joey Lee Miranda, Keisha S. Palmer, David M. Panico, Jonathan H. Schaefer, and Evan J. Seeman attended the event, along with Marnie Rubin and incoming first-year associates Christie Jean and Kelly Frye. The George W. Crawford Black Bar Association works to enhance the role of black attorneys in the state, to establish lines of communication and affiliate with local and national organizations within the legal profession, and to focus on legal issues that affect members of the black community.

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#### **DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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[Amanda S. Eckhoff](#) | [John H. Kane, Chair](#) | [Peter V. Lacouture](#) | [John B. Lynch Jr.](#)

[Richard Martinez II](#) | [Virginia E. McGarrity](#) | [Kristopher I. Moore](#) | [Keisha S. Palmer](#)

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