

# D+I Download

## Campus Edition

Volume 2, Fall 2023

Welcome to the second issue of this year's D+I Download: *Campus Edition*. By way of background for our new readers, the purpose of the D+I Download is to keep you up to date on some of Morrison Foerster's diversity and inclusion efforts. We hope you enjoy learning more about our endeavors.

### A MESSAGE ABOUT THE MOMENT

For decades, Morrison Foerster has worked to create a workplace environment that respects and fosters diversity and inclusion. Our commitment to these core values is unshakeable. We will continue to uphold these core values and our long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion, despite the challenging landscape before us.



Natalie Kernisant  
Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer

### MOFO CELEBRATES A HOST OF HERITAGE MONTHS

#### CELEBRATING ASIAN-AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER (AAPI) HERITAGE MONTH

##### *A Conversation with Helen Wan, Author of Partner Track*

On May 10, in celebration of AAPI Heritage Month, New York partner [Haima Marlier](#), sat down for a conversation with Helen Wan, speaker, lawyer, and author of the Netflix series, *Partner Track*. The series is an adaption of Wan's novel, which was inspired by her personal journey as an M&A associate at a large corporate law firm. The series explores Wan's observations of patterns of disparate treatment toward and among her peers, while also examining intersectionality and the relationship of the AAPI community to other marginalized communities, with many of the main characters struggling with imposter syndrome and the pressure to conform to expectations.

To learn more about the discussion and Helen Wan's book, please read our MoFo+ [blog post](#).





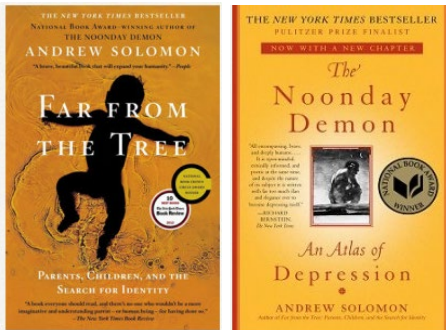
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## CELEBRATING PRIDE MONTH

### *A Conversation with Andrew Solomon, Author of **Far from the Tree** and **The Noonday Demon***

On June 20, as part of MoFo's celebration of Pride Month, New York partner [Katherine Erbeznik](#) moderated a conversation with Andrew Solomon, a writer and lecturer on politics, culture, and psychology. During the program, Andrew shared his personal journey celebrating love and parenthood as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Specifically, Andrew discussed how the emergence of gay parenthood has made an enormous difference in strengthening the perception of the LGBTQ+ community. He also discussed the challenges and feelings of unhealthy perfectionism that he faced as a parent in a gay household.

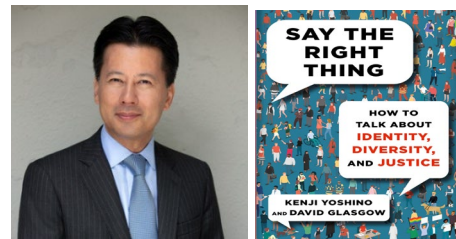
To read more about Andrew Solomon's discussion, please read our MoFo+ [blog post](#).



### *A Conversation with Professor Kenji Yoshino, Author of **Say the Right Thing – How to Talk About Identity, Diversity, and Justice***

On June 26, to close out the firm's celebration of Pride month, the LGBTQ+ Affinity Network and the MoFo Allies Network sponsored a fireside chat with Kenji Yoshino, the Chief Justice Earl Warren Professor of Constitutional Law at NYU School of Law, acclaimed author, and legal scholar. The discussion was moderated by New York partner [Katie Viggiani](#). Over 370 employees tuned into the webinar as Kenji discussed his lived experiences as a member of the LGBTQ+ community and how these experiences served as a springboard for his work in allyship.

To learn more about the discussion and Kenji's book, please read our MoFo+ [blog post](#).





## CELEBRATING LATINX HERITAGE MONTH

### *A Conversation with Monica Ramirez, Founder of Justice for Migrant Women*

On September 15, MoFo began its celebration of Latinx Heritage month, which is observed annually from September 15th to October 15th.

To commemorate the month, on October 6, the Latinx Affinity Group hosted a paint and sip event for its members.

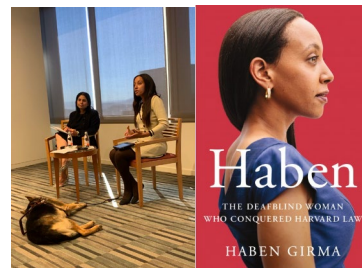
Additionally, on October 13, New York partner [Anthony Ramirez](#) hosted a conversation with [Monica Ramirez](#), an activist, author, civil rights lawyer, entrepreneur, and public speaker. She is engaged in service and advocacy on behalf of farmworkers, Latinas, and immigrant women and is the founder of Justice for Migrant Women.



## **MOFO CELEBRATES NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH**

Observed annually in October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities, past and present, and highlights supportive, inclusive employment policies and practices.

On October 18, New York of counsel [Tushna Gamadia](#) hosted a conversation with [Haben Girma](#), a disability rights lawyer, author, and speaker. Haben, the first deaf-blind woman to graduate from Harvard Law School, discussed her career path as a deaf-blind lawyer, her disability advocacy work, and the importance of accessibility in education and technology. Nearly 250 employees and clients tuned into the webinar.



Additionally, on October 20, MoFo hosted an ableism training, which discussed what ableism is and how to recognize it in the workplace. The training, hosted by [Disability Solutions](#), also provided actionable tips to address ableism in our environment. Disability Solutions is a non-profit consulting and services group that helps employers to attract, hire, and engage top talent from the disability community.



## MOFO NAVIGATE

### A SPOTLIGHT ON PARTNER NATE MENDELL

On June 6, Boston partner [Nate Mendell](#) sat down with Diversity Strategy Committee co-chair and New York partner [Haima Marlier](#) to discuss his career and transition from the U.S. Attorney's Office to MoFo. The Partner Spotlight series is a part of MoFo Navigate and is designed to support the successful integration of our new lateral diverse and women partners. MoFo Navigate is an umbrella initiative that houses all of the firm's mentorship and sponsorship programs and is uniquely and specifically designed to promote greater equity and inclusion and to train both mentors and mentees on issues like the root causes of attrition and how to mentor effectively across differences.

In addition to providing practical career advice, Nate discussed how being diverse has helped him develop adaptability, perspective-taking, and problem-solving skills. Nate, a partner in Morrison Foerster's Investigations + White Collar Defense and Privacy + Data Security practice groups, was the former Acting U.S. Attorney for the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Massachusetts. He represents companies, financial institutions, boards, and executives through all phases of investigation and litigation involving allegations of corporate healthcare fraud, securities, and other financial fraud, public corruption, criminal intellectual property theft, data breach or disclosure, and international money laundering.



## MIDSUMMER RETREAT AT MOFO

On June 28 – 29, MoFo Wetmore Fellows and SEO Law Fellows attended a midsummer retreat in the firm's San Francisco office. The program provided Fellows with professional development sessions and networking opportunities.

The Keith Wetmore Fellowship for Excellence, Diversity, and Inclusion program provides exceptional first and second-year law students with a demonstrated commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in the legal profession, with the training, mentorship, and exposure necessary for their professional development and engagement. Each year, Fellows are selected from a competitive pool of applicants and are invited to join the firm as summer associates.

The Sponsors for Educational Opportunity (SEO) Law Fellowship Program provides academic and career development training programs to students of various dimensions of diversity, to ensure their professional success and jumpstart their legal careers. The pre-law interns who join us as SEO Law Fellows are included in our Summer Associate Program.

Approximately 40 Fellows attended the retreat that was designed by MoFo's Diversity and Inclusion (D+I) Group to help the Fellows connect as a cohort, engage with firm leadership and diverse MoFo lawyers, and support their continued success at MoFo and beyond.







## MOFO WOMEN'S INITIATIVES

### A SPOTLIGHT ON MOFO WOMEN PARTNERS

On July 21, the Women's Strategy Committee (WSC) spearheaded a conversation with partners Katherine Erbeznik, Kelley Howes, and Whitney O'Byrne, where they discussed how they began their legal careers and curated their own paths to partnership and success at MoFo. The discussion was moderated by Denver associate [Chere See](#).

[Katherine Erbeznik](#) is a Tax partner in the New York office and has experience with a wide range of transactional matters, including cross-border mergers and acquisitions with a particular focus on Latin America.

[Kelley Howes](#) is a partner in the Denver office and co-chair of the Investment Management Group. She has experience with a wide range of legal, regulatory, compliance, corporate governance, insurance, relating primarily to the representation of U.S. registered and unregistered investment companies, offshore funds, registered investment advisers, transfer agents, and broker-dealers.

[Whitney O'Byrne](#) is a partner and trial lawyer in the Los Angeles office. She has a wide range of experience litigating complex civil, regulatory, and criminal matters. She represents clients, large and small, in disputes involving intellectual property, legal malpractice, antitrust, consumer class actions, privacy class actions, and other commercial litigation in state and federal court.



### A SPOTLIGHT ON THE SCHOOLS CONSENT PROJECT

On April 25 and September 21, the WSC and the MoFo pro bono team welcomed the Schools Consent Project (SCP) to the New York office for an introductory program and a subsequent 90-minute collaborative training. The SCP is an innovative program that trains lawyer volunteers on how to conduct highly interactive workshops at high schools around the legal parameters of consent in intimate relationships. The SCP training was well-received—a MoFo New York associate was “impressed with this training program that so artfully teaches the importance of communication and respect for intimate relationships through helpful exercise[s].” Additionally, a MoFo client noted that “the training and program [was] fantastic.”

You can learn more about the SCP [here](#).





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## DIVERSITY IN PRACTICE PODCAST

THE ALLIES NETWORK PRESENTS: FROM DOBBS TO BIDEN V. NEBRASKA: *A LOOK AT THE 2022-2023 SCOTUS TERMS* PODCAST



The *Diversity in Practice* podcast is a part of MoFo Perspectives and is designed to provide a space to discuss a wide variety of issues related to diversity in the law, as well as introduce the external community to some of our talented, diverse lawyers, their areas of legal expertise, and the work that they and their MoFo Allies do in furtherance of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

In the most recent episode of the series, co-chair of Morrison Foerster's Global Employment + Labor Group and Women's Strategy Committee and Los Angeles partner, [Tritia Murata](#), and managing partner of Morrison Foerster's New York office, [Jamie Levitt](#), hosted a discussion about the legal implications of recent landmark Supreme Court decisions with NYU Law professors and legal experts, [Kenji Yoshino](#) and [Melissa Murray](#), and author and legal correspondent at *Slate*, [Dahlia Lithwick](#).

Listen to the podcast [here](#).



## BLACK AFFINITY NETWORK MEETING

On September 25-26, partners and associates across MoFo's U.S. offices came together in Washington, D.C., for an in-person Black Affinity Network (BAN) meeting. The D+I Group kicked off the retreat with a cooking class with [Mangia DC](#). The next day, partners and associates sat down for an update from the D+I Group, an *Ask Me Anything* session with BAN partners, and a session with DEI consultant and speaker [Michelle Silverthorn](#) on recognizing one's pathway to success at work. The retreat concluded with an associate happy hour and farewell dinner. Additionally, BAN partners attended a Diamond Dinner with the [Black In-House Counsel Network](#) (BIHC), where partners were able to connect with black in-house lawyers across a variety of industries and geographic locations.





## MOFO LAUNCHES NEW MIDDLE EASTERN NORTH AFRICAN AFFINITY NETWORK

In September, MoFo launched the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Affinity Network. The MENA Affinity Network is open to all employees and aims to further the firm's commitment to D+I by focusing our efforts on raising awareness around the unique experience of navigating the professional space as a MENA lawyer/employee by actively supporting the recruitment, engagement, retention, development, and advancement of our MENA lawyers/employees across the firm.

The network held a kickoff on October 10. At the kickoff, affinity network liaisons, Los Angeles partners [Mehran Arjomand](#) and [Whitney O'Byrne](#) reflected on the diversity of the MENA community, their personal and professional journeys, and what launching the MENA Affinity Network means to them. The conversation was moderated by San Diego associate [Owen Grayson Hosseinzadeh](#).



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## D+I RESOURCES

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MOFO'S D+I INITIATIVES

[Diversity Strategy Committee](#)

[Women's Strategy Committee](#)

[MoFo Proud](#)

[MoFo Women](#)

Please visit [MoFo To-Go](#) for more information on our Summer Associate Program, to read our latest blog posts, and to experience our virtual job simulations.