



July 2013

---

## In This Issue:

- [Message from John H. Kane, Diversity Partner](#)
- [Lunchtime Discussion Series Continues](#)
- [Firm Sponsors Annual Crawford Dinner](#)
- [Lawyers of Color Recognizes Scott E. Sebastian](#)
- [Robinson & Cole Lawyers Support the Stowe Center](#)
- [Robinson & Cole Lawyer Featured in HRACC Newsletter](#)
- [Virginia E. McGarrity Quoted in Connecticut Law Tribune](#)
- [Keisha S. Palmer Reelected to Crawford's Board of Directors](#)
- [Scott E. Sebastian Elected Commissioner in West Hartford](#)

---

## MESSAGE FROM JOHN KANE, DIVERSITY PARTNER

As we all try to deal with the recent heat wave, R&C's Summer of Service Program, co-sponsored by our Diversity and Women's Committees, is also heating up. Our Stamford office has had very successful events: cleaning the beach for SoundWaters; sorting and stocking food for the Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County; and preparing, serving, and cleaning up after a meal for over 100 people at the Open Door Shelter. I personally volunteered at Open Door and saw firsthand how important it is, particularly on the hottest day of the year so far, to provide the shelter's clients with a good meal and a place to cool off for a few hours, and we had a lot of fun doing it! Our Hartford office took part in the United Way/YMCA Literacy Program and volunteered with the Elizabeth Park Conservancy, helping to beautify an area park. Volunteers from the Providence office spent an afternoon sorting food donations at the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. A big thank you to all of our volunteers who have made these first few events so successful. More volunteer opportunities are planned for August, including repacking and sorting food at the Greater Boston Food Bank and delivering meals to clients of NYC's Citymeals-on-Wheels. If you have not had a chance to participate in our Summer of Service, please try to join us for our upcoming events. R&C is really making a difference with these organizations, and our volunteers are having a lot of fun along the way. For more information, please click [here](#).



On another note, I'm sure all of us have been involved in conversations over the past couple of weeks concerning the recent Zimmerman verdict out of Florida. R&C will soon be taking part in a program with the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association that will focus on this verdict. More details will follow, but I hope that many of you will be able to join us. In the meantime, enjoy the rest of the summer with your families.

## **LUNCHTIME DISCUSSION SERIES CONTINUED**

Once again, the Diversity Committee was pleased to bring to each of the R&C offices the lunchtime discussion series Concepts of Justice in Literature. This year, participants read and discussed "The Story of a Suicide" by Ian Parker, an article that recounts the events leading up to the tragic suicide of Rutgers student Tyler Clementi. The program was held in the Boston, Providence, Hartford, New York, and Stamford offices during May, June, and July. Adele Geffen Eil, an attorney and educator based in Rhode Island, led and moderated the discussions.

## **FIRM SPONSORS ANNUAL CRAWFORD DINNER**

Robinson & Cole was a sponsor of the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association's (Crawford) Annual Dinner on April 25, 2013. Firm lawyers John B. Lynch Jr., John H. Kane, David M. Panico, Keisha S. Palmer, Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson, and Virginia E. McGarrity attended the event, along with Richard Martinez and Marnie Rubin. Crawford works to enhance the role of black attorneys in the state, to establish lines of communication and to affiliate with local and national organizations within the legal profession, and to focus on legal issues that affect members of the black community.

## **LAWYERS OF COLOR RECOGNIZES SCOTT SEBASTIAN**

Scott E. Sebastian, a tax lawyer in the Hartford office of R&C, has been named by Lawyers of Color to its inaugural Hot List honoring early- to mid-career diverse attorneys in the Eastern Region. Hot List honorees were selected from nominations by mentors, peers, and colleagues as well as by extensive research of attorneys with noteworthy accomplishments. Mr. Sebastian is among a select group of only 100 attorneys chosen to receive this distinction. He has participated in the Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity's Mentoring Program and serves in a leadership role with the Connecticut Asian Pacific American Bar Association.

## **ROBINSON & COLE LAWYERS SUPPORT THE STOWE CENTER**

Robinson & Cole sponsored the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center's Big Tent Jubilee on May 30, 2013, at which Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, was awarded the 2013 Stowe Prize for Writing to Advance Social Justice. Connecticut Governor Dannel P. Malloy, Chief Executive Officer Cathy Malloy of the Greater Hartford Arts Council, and Hartford Mayor Pedro E. Segarra attended the event which raised funds for the Stowe Center's education programs. Robinson & Cole lawyers Bruce B. Barth, John B. Lynch Jr., and Virginia E. McGarrity, a member of the Stowe Center's Board of Trustees, also attended.

## **ROBINSON & COLE LAWYER FEATURED IN HRACC NEWSLETTER**

Labor and employment lawyer Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson was featured in the May 2013 newsletter *HR Communicator*, a publication of the Human Resource Association of Central Connecticut (HRACC). Ms. Cole-Johnson, who was presented with a Volunteer of the Year Award from the Pro Bono Partnership on May 13 in New York City, was recognized in the article for her commitment to human resource (HR) issues and pro bono service.

The HRACC is an affiliate of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Chartered in 1980, HRACC serves all of Greater Hartford and the broader central Connecticut area. Its mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals and to advance the interests of the HR profession by offering professional development, networking, and resources and solutions for varying HR issues.

## **VIRGINIA MCGARRITY QUOTED IN *CONNECTICUT LAW TRIBUNE***

Employee benefits and compensation lawyer Virginia McGarrity was quoted in the *Connecticut Law Tribune* article "Conn. Lawyers Tune in to Supreme Court for 'Civil Rights Issue of the Moment,'" published on March 29, 2013. The article offers responses from Connecticut lawyers on same-sex marriage and the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) debate. Ms. McGarrity spoke to the potential impact of the DOMA decision, particularly within her practice and in regard to benefits and compensation from employers for same-sex couples.

## **KEISHA PALMER REELECTED TO CRAWFORD'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Public finance lawyer Keisha S. Palmer has been reelected to the 2013-2014 Board of Directors of the George W. Crawford Black Bar Association (Crawford). Crawford, whose members include attorneys, judges, and law students, represents the collective body of attorneys of color in the state of Connecticut.

## **SCOTT SEBASTIAN ELECTED COMMISSIONER IN WEST HARTFORD**

Tax lawyer Scott E. Sebastian was elected as a commissioner of the Town of West Hartford's Conservation and Environment Commission. The goals of the commission include developing and conserving natural resources as well as protecting the integrity of the environment within the territorial limits of the town. Each commission member serves a five-year term.

---

## **2013 DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Patrick M. Birney	Virginia E. McGarrity
Antionette D. Bishop	Kristopher I. Moore
Britt-Marie K. Cole-Johnson	Keisha S. Palmer
Amanda S. Eckhoff	Marnie J. Rubin
John H. Kane, <i>Chair</i>	Edward J. Samorajczyk, Jr.
Peter V. Lacouture	Scott E. Sebastian
John B. Lynch, Jr.	Howard K. Shafer
Richard Martinez II	

---

© 2013 Robinson & Cole LLP. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission. This document should not be considered legal advice and does not create an attorney-client relationship between Robinson & Cole and you. Consult your attorney before acting on anything contained herein. The views expressed herein are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Robinson & Cole or any other individual attorney of Robinson & Cole. The contents of this communication may contain attorney advertising under the laws of various states. Prior results do not guarantee a similar outcome.



Forward to a Friend