

Mark S. Stewart

BALLARD SPAHR LLP

Chair

Progress Toward True Diversity

WE WILL KNOW we have made meaningful progress toward true diversity when written statements of support for diversity, like this one, are superfluous; when the movement of minority lawyers from associate to partner is the norm; when women and lawyers of color and gay lawyers are well-represented in all aspects of firm life; and when lateral candidates no longer need to ask where we stand. In other words, I look forward to the end of the need for diversity “champions.”

Diversity is a pursuit in which good flows directly from right. Our clients tell us that they care about diversity in their outside legal teams. We hear that message and we embrace it because we too believe that the best legal representation is that which incorporates a diverse range of backgrounds and viewpoints.

A decade ago, I co-chaired the firm’s newly formed Diversity Committee and in that role helped implement programs for minorities and women. The Committee started because we realized that we had extremely valuable women and minorities who were becoming increasingly important to the future of the firm and we were hearing from clients that they expected our firm to be more diverse when it came to practicing law. I think we thought we were doing a good job, but we understood that you can always do a better job. So we tested that proposition and now we try to make sure we do all that we can to make Ballard a welcoming place for all people.

Virginia Essandoh, our Chief Diversity Officer, is part of our Management Committee. In this capacity, she meets regularly with myself and other firm leaders. We look to Virginia to keep us honest regarding our successes and struggles and focused on our goals. We value what she has to say.

Virginia reminds firm leaders that we must extend to diverse lawyers the same support and mentoring from which we benefited when we were starting out. In doing so, we will help to cultivate the talents and capabilities of people who will be a credit to our firm and well-suited to assume leadership roles. Ultimately, we want Ballard to be a place where clients come to get great legal services and all lawyers come to have fulfilling careers. **PDJ**

HEADQUARTERS: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

WEBSITE: www.ballardspahr.com

PRIMARY BUSINESS: Law firm

ANNUAL REVENUES: \$273.5 million

EMPLOYEES: 1,107

EDUCATION: BA, University of Delaware;

JD, University of Pennsylvania;

GC, London School of Economics

FIRST JOB: Cutting grass

WHAT I'M READING:

The Checklist Manifesto, by Atul Gawande;
Daisy Petals and Mushroom Clouds, by Robert Mann;
Unbroken, by Laura Hillenbrand

MY PHILOSOPHY:

Keep things on an even keel—life is a marathon.
Take everyone seriously, except yourself.

BEST ADVICE: Listen

FAMILY: Wife, Mary Gay Scanlon; Children, Casey,
Daniel and Matthew

INTERESTS: Running

FAVORITE CHARITIES:

Support Center for Child Advocates;
Project Forward Leap

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