



14

Diversity, Equity + Inclusion in Action

Annual Report 2019



# Cementing a Firm Foundation for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Warner

Contents

Annual Report 2019



<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
Letter From Our Managing Partner	2
<b>NEW INITIATIVES</b>	
Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Action Committee	4
Hiring Practices	6
Our New Headquarters	8
<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH</b>	
Events + Engagement	10
Volunteerism + Philanthropy	12
<b>STATISTICS</b>	
How We Measure Up	13



# Growing Our Commitment to Serve Better and Achieve More

To our clients, community partners and friends:

For the past 14 years, Warner Norcross + Judd has prepared this annual report to share our successes and challenges as we work to become a more diverse and inclusive organization. These efforts have been very ably led for more than two decades by our Diversity Partner, Rodney Martin. Rodney started our first serious efforts in this area and pursued the work with enthusiasm. He developed innovative programs and initiatives that addressed recruitment, retention, engagement and more.

This report highlights the progress we made in 2019. But since this report was first drafted, our entire world has been turned upside down. We are in the midst of a global pandemic and, as recent events have highlighted, racism and social injustice have been identified as urgent issues we have to address. This year has impacted us all profoundly, both individually and as a firm. Next year's 2020 Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Annual Report will examine our immediate and heightened response to these events and the impact we hope our response will ultimately have on our firm, on our firm members and in the communities we serve.

Still, we're proud of our accomplishments in 2019 and believe they're entirely consistent with Rodney's original vision to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion are at the heart of every decision we make.

During 2019, we expanded our efforts on this front by transitioning to a broader committee designed to engage people from all levels within our firm. Our new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action (DEIA) Committee has welcomed 25 team members from our eight offices who are aligned around five common initiatives, including leadership, communications, external relationships, organizational processes and systems criteria/process management.

We also engaged Skot Welch from Global Bridgebuilders® to lead an internal benchmarking survey and focus groups designed to demonstrate exactly where we are as an organization and how we can improve. We have shared results broadly within the firm and are implementing an action plan with steps designed to strengthen our diversity and inclusion efforts. You can read more about our findings on page 4.

Our DEIA Committee has used these findings to develop specific recommendations and actions that our firm can achieve. We feel by engaging in a broader and more comprehensive approach to addressing the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in our firm, we will spark more momentum and encourage accountability.

During 2019, we continued to invest in Talent 2025, a West Michigan catalyst of 100-plus CEOs from a 13-county region working to ensure West Michigan will have an ongoing supply of world-class talent. Warner has been part of this important work since Talent 2025's inception, and I have served on the CEO Council since 2015. You can read more on our work with Talent 2025 on page 6.

As a region, as a profession and as a law firm, we are committed to enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion to ensure everyone feels welcomed and part of our team. These principles were at the forefront of our thinking when we designed the new Warner Building, the firm's new home in the heart of downtown Grand Rapids. You can read more about what went into this process on page 8.

Thank you for taking time to read our 2019 Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Annual Report. We have significant goals for 2020 and know our work is far from complete as we strive to become a more diverse and inclusive organization.

Best regards,

Douglas A. Dozeman  
Managing Partner



**1** Managing Partner, Doug Dozeman  
**2** Diversity Partner, Rodney Martin  
**3 / 4** Attorney Jason Tejani and Career Development Manager Kaushi Muthukuda play key roles as leaders on our Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Action Committee in Southfield. **5** The new Warner Building in downtown Grand Rapids.

# Actively Improving Our Processes to Advance Our Culture

Fostering an environment of belonging and one that advances diversity, equity and inclusion has been a long-term commitment of Warner.

New in 2019, we have hired a third party to internally assess where we are, where we need to go and how to get there. Externally, we invest time, talent and resources in organizations that provide services and opportunities relating to culture, race, gender and sexual orientation, and socio-economic, marital, age, religion, disability, immigrant or veteran statuses.

In 2019, the newly formed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Committee conducted a firm-wide Inclusion Systems Assessment Survey to better identify our areas of strength and those that need improvement. Conducted by Skot Welch, principal, innovation strategist and facilitator of Global Bridgebuilders®, the survey focused on organizational behavior and processes, as opposed to individual attitudes.

For the survey, Warner received an incredible firm-wide participation rate of 74%, with respondents identifying as white, African American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern and multi-racial. Feedback was given in five areas including leadership, communication, organizational processes, external relationships and systems criteria/process management, which mirror the new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Committee’s subcommittees.

Scores are given within a defined range, with four ranges total. Warner’s survey results placed the firm in the second scoring range – the first being the best. The results revealed that while the firm is on the right track, we haven’t yet achieved our final destination.

In addition, Skot facilitated focus groups in our Grand Rapids, Midland, Lansing, Kalamazoo and Southfield offices comprised of attorneys and staff of varying positions within the firm. These focus groups addressed topics such as diversity and inclusion and welcoming versus belonging, as well as identifying strengths and weaknesses of the firm.

We believe a team that values a broad range of experiences, perspectives and ideas is more innovative, effective and better at problem solving, which will result in better outcomes and service for our clients.

Several members of our Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Action Committee work on executing our action plan in our Southfield office. Pictured from left to right, Valerie Butler, Cassandra Tucker, Kaushi Muthukuda and Jason Tejani. More DEIA Committee members are featured on page 8.

Our Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Action Committee is addressing and implementing action plan items through our five subcommittees.

These action plan items include:

- 1** Creating a more robust process around communication, both internally and externally, so our staff and community have better insight into our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.
- 2** Continuing to work on our hiring practices to ensure we solicit applications from individuals with all backgrounds and work to eradicate unconscious bias.
- 3** Expanding our relationships with suppliers and other community organizations to continue to develop workforce diversity.



# Coming Together to Attract and Support Top Talent

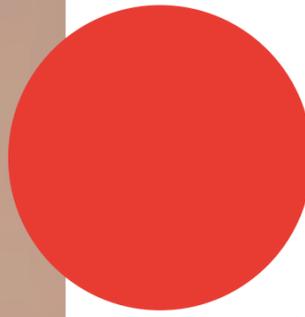
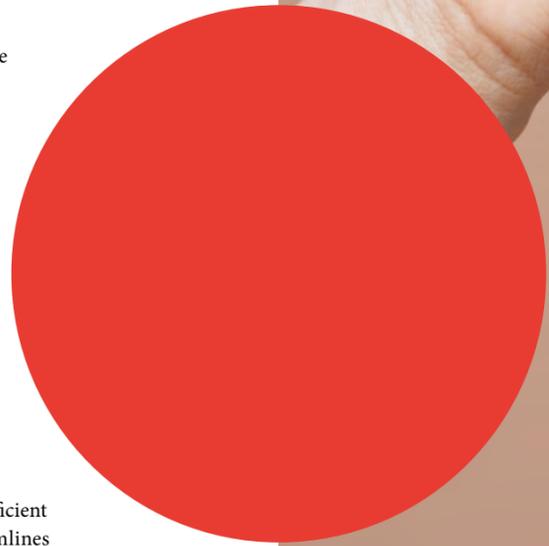
A sizable employer in the state of Michigan, Warner has been committed to eliminating barriers for many years. One way we do that is by being active in the community – providing both financial and hands-on resources to a variety of nonprofits. Involvement in these community groups enables us to have a grassroots approach to building a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce.

We support numerous initiatives across our eight offices and in the communities where we work and live. For example, many of our offices are involved in Michigan Women Forward (MWF), a nonprofit organization devoted to the economic and personal advancement of Michigan women and girls. We actively sponsor and work with MWF through the pro bono assistance our attorneys provide to economically disadvantaged businesses and individuals who come through MWF. MWF's programs, namely UGOGirlsforChange, UGOSTEMGirls and UGOGirlsonCampus, empower young girls to reach their full potential.

Additionally, attorneys from our Midland office serve on boards for the Japanese Cultural Center, the Bay Area Women's Center and Hidden Harvest. These three community nonprofits bring awareness to diversity and inclusion, gender equity and socio-economic conditions impacting people in the Midland community.

The mindset of investing in community isn't new, but it led Warner to join Talent 2025 in 2015, combining efforts with more than 100 employers and stakeholders in West Michigan to address talent demands across several industries.

Talent 2025 is a nonprofit organization that pools resources and best practices together to help employers in 13 West Michigan counties facilitate efficient collaboration that integrates shared resources, streamlines processes and leverages best practices to make West Michigan a top 20 employment region by 2025 – a mission Warner has supported from the very beginning. The organization does this through "working groups" and other talent attraction and retention programs, such as HireReach.



"Talent 2025 aligns with things we were already trying to do, but now with the benefit of learning from the experiences of others," said Managing Partner Doug Dozeman, who serves on Talent 2025's CEO Council. "The several strategies we adopted years ago, such as behavioral-based interviewing, implicit bias training, along with working to increase diversity among our vendors, have been affirmed by organizations in Talent 2025 that are on parallel paths.

"West Michigan thrives, in part, because businesses are motivated to work together to make a difference. Partnerships like Talent 2025 come naturally in our community.

"Diversity, equity and inclusion are extremely important to me and to our firm," Doug noted. "A broad range of experiences, perspectives and ideas contribute to a more innovative and effective workplace – resulting in greater outcomes and service for our clients. It has been valuable to compare notes with other companies in the group."

Talent 2025 President Kevin Stotts said: "I've had a longstanding relationship with Warner, even before Talent 2025. Warner is a major employer in the professional industry sector, an exemplary employer. It's always been a great organization with a strong commitment to community and in addressing regional challenges."

In addition to Doug's participation, Warner's Director of Pricing and Process Improvement and former Human Resources Director Cheryl Coutchie initiated the firm's participation in HireReach; a collaboration of West Michigan Works! and Talent 2025. HireReach assists West Michigan employers with meeting talent demands through evidence-based selection processes and is led by Technical Advisor, Bill Guest.

"HireReach is designed to help employers do a better job of selecting the best candidates," Bill said. "The hiring process in general has lots of gray areas and variation. This program is all about measuring people's skills so we hire people with the right skillset and increase our diversity."

Cheryl noted: "Warner was selected to participate in the first cohort of HireReach, a year-long, grant-funded program. We meet monthly for training on evidence-based selection techniques, vendor selection support and benefit from peer-to-peer sharing.

"Warner's participation has allowed the firm to leverage the experience of seasoned consultants and larger employers. This has helped us adopt robust and sophisticated hiring processes faster than the firm could have done on its own."

The end goal includes improving the quality of Warner's legal support hiring, reducing turnover, increasing workforce diversity and maintaining the firm's historically low attrition rate.

"It's not enough to have good intentions," Doug said. "You have to put in the work every day and be committed to growth over time. It won't happen instantaneously. There will be growing pains, but it will be worth all the effort."





# Moving to Improve the Way We Work

The move to new offices in the Warner Building at 150 Ottawa Ave. NW reflects the way law is practiced today – and anticipates future trends that will shape the legal industry over the next 50 years. Designed by a cross-section of firm team members, the new office features workspaces that encourage collaboration and teamwork, creating a welcoming environment for clients, attorneys and staff.

Gone are the hierarchical signs of the traditional law firm, where senior partners claim larger offices in plum locations. Whether for partners or associates, all attorney offices are the same size. And everyone has direct access to windows, a deliberate design choice underscoring the importance of natural light and the desire to bring the outdoors in.

The Design Committee created workspaces to enhance collaboration, from “neighborhoods” that allow legal assistants to more efficiently share work to coffee nooks throughout the footprint. The Warner Building features 11 collaborative open-work environments designed to be accessible to all in the firm. They have been equipped with Chromebooks and iPads that motivate people to grab a cup of coffee and continue a discussion or work on a project away from individual offices.

New collaborative technology has simplified video conferences, webinars and conference calls, allowing the Grand Rapids office to connect seamlessly with Warner’s seven other offices throughout the state. Nineteen conference rooms of varying sizes, including 11 on the 15th floor with sweeping views of downtown Grand Rapids, are intended to welcome both clients and community partners. The 15th floor is also home to our gender-inclusive restroom.

“The finished space truly exceeded our expectations, giving us a flexible, functional workspace that meets the needs of attorneys and

staff,” said Managing Partner Doug Dozeman. “Many hands went into this project, from our Design Committee to our general contractor Dan Vos Construction to our good client Haworth. We took great care at each step to ensure we were creating a space for everyone, and I think it shows.”

The move – only the third in the firm’s 88 years – may only have been “across the street” from Warner’s longtime downtown headquarters, but it was more than five years in the making. It was critical to the firm to maintain a strong downtown Grand Rapids presence – and to plan for future changes in how people work and how attorneys will practice law.

“This project was never simply about building a building. It has always been about building space that is flexible and able to support the practice of law into the future, knowing there will be fundamental changes,” said Amanda Fielder, a partner who chaired the firm’s Design Committee. “We knew we needed offices that would accommodate all generations, from team members in their 20s to their 70s.

“Our over-riding goal was to create a space that encouraged people to move, not just sit at their desk in the same space for eight hours a day. We tried to carefully balance personal space with engaging collaborative space to create an environment that encourages teamwork.”

Above, selected members of our Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Action Committee gather to implement our action plan in our new Grand Rapids office. Pictured from left to right, Carin Ojala, Mandice McAllister, Kent Sparks, James Liggins Jr., Courtney Failer, Jana Hoeker and Audrey Pimpleton.



# Impacting Positive Change in our Communities

Warner’s dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion extend beyond the walls of our eight offices. Since our founding, Warner has valued investing time, talent and resources in our communities.

### Funding Scholarships

For nearly two decades, Warner has invested in diversifying the legal profession. Through various scholarships to support those pursuing a career in law, the firm has given more than \$200,000 in financial support.

“It is with great honor to share that I recently embarked on my law school journey at the Georgetown University Law Center. I am reaching out to express my sincerest gratitude to the firm for its important contribution to my success thus far. Without the scholarship, I am certain that my admissions process would have turned out differently. I look forward to one day contributing to my community in a similar way as Warner Norcross + Judd. And as a proud Michigander, I hope to do so right at home.” 2017 LSAT Scholarship recipient Nabintou Doumbia, pictured at right.

### Revitalizing Urban Detroit

Warner is a proud member of the 313 Club – a club founded through Detroit-based nonprofit Life Remodeled – to support the revitalization of Detroit neighborhoods. As we look forward to moving into our new downtown Detroit office, Warner is committed to contributing to the betterment of the Detroit community.

### Advancing Ethnic Diversity

Our investment in the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance Summit on Race and Inclusion supports a day-long conference for hundreds of participants from across the state to address and eradicate racial disparities. Warner has been a supporter of this event since 2008, and Partner Rodney Martin is on the CEO Advisory Council. Gloria Lara, executive director of the Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance, stated: “Warner Norcross + Judd has been an excellent supporter of our work in advancing equity in West Michigan. We are grateful to have such an outstanding partner in the community.”

### Advocating for the LGBTQIA+ Community

Warner champions diversity, equity and inclusion for all, and is a proud sponsor of OutPro through the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce. The firm supports the Chamber’s goal to create a welcoming culture in Grand Rapids, and wants to ensure that everyone in our community has a sense of belonging. This LGBTQIA+ professionals group serves as a resource to area businesses and employees. In addition, Warner has a representative on the leadership council for OutPro.



### Carrying on the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Every year, Warner honors the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by engaging in and sponsoring events statewide. The firm supports and attends the Muskegon Community College MLK Unity Day Breakfast, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commission of Mid-Michigan Annual MLK Holiday Luncheon, and the Saginaw Valley State University MLK Regional Celebration, to name a few.

Now in its 15th year, our Grand Rapids office also coordinates a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest open to sixth graders within Grand Rapids Public Schools. We encourage students to reflect on the lasting impact of King’s legacy and teachings and consider how we can continue to advance his work.

The 2019 contest engaged more than 330 students from 17 different schools in Grand Rapids. Every year, the winner reads their essay at the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration at Fountain Street Church. The top three winners read their essays at a Grand Rapids Public School Board of Education meeting. In 2019, student, teacher and school names were removed from the essays prior to judging to prevent unconscious bias in scoring.

Teacher Steven Reynolds of Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Academy shared: “Through this essay contest, we better understand that our building’s namesake is not titular. As we studied Dr. King’s words, we learned a lot about ourselves and were encouraged to fortify our finer attributes and subdue the things hurtful to our school, community, family and our own self.”

### Supporting Our Local Communities

Warner is invested in the Grand Rapids Plaza Roosevelt project – a collaborative neighborhood-focused plan that includes affordable housing, education, health and economic opportunities for the Roosevelt Park Neighborhood residents. In addition to financial support, Partner Jeff Ott serves on the Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity of Kent County – the originating organization behind this project – and Warner has supported legal needs of the initiative. “Our partnership with Warner Norcross + Judd goes so much deeper than financial support,” says Bev Thiel, executive director at Habitat for Humanity of Kent County. “From Board leadership to technical assistance, we are grateful for the many ways the team at Warner walks alongside us to build a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.”

**1** Warner scholarship recipient, Nabintou Doumbia. **2** Warner actively supports the revitalization of Detroit urban neighborhoods. **3** Sixth-grader Azariah Powell participates in our Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest in coordination with the Grand Rapids Public School District. **4** 2019 Summit on Race and Inclusion featuring speaker Rudy Valdez at the Jack H. Miller Music Center at Hope College.

### Promoting Volunteerism

Warner values time spent volunteering in our communities. Statewide, our offices find ways to give back beyond talent and treasure. Every year, our Midland office joins together to work on a home build for Midland County Habitat for Humanity. In 2019, our Macomb County and Southfield offices packed meals for Forgotten Harvest. Kalamazoo attorneys and staff work in the kitchens at Ministry with Community on a quarterly basis, and our Grand Rapids office helped fix up a house for Family Promise. Additional individual engagements on boards and committees are too numerous to mention.

### Championing Collection Drives

Warner also finds opportunities to give back to those in need in our communities through various collection drives:

- Our D.A. Blodgett-St. John's Backpack and School Supply Drive collected nearly 600 items to support students in need.
- We collected more than 150 pounds of food for the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes food pantry.
- We filled more than four bins with used electronics to support the work of Comprenew, which refurbishes and then donates or sells the electronics at very modest prices to organizations that serve low-income and at-risk populations.
- Our Heart of West Michigan United Way Fill the Cart Drive provided more than 350 basic needs items for local nonprofit agencies serving those in need.
- We supported the work of Oakland Family Services by providing basic needs and holiday wish list items for the children of two local families.
- Various nonprofits across the state also benefitted from furniture donations as we moved office locations.

1 Bruce Young takes a break from renovating a house for Family Promise. 2 Food collection for the Kalamazoo Loaves & Fishes food pantry. 3 Stacy Warren organizes used electronics as part of our annual donation initiative to Comprenew. 4 Warner team members raise a house for Habitat for Humanity in Midland.



Here's a look at where we are today – we will never stop trying to do better



#### Associates

RACE / ETHNICITY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
African American	2	1	3
Arab American	2	-	2
Asian / Pacific Islander	-	-	-
Hispanic	-	-	-
Multi-Ethnic	-	1	1
White	24	20	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>50</b>

#### Partners

RACE / ETHNICITY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
African American	-	2	2
Arab American	1	1	2
Asian / Pacific Islander	-	1	1
Hispanic	-	-	-
Multi-Ethnic	-	-	-
White	28	92	120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>125</b>



#### Senior Counsel

RACE / ETHNICITY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
African American	1	1	2
Arab American	1	-	1
Asian / Pacific Islander	-	-	-
Hispanic	1	-	1
Multi-Ethnic	-	-	-
White	11	14	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>29</b>

#### All Active Attorneys

RACE / ETHNICITY	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL
African American	3	4	7
Arab American	4	1	5
Asian / Pacific Islander	-	1	1
Hispanic	1	-	1
Multi-Ethnic	-	1	1
White	63	126	189
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>204</b>



## Warner Norcross + Judd

Grand Rapids  
Southfield  
Midland  
Macomb County  
Muskegon  
Kalamazoo  
Lansing  
Holland

