



IN ACTION

ISSUE IV

Why the Mansfield Rule Matters Stradley Ronon Attorneys Share Their Perspectives

In the summer of 2021, Stradley Ronon was Mansfield certified after it committed to equity and inclusion in a highly measurable way. The results of that commitment – which required the firm to be transparent and accountable in regard to its hiring, promotion, and leadership policies – have been significant and obvious. In this issue, Stradley Ronon lawyers sound off on why this certification is important to them and to the firm.

How does Mansfield help foster meaningful positive change?

As a Stradley partner, I understand the crucial role I play in ensuring the firm is a place where everyone can come to work as their complete selves. However, it's sometimes challenging to know exactly what steps I should be taking to reach that goal. Mansfield guides me – and all other Stradley partners – by providing specific ways to increase diversity from top



to bottom. It requires me to be transparent about my processes and decisions and to remain accountable for my outcomes. Both are necessary for me to demonstrate to my colleagues and my clients that the firm's commitments are more than just words.

– **Adam Petitt, litigation partner**

How does Mansfield help demonstrate the firm's commitment to diversity?

Unlike some other diversity accomplishments, Mansfield Rule certification is not an award or a certificate. It is a recognition of a change in the way we



do business. Mansfield requires measurable changes in our processes that ensure we have a diverse workforce and leaders who believe deeply in inclusion. As a firm, we can't just rest on our past DEI accomplishments. We need to do more and commit ourselves to evolving year after

year, and Mansfield helps us do that.

– **Joe Nguyen, litigation partner and member of the firm's board of directors**



Why do you think Mansfield is essential for developing the next generation of leaders at Stradley?

Mansfield is essential for developing the next generation of Stradley leadership for many reasons. One is that it promotes critically important diversity of

thought. When all members of a group of leaders have the same gender identity, have the same sexual orientation, come from similar socioeconomic backgrounds, share the same race/ethnicity and attended the same schools, they have similar lenses through which they view the world. In turn, they likely bring similar approaches to solving problems. A diverse group of leaders, a diverse workforce in general, with unique perspectives and experiences, brings unique approaches to solving problems, which translates to better solutions for clients. I have always viewed Stradley's commitment to DEI as a competitive advantage, and future Stradley leaders should continue to build on our strong momentum.

– **Rachel Ortiz, trusts & estates associate**

Dignity After Death

Estate Planning Lessons Learned for Queer Gender Identities



Maria Gonzalez was a pioneer as the first trans woman in the history of Philadelphia's police force. Maria proudly lived her life as a woman in every way and had legally changed her birth certificate and driver's license to ensure her gender was respected. When she was diagnosed with a terminal illness, she let her loved ones know that she wanted to be remembered just as she was – as a woman – after she died.

Unfortunately, these requests were insufficient to protect Maria's identity because they were never reduced to writing. Thus, the power to decide what happened to her body after her death in 2018 – and the power to change Maria's identity – went to her relatives, who had never accepted Maria as a woman. So instead of being buried in the dress and makeup she had chosen, she was cremated in a box that read "Dad."

It is shocking that something so contrary to Maria's wishes could occur, yet identity erasure often results when people with queer gender identities lack estate planning documents. (For purposes of this article, a person with queer gender identity includes anyone who identifies as transgender or non-binary.)

Estate planning documents such as last wills and testaments, powers of attorney, and advance directives exist to avoid the very issues that arose

after Maria's death. These documents, which should be drafted by a lawyer, can do all of the following to avoid the possibility of identity erasure:

- Specify that outdated birth certificates and driver's licenses may not be used as a basis to misgender and/or misname the deceased.
- Identify the deceased's specific burial clothing, makeup and hairstyle, and indicate that the appearance of the deceased must align with their gender identity.
- Require that the gender identity of the deceased must be respected during any eulogy or burial service.
- Specify that in the case of medical incapacitation or unconsciousness, hormone treatments must continue, and the individual's outward appearance is to be maintained in alignment with their gender identity.

Maria Gonzalez deserved to have her identity and wishes respected after her death. However, the opposite happened, in part because of a lack of end-of-life documents. For this reason, persons with queer gender identities should consider drafting these documents before they are necessary.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Angeli Fernandez was a summer associate at Stradley Ronon. She is in her third year at Drexel University's Thomas R. Kline School of Law, concentrating on the impact of data privacy issues on competition law.

Gillian Facher Honored With *Philadelphia Business Journal's* Diversity Business Leader Award



Stradley Ronon Executive Director [Gillian G. Facher](#) was named a recipient of the *Philadelphia Business Journal's* Diversity Business Leader Awards, which recognize the region's most influential leaders based on professional accomplishments, community involvement and philanthropy.

Over 31 years ago, in January 1991, Gillian became executive director of Stradley Ronon. At that time, she was one of only a dozen women across the country holding the top administrative position in a law firm, and to the best of her knowledge, she was the only one who was openly gay. Gillian is proud to be part of a firm that celebrated her diversity – and that of her

colleagues – at a time when being out was viewed by many in the United States as both dangerous and depraved. “It is an extraordinary statement about the heart and the culture of Stradley that they took what, at the time, was a significant risk in elevating me to the position of executive director,” said Gillian. “It is the reason why I have stayed at Stradley for almost four decades and why I feel a powerful motivation to pay it forward for those coming up after me.”

As a dynamic and engaged leader, Gillian's warmth, generosity and commitment to her colleagues and to the legal profession have had a profound impact on Stradley's attorneys and business professionals.

Whether acting as mentor and coach to Stradley lawyers and numerous individuals outside the firm, spearheading leadership programs, promoting initiatives that improve the working lives of her colleagues, or functioning as the firm's integration

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“IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL FIRM, IT STARTS WITH THE PEOPLE, AND YOU CAN ASK ANYONE HERE: GILLIAN IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF STRADLEY!”

– JEFFREY A. LUTSKY, CO-CHAIRMAN

STRADLEY RONON PARTNER NAMED ‘NOTABLE RISING STAR IN LAW’



[Mark R. Greer](#) was selected by *Crain's Chicago Business* to its Notable Rising Stars in Law list. This distinguished award recognized Mark for his work with registered investment companies

and advisers; independent board members; registered investment advisers and exchange-traded fund (ETF) providers, to address significant issues. Notably, *Crain's* emphasized his representation of Invesco, the fourth-largest ETF issuer globally, to help launch more than two dozen ETFs.

Mark is a partner in the Chicago office and is a member of the firm's Diversity Committee. He also serves on the Audit and Finance Committee of the board of directors for the non-profit [Legal Council for Health Justice](#).

Empowering Our Collective Voices

As a firm, we recognize that efforts relating to DEI are certainly not “one size fits all.” While we strive to take actions that will benefit our firm as a whole, we also know that the concerns and needs of individual communities within the firm can vary greatly and are often best addressed by members of those communities. For that reason, Stradley created four engagement groups designed to bring together

attorneys and business professionals with a shared heritage and life experiences in small-group settings. These groups have great independence to set their agendas and determine how to contribute to the Stradley community. We will continue to spotlight these individual groups in future newsletters so that our clients and colleagues can better understand the unique voices of each.

Our Engagement Groups and Leaders



Litigation Associate **Nancy Fisher** leads the **Hispanic and Latin Group**.



Business Associate **Evan Poulgrain** leads the **LGBT+ and Queer Group**.



Business Associate **Michael Tang** leads the **Asian American and Pacific Islander Group**.



Legal Talent Coordinator **Alivia Walton** leads the **Black and African American Group**.

From Law Student to Lawyer: Katherine K. Durr

Katherine K. Durr is an associate in the firm’s business department in Philadelphia and is a member of the firm’s Diversity Committee. She was a member of the firm’s 2020 Summer Associate Program.

What have you found most surprising as a Stradley lawyer?

How immersive my first year of practice has been. The summer program gave me a glimpse of Stradley’s culture and the opportunities available to new associates, but the degree of mentorship and caliber of assignments have exceeded my expectations. I have had an active role with clients and on deal teams since my first week at the firm. With guidance and support from wonderful colleagues, I have continued to take on more responsibilities in drafting agreements and coordinating transactions.

Tell us something interesting about yourself that we don’t know.

Music is my favorite outlet. I play electric and acoustic guitar as well as several other instruments. I’ve dabbled with mixing and producing my own tracks, but I mostly play for my own peace of mind and enjoyment.





Susan Gault-Brown
IM Partner | Washington, DC

[Susan](#) is the chair of the firm's fintech practice group and co-chair of the derivatives and commodities practice group.

Susan lives a few miles outside of DC in Silver Spring, MD, with her wife, her teenage son and Ginger the dog. In her spare time, Susan likes to hike the wooded areas of Rock Creek Park.



Jin Park
Tax Associate | New York

[Jin](#) provides tax analysis and guidance at the international and federal levels with a focus on investment companies and tax-exempt organizations.

Jin lives in New York City with his wife and son. He likes to explore the city and beyond. He also enjoys playing golf, hiking and watching documentaries.



Kenneth C. Wang
Tax Partner | New York

[Ken](#) uses his many years of experience in both private practice and in-house tax departments for Fortune 200 companies to counsel clients on all aspects of U.S. tax law.

Ken lives in New Jersey with his wife and their two dogs. He enjoys traveling abroad and trying to cook new recipes that are beyond his skill level.

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ambassador for new arrivals, Gillian leads by example. In her work “behind the scenes” and as a member of firm management, she is fully invested in helping her colleagues be the best and truest version of themselves.

Since joining Stradley Ronon in 1982, Gillian has taken on numerous roles during her career, and she will be the first person to tell you that the support and mentorship she received from the firm contributed to her success. She started as a bankruptcy paralegal before making a move into firm administration when she was promoted to recruiting coordinator in 1987. She assumed broader responsibilities when she was promoted to director of human resources and administrative services in 1989. Two years later, she was promoted again, this time to executive director. Over time, Gillian's responsibilities at Stradley have

changed considerably as the firm has grown, and in recent years, her role has focused more on the strategic and less on the operational aspects of the firm.

To say that Gillian has her hand in every significant project at Stradley is an understatement. Gillian is everywhere and involved in virtually every aspect of law firm life. She is Stradley's go-to person for just about anything. Stradley Ronon Co-Chairman and Managing Partner [Jeffrey A. Lutsky](#) has had the privilege of knowing Gillian for 40 years. “If you want to build a successful firm, it starts with the people, and you can ask anyone here: Gillian is the heart and soul of Stradley. As her colleague and her friend, I can say that Gillian's commitment not only to the firm but to her peers in the legal community and to the steady advancement of Stradley's diversity initiatives puts her in a class of her own,” says Lutsky.

Over 200 People Attended ‘Asian Pop: Understanding Cultural Influences and Overcoming Biases in the Legal Profession’

Hosted by Stradley Ronon and Macquarie Group



From left, Nydia Han, Macquarie Asset Management Managing Director and Co-Chair of Macquarie's Unity ENG Mimi Wang, Stradley Ronon Partner [Deborah Hong](#), Stradley Ronon Associate [Michael Tang](#) and Jeff Yang.

The firm's Diversity Committee and APA Engagement Group partnered with Macquarie Group's multicultural employee network group Unity to present a CLE program on May 25 featuring a conversation with Emmy Award-winning television journalist Nydia Han and author, screenwriter and cultural critic Jeff Yang.

The conversation shared the varied career and personal experiences of Asian Americans and the history of bias facing this community, and discussed how pop culture reflects and informs how Asian Americans have been perceived, embraced or discriminated against throughout American history, with a focus on the last three decades. These topics are in Jeff's book *Rise*. The presentation can be watched [here](#).

Cameron Redfern and Brian Seaman Presented ‘Promoting Inclusivity for Queer Employees’ During Pride Month

Litigation Associate [Cameron Redfern](#) and Chief Diversity Officer [Brian Seaman](#) presented a CLE program on June 15 at the firm. The event, which was hosted in person and virtually, focused on making conversations surrounding queer identity and inclusivity more accessible and provided insight into fundamental issues, including understanding the language used to explain queer identities and issues. Click here for the [replay](#).





Celebrating Pride Month: On June 22, more than 40 Stradians met in New York City at the place where Pride began – the Stonewall Inn in the West Village. The evening began with a walking tour, during which the group learned how, after the bar was raided late in the evening of June 28, 1969, more than 1,000 queer people stood up for their rights and started both a riot and the modern gay rights movement. Following the tour, the group toasted those pioneers inside the bar and shared a meal.



Celebrating Black History Month: Black history doesn't begin and end with February, and we are committed to learning about and celebrating Black and African American voices this month and every month. We invite you to join us in this commitment and watch the [video](#) that was produced by two innovative creators at the firm – former Video & Digital Media Specialist **Joe Ndaro** and Practice Group Assistant **Donna Soles**.



Kashae Garland

A DEI leader, like all other law firm leaders, has a responsibility to represent all members of that organization with understanding and passion. However, through no fault of their own, this leader can only truly understand their own perspective – their own race, their own gender identity, their own sexual orientation, their own disability status – and the unique combination of these identities may limit their worldview.

In a contributed article for *The Legal Intelligence*, Legal and DEI Intern **Kashae Garland** and Chief Diversity Officer and Counsel **Brian Seaman** discuss practical and fairly simple ways for a firm to ensure that a single leader can advocate for and recognize all communities. Read the article [here](#).



For more information on Stradley Ronon's diversity and inclusion efforts, please contact [Brian Seaman](mailto:bseaman@stradley.com) at bseaman@stradley.com or 215.564.8171 or visit www.stradley.com/diversity.

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