



NEWS RELEASE

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San Diego Attorney Population Growing More Diverse

Survey shows modest increase in female and non-white attorneys in San Diego, public sector leads in diversity

For immediate release January 14, 2013

An annual equality survey conducted by [Lawyers Club of San Diego](#), a specialty bar association with the mission “to advance the status of women in the law and society,” shows modest increases in the numbers of women in partner and leadership positions in law firms and steady numbers of non-white attorneys in law firms from last year. The 2012 survey shows that the public sector continues to lead in gender equality and ethnic diversity over the private sector, with more women and non-white attorneys overall and more women in top-level and leadership positions.

The Equality Survey, conducted by Lawyers Club’s Equality and Action Committee, gauges trends and documents the progress of female and non-white attorneys in the San Diego legal community each year. This marks the 21st year that Lawyers Club has conducted its Equality Survey to measure such progress.

Among the 42 private law firms surveyed in 2012, women made up an average of 36 percent of the total attorneys (up from 34 percent in 2011), 25 percent of the partners (up from 21 percent in 2011), and 48 percent of the associates (the same as in 2011). Non-white attorneys comprised an average of 13 percent of attorneys at the 26 firms that provided information about ethnic diversity, compared to 12 percent in 2011. Only firms with 15 or more attorneys in San Diego County were included in the survey.

At the 11 public agencies surveyed, women accounted for an average of 54 percent of total attorneys (down slightly from 55 percent in 2011), 48 percent of the attorneys in top-level positions (the same as in 2011), and headed 55 percent of the agencies (the same as in 2011). Non-white attorneys comprised 22 percent of attorneys at public agencies in 2012, up from 20 percent in 2011.

Maggie Schroedter, chair of the Equality and Action Committee and an attorney at San Diego law firm Higgs Fletcher & Mack, led the effort to maximize participation from

local firms and ensure that the survey was executed to its full potential. Committee member Paula Rosenstein, recently sworn in as a San Diego Superior Court judge, headed up the public sector portion of the survey.

“The data we acquired helped us paint an accurate representation of the diverse make-up in the local legal community,” Schroedter said. “Diversity and gender equality are of growing importance – not only as a matter of ethics, but also because a diverse workforce is vital in developing a successful business and maintaining valuable client relationships. While we are excited to witness an increase in both female leadership and a non-Caucasian attorney composition within firms, it continues to be the mission of Lawyers Club to promote these issues within the San Diego legal community.”

For law firms, the survey also inquires about parental leave and alternative work schedule policies, and survey results show a continued improvement in benefits and flexibility. A more detailed discussion of firms’ various policies can be found online at <http://lawyersclubsandiego.com/associations/4937/files/Dec.2012.LC.newsletter.pdf> (at pages 10-11).

In 2011, the Equality and Action Committee added two new categories of questions to the law firm portion of its survey, inquiring about women and attorneys of color who hold equity vs. non-equity partnerships and leadership positions within firms.

“It is critical to track information about equity partnership and leadership positions within law firms,” said Johanna Schiavoni, Lawyers Club Vice President of Public Relations, past-chair of the Equality Committee, and a partner with Jacobs & Schlesinger in San Diego. “Those positions are where power resides for decision-making within firms, and where women and attorneys of color have made the least progress. Lawyers Club is committed to providing professional and business development opportunities to help women and attorneys of color attain these crucial partnership and leadership positions.”

The 2012 Equality Survey results and a detailed summary of the data are available online at <http://lawyersclubsandiego.com/associations/4937/files/2012.Equality.Survey.web.pdf> (at pages 10-14.)

For more information about the 2012 Equality Survey, contact Maggie Schroedter at schroedterm@higgslaw.com.

About Lawyers Club of San Diego

Lawyers Club of San Diego, a specialty bar association with the mission “to advance the status of women in the law and society,” was founded in 1972 and celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2012. Lawyers Club now has more than 1,000 members comprised of female and male attorneys, judges, law students and others in the San Diego community who share our interests and goals. www.lawyersclubsandiego.com.