

BILZIN SUMBERG
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION
2021 ANNUAL REPORT

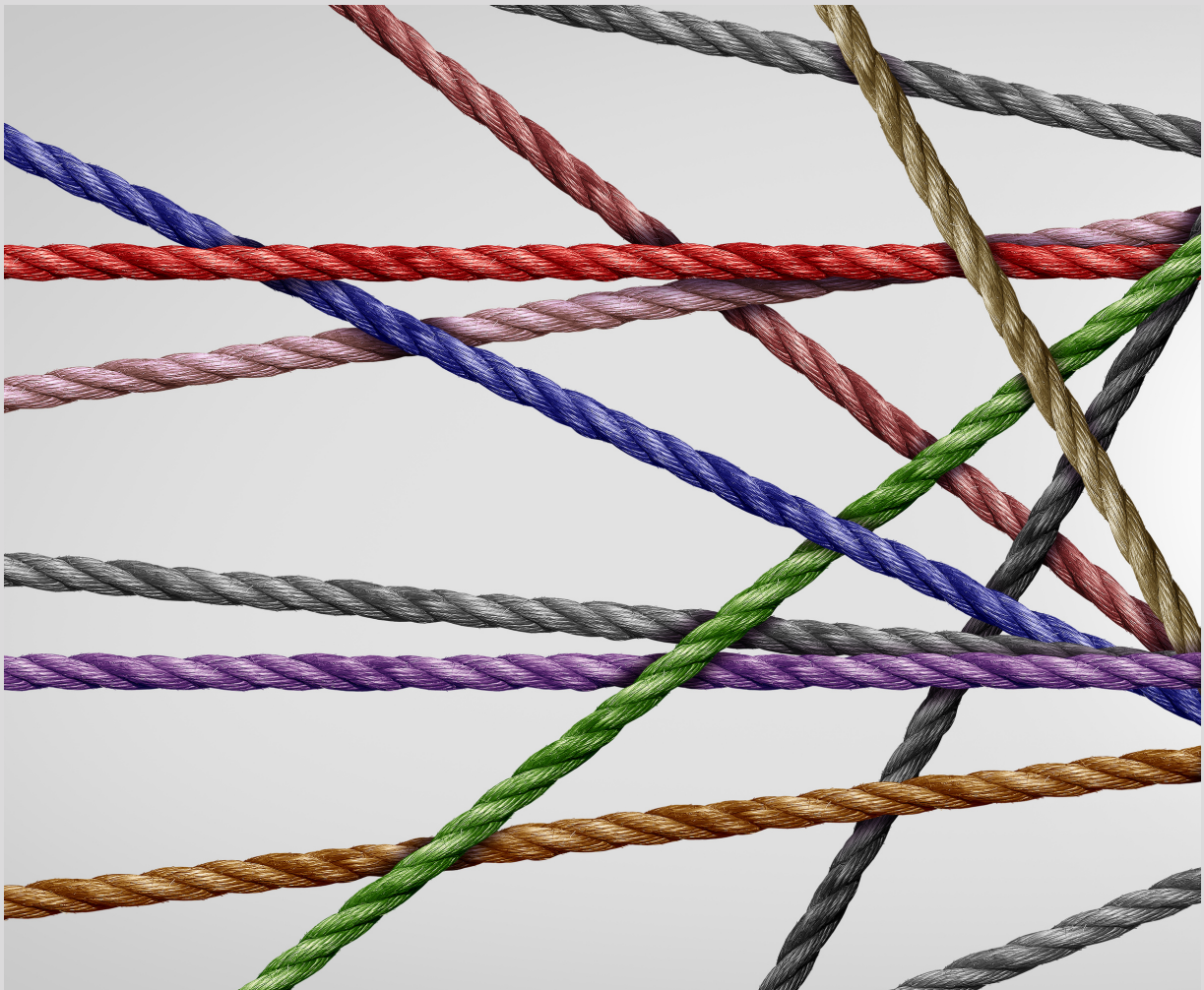


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Thank You to Our DEI Committee Members

Letter from the Chair of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

It is my pleasure to present the inaugural edition of Bilzin Sumberg's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Annual Report.

Bilzin Sumberg seeks to create a professional environment, both internally and externally, that promotes collaboration, ensures people of all backgrounds feel welcomed and supported in developing their careers, and provides meaningful and equal opportunities to succeed and excel to minorities and underrepresented groups. We understand the social and moral cases for diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as the attendant business case.

First, the nation's demographics have become increasingly diverse over the past several decades; thus having a legal industry that is more reflective of the community and its people engenders confidence and trust from the general public. Having law firms with employees of diverse backgrounds fosters creativity, innovation, learning, and flexibility, thereby leading to better collaborative and innovative solutions and better problem-solving models than those obtained by legal teams who share the same or similar backgrounds. Finally, law firms that recognize the value of and embrace diversity in their employees and culture are better positioned to serve their clients and thrive during economic shifts.

This Report highlights some of the actions and initiatives Bilzin Sumberg undertook in 2021 as part of its DEI efforts. I hope that you find our work over the past year as inspiring and uplifting as we have.

Sincerely,

Adrian K. Felix

Chair, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee



Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion at Bilzin Sumberg

Bilzin Sumberg's quest to advance and integrate the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion inside and outside the firm has been distilled into a strategic plan to guide its myriad DEI activities. Reflecting inward, the firm's mission is to create a more inclusive culture that nurtures and uses the strength of its diversity to add value in addressing client needs. We seek to provide an environment where people of all backgrounds, including and especially minorities and other underrepresented groups, are empowered to succeed and excel. Looking outward, the firm recognizes that, as a socially responsible community leader, it is important to support and work with other actors to make a collective impact. With this in mind, Bilzin Sumberg's strategic DEI plan coalesces around four distinct but interconnected pillars:



Strategic Partnerships

To collaborate with clients and other organizations committed to advancing diversity and inclusion in the legal, professional, and business communities.



Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

To offer training and experiential opportunities through our business and professional networks.



Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline

To participate in recruiting events and pipeline initiatives designed to enhance diversity within the legal profession.



Commitment to Social Justice

To promote and participate in community initiatives with the goal of promoting social justice in our country.

Strategic Partnerships

Bilzin Sumberg views its efforts in the DEI space as part of a broader initiative with inspiring local and national organizations pushing the envelope towards a more just and inclusive future. Our partnership with organizations that share our values and goals functions as a multiplier- we are far more effective working together than separately. Over the course of 2021, we strengthened existing partnerships and formed new ones.

Economic Development: Bilzin Sumberg continues to work closely with the Community Economic Development Unit (CEDU) at Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. Through the CEDU, Bilzin Sumberg attorneys provide pro bono legal counseling to small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and nonprofit affordable housing developers in connection with the formation and governance of their operations, preparation of business contracts, and real estate transactions. The firm's counsel serves to buoy and strengthen local minority business owners and professional communities.

Law School Scholarships: This past year Bilzin Sumberg funded the H.T. Smith Scholarship awarded by the Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association as part of its ongoing effort to diversify the pipeline into the legal profession. The H.T. Smith Scholarship was established to support minority law school students who have a strong connection with the South Florida community and is named after the founding Director of the Trial Advocacy Program at Florida International University (FIU) College of Law. H.T. Smith is widely recognized for blazing trails as Miami's first African-American assistant public defender and first African-American assistant county attorney. In 2021, the inaugural H.T. Smith Scholarship recipient was Jameesha Rock, a Juris Doctor candidate at FIU College of Law.



“As a first generation law student, the funds do not only help me fund my education academically but help motivate me to continue my law school dreams.”

Jameesha Rock, 2021 H.T. Smith Scholarship recipient

Strategic Partnerships



Damion Dunn

In addition to the H.T. Smith Scholarship, every year Bilzin Sumberg awards a scholarship to an FIU Honors College student in memory of the late Damion Dunn, a former attorney at the firm. The Bilzin Sumberg Scholarship in Memoriam of Damion Dunn (“Damion Dunn Scholarship”) goes to an Honors College student, with preference towards a student of Caribbean descent, who intends to pursue a career in law and has demonstrated leadership ability in extracurricular activities. In 2021, the Damion Dunn Scholarship was awarded to Catrina Gibson, a Jamaican-American student currently pursuing a bachelor’s degree in English from FIU.

Finally, the firm contributes each year to FIU’s First-Generation Scholarship, which is awarded to first-generation college students whose parents or legal guardians have not earned a bachelor’s degree, with the majority of recipients coming from minority communities.



Professional Networking: In June 2021, Bilzin Sumberg proudly joined the Black Professionals Network (BPN), a non-profit social learning organization with the mission to advance careers, power up businesses, and build professional pathways for black professionals. The firm has actively encouraged membership in the Network among its attorneys and actively promotes its job openings on BPN’s site. Bilzin Sumberg views its participation in BPN as an important conduit for outreach to black legal professionals, and as a way for its attorneys to further their own professional development.

Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline

Bilzin Sumberg has been a long time leader in seeking to diversify the legal profession's pipeline so that the practice of law more appropriately reflects our community and more generally showcases the rich diversity of our country. The firm actively participates in recruiting events at law schools and professional fairs with the aim of expanding its hiring of talented attorneys from a broad range of backgrounds and with a strong push towards increasing its share of female attorneys. The firm has also aggressively moved to increase minority and female participation at leadership levels. The results speak for themselves: in a recent analysis performed by Daily Business Review that looked at the diversity of Florida law firms, Bilzin Sumberg was ranked number one for both its proportion of minority attorneys (43%) and minority partners (54%).¹ In 2021, over 40% of new attorney hires were female and the same proportion came from minority backgrounds, one component among many others aimed at achieving greater equity and inclusivity at the firm.

Bilzin Sumberg also works with the American Bar Association (ABA) to promote DEI in the legal profession through institutional channels. Specifically, the firm has been a long-term sponsor of the ABA Section of Litigation's Judicial Intern Opportunity Program (JIOP), whose mission is to provide paid summer clerkship opportunities to students who are members of racial and ethnic groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the profession, students with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, students who identify themselves as LGBTQ+, and women. Over the past 21 years, more than 3,100 students have been placed with federal and state judges through the Program, including 165 students in 2021. Adrian Felix, Partner and Chair of Bilzin Sumberg's DEI Committee, serves as the National Co-Chair of JIOP, and Bilzin Sumberg attorney Brianna Sainte serves as part of the leadership of the Miami region.

¹ <https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2021/07/19/south-florida-firms-largely-lead-the-nation-in-diversity-but-still-lag-behind-in-black-representation/>



Brianna Sainte
Attorney
Bilzin Sumberg

Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline

Just as importantly, Bilzin Sumberg seeks to foster interest and encouragement in the practice of law among pre-college students from minority backgrounds. For 14 years, the firm has worked closely with the National Association for Law Placement (NALP) through their Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program. Street Law introduces students from underrepresented communities to the legal profession by connecting them to practitioners from law firms. Bilzin Sumberg employees volunteer with the program to educate such students about the practice of law and cultivate interest in the field, thereby strengthening the diversity of the legal profession's recruitment pipeline. The firm's volunteers participate in every aspect of the program, which includes teaching lessons in substantive areas of law, introducing students to the many professional roles that support a law firm, and growing awareness of how the law impacts ordinary people in their daily lives.



Jessica Buchsbaum, Chief Legal Talent Officer, with a participating student during a presentation.



Mitchell E. Widom, Bilzin Sumberg Partner, engaging with Street Law students during a hands-on assignment.

Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline

The following are some of the additional student engagement, outreach, and recruitment events in which Bilzin Sumberg participated in 2021:



Black Law Students Association (BLSA) Roundtable hosted by the University of Miami, Florida International University, and St. Thomas University (July 30)



Welcome Committee for the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (APALSA) at the University of Miami (September 29)



Panel on commercial law practice sponsored by the BLSA and Student Bar Association (SBA) at Florida A&M University (October 20)



Bilzin Sumberg College Essay Program: Bilzin Sumberg attorneys assisted in reviewing college essays written by local high school students in partnership with United Way of Miami-Dade and Overtown Youth Center (program runs October-November)



Sponsorship of Miami-Dade Urban Debate League (MDUDL) Winter Tournament, which brings together middle and high school students from 23 urban Title 1 schools, over 80% of whose attendees identify as students of color (December 11)

Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

Bilzin Sumberg prides itself on curating year-round, thought-provoking programming aimed at elevating the consciousness of all firm employees on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. To this end, 2021 featured a robust series of speakers from academia, the legal profession, the nonprofit sector, and other areas to enlighten the firm on both historical and current topics with timely and valuable takeaways. The firm's 2021 Speakers Series program included:

An intimate discussion with Miami-Dade Circuit Judge William Thomas on racial injustice and equity. Judge Thomas explained the historical context within which today's racial discontent and strained race relations have developed, covering the economic and social government policies that have disadvantaged African Americans in addition to the systemic bias fueling high poverty, lower quality education, and lack of opportunity for the African-American community. Judge Thomas emphasized the importance of candid and open discussions about race and other forms of diversity in professional settings because of the ability of such conversations to galvanize change, and warned that treating uncomfortable issues with silence would only perpetuate inequity and misunderstanding. For the legal profession in particular, he advised that educating young people about the rewarding prospects of the field of law prior to college, and then providing them with valuable mentors in the profession to build their technical expertise and business development skills, were crucial for strengthening the diversity, equity, and inclusion of the professional pipeline. The firm's participation in the NALP Street Law Diversity Pipeline Program is intended to achieve that very result. The event was organized in collaboration with law firms Greenberg Traurig and Holland & Knight, with members of the South Florida legal community invited to participate.

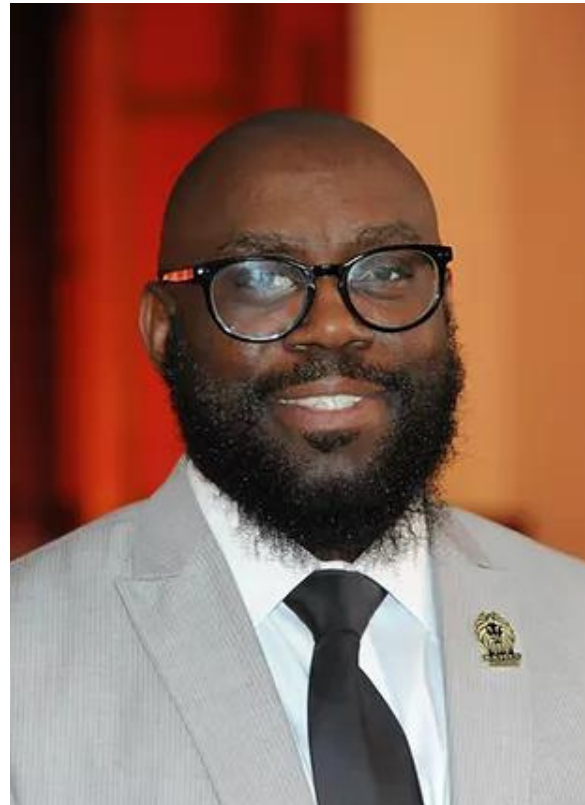


**Miami-Dade Circuit
Judge William Thomas**

Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

A lecture by Dr. Timothy Barber on the history of Miami's Black community.

Dr. Barber is the Executive Director of The Black Archives History & Research Foundation of South Florida, a non-profit organization whose mission is to collect and preserve material that reflects the African-American experience in Miami-Dade County. Dr. Barber explained how the Black community in Miami-Dade County was pivotal in the establishment of the City of Miami in 1896, and how the Black community established a thriving commercial, entertainment, and tourism economy in what is now the Overtown neighborhood of Miami, despite attempts at economic marginalization during the Jim Crow era. By shining a light on the oft-forgotten history of the local Black community, Dr. Barber highlighted the important role of the community in Miami's development and raised



Dr. Timothy Barber

Dr. Barber explained how the Black community in Miami-Dade County was pivotal in the establishment of the City of Miami in 1896.

awareness of its contribution among the attendees. In addition to Bilzin Sumberg staff and attorneys, staff and students from Year Up South Florida, a non-profit workforce development program for motivated and talented young adults, were also invited to the lecture.

Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

An interview with Justice Rosemary Barkett on her groundbreaking career.

Justice Barkett was Florida's first female Supreme Court Justice and currently represents the U.S. Department of State on the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal in The Hague. Justice Barkett discussed her experience as an immigrant and her aspiration for pursuing a career in law at a time when female participation significantly lagged male participation. Participants also engaged Justice Barkett on a range of timely legal and political topics to gain the benefit of her professional insight.



Justice Rosemary Barkett

A historical presentation by Dr. Marvin Dunn on the Rosewood Massacre of 1923.

Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Florida International University and recognized authority on the history of Florida, [Dr. Dunn](#) spoke about the historical importance of the Rosewood Massacre of 1923. Drawing on his groundbreaking research on one of the most tragic racial incidents in Florida's history, Dr. Dunn recounted the story of Rosewood, explored the ramifications of the events that transpired for the local African-American community in the years that followed, and discussed his search for the graves of the Black victims of the 1923 massacre that destroyed the town. Participants engaged with Dr. Dunn on what the tragedy of Rosewood teaches us regarding issues of social justice today. This presentation was opened to the community at large and specifically to partner organizations such as the Florida Foster Care Review, Year Up South Florida, and University of Miami Law School.



Dr. Marvin Dunn

Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

When Women Lead: Insights and Experience from Women in Power.

Bilzin Sumberg hosted a virtual event featuring a panel of accomplished women leaders from across South Florida in order to share their professional journeys and personal experiences in leadership positions, to discuss the continuing challenges that women face in advancing professionally, and to openly discuss the way forward for greater gender equity in management roles and organizational leadership. Immediately following the panel, participants engaged in an exchange of ideas about what they could do to raise cognizance of unconscious gender bias in the workplace. Panelists: Donise Brown, Managing Director & Corporate Counsel, Starbucks; Lissette Calderon, Chief Executive Officer, [Neology Life Development Group](#); [Jill Hertzberg](#), Founder, The Jills Zeder Group; Kerry-Ann Royes, President & Chief Executive Officer, YWCA South Florida; and Ana Lopez-Blazquez, Executive Vice President, Chief Strategy & Transformation Officer, Baptist Health South Florida; Moderated by Jane Wooldridge, Senior Director for Journalism Sustainability and Partnerships, Miami Herald.



Donise Brown



Lissette Calderon



Jill Hertzberg



Kerry-Ann Royes



Ana Lopez-Blazquez

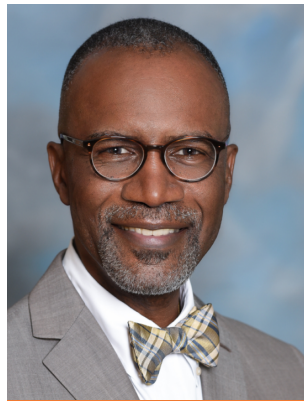


Jane Wooldridge

Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

Juneteenth Black leaders panel.

Bilzin Sumberg hosted a panel of accomplished Black leaders from across the South Florida community entitled Tackling Social Injustice & Racial Bias. The panelists hailed from multinational corporations, institutions of higher learning, local government, and the sports and entertainment industry, thereby offering broad and rich perspectives as they shared their personal experiences and professional views on race relations and social injustice. They also explored thought-provoking ideas about constructively dealing with overt discrimination and unconscious bias in professional and personal settings. Panelists: Michael Finney, President & CEO, Beacon Council; [Marlene Gordon](#), Senior Vice President, Chief Administrative Officer, General Counsel & Secretary, Fresh Del Monte Produce Inc.; Dr. Jaffus Hardrick, President, Florida Memorial University; and Myles Pistorius, Senior Vice President & General Counsel, Miami Dolphins.



Michael Finney



Marlene Gordon



Dr. Jaffus Hardrick



Myles Pistorius

Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

National Hispanic Heritage Month discussion with Albert Milo, Jr.

In honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, Bilzin Sumberg invited Albert Milo, Jr., President of Related Urban Development Group, to discuss the challenges and opportunities facing Hispanic-Americans today and his own personal journey as a Hispanic-American. As a local Miamian with a decades-long career in South Florida's real estate industry, Mr. Milo expounded extensively on the current status of the local and national Hispanic community, and on lingering challenges to be addressed for both. He also highlighted the positive developments that companies like his had brought to local communities, Hispanic and non-Hispanic alike, through their transformative affordable housing projects.

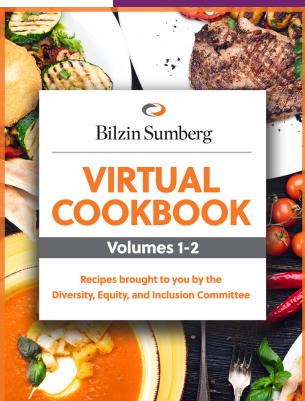


Albert Milo, Jr.

"Anybody can build a building, but not everyone can rebuild a community. Our inclusive approach addresses the existing community's needs as part of new development."

**Albert Milo, Jr.,
President of Related Urban
Development Group**

Did you know?



Every year Bilzin Sumberg celebrates the diversity of its employees by compiling a recipe book with dishes that hail from employees' ethnic backgrounds and heritage. The book is a melting pot of delicacies from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, South and Central America, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America. All proceeds from sale of the cookbook go to United Way of Miami-Dade.

Commitment to Social Justice

In order for our commitment to DEI to be transformative, it is crucial that our efforts also address the obstacles to social justice in our country. Bilzin Sumberg has carefully studied the optimal ways to lend its legal bench to pro bono initiatives seeking to tackle the systemic drivers of social injustice in our country.


In December 2020, the firm joined the Law Firm Anti-Racism Alliance (LFAA), a recently established organization of approximately 400 law firms nationwide working together to provide pro bono resources to address systemic racism across a range of sectors and industries. As part of Bilzin Sumberg's membership in the LFAA, the firm's attorneys have access to the LFAA Bulletin Board, which contains listings of various available pro bono matters aimed at combatting systemic racism in different ways. Furthermore, of the 19 working groups convened by the LFAA, Bilzin Sumberg attorneys actively participated in two of them over the course of 2021.

Raquel Fernandez, Partner and chair of Bilzin Sumberg's Pro Bono program, serves as a member of the LFAA's Education Working Group, whose goal is to identify areas in which the LFAA can most effectively and impact-fully contribute to the removal of systemic racial barriers and inequities in the American educational system, and to build a community of experts and advocates who work collaboratively and strategically to achieve those goals. The Education Working Group builds coalitions among diverse stakeholders—including law firms, subject

matter experts, and local, regional, and national organizations—to develop scholarship, lead and contribute to impact litigation, aid in legislative and policy-change efforts, promote awareness of racial inequity in education, and increase funding for anti-racism efforts in education.

Adrian Felix, Partner and Chair of Bilzin Sumberg's DEI Committee, serves on the LFAA's Banking Working Group, specifically as co-chair of its "Addressing Community" subgroup, which seeks to solicit feedback from local community leaders and non-profit organizations embedded in six major metropolitan areas² on the needs and concerns of underserved minority communities when it comes to banking and financial services. Gaps in fair and equal access to financial services are a major driver of socioeconomic inequality, and such 'underbanked' individuals overwhelming hail from minority communities.

² The six metropolitan areas correspond to the geographic locations of the six members of the subgroup: Charlotte, NC; Kansas City, MO; Miami, FL; New York, NY; Salt Lake City, UT; and Tulsa, OK



Raquel Fernandez
Partner and chair of Bilzin
Sumberg's pro bono program

Commitment to Social Justice

Over the course of 2021, Adrian and other members of his subgroup organized and participated in a series of roundtables with local leaders and community workers to better understand what banking and other financial services are needed in their respective communities and to listen to their perspectives on the best way to remove existing barriers to finance. Members of the subgroup are currently working on a final report that will outline the overlapping concerns and needs of those communities, which will in turn be used to develop an agenda for further engaging minority communities and developing pro bono projects to improve equitable access to financial services.



In addition to Bilzin Sumberg's involvement in the LFAA, the firm has also been working with the Alliance for Safety and Justice (ASJ) on defining the parameters of a partnership in which the firm could support the organization's legislative agenda in Florida. The ASJ is a multi-state organization that aims to replace over-incarceration - which overwhelmingly affects people of color - with more effective public safety solutions rooted in crime prevention, community health, rehabilitation, and support for crime victims. ASJ partners with state leaders and advocates to achieve safety and justice reforms through advocacy, organizing, coalition building, research, and communications.



Awards & Accolades

Bilzin Sumberg's multifaceted efforts to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within the firm, across the legal profession, and in the wider South Florida community garnered it notable awards and accolades in 2021.

Bilzin Sumberg Managing Partner Albert E. Dotson, Jr. was honored with South Florida Business Journal's Diversity & Inclusion Award for his role as an outstanding business leader in the South Florida area who is making a difference in advancing diversity, inclusion, and equality in the business world. The Journal in particular singled out Al's tireless leadership in placing Bilzin Sumberg front and center on promoting DEI among local law firms. His role in establishing the firm's partnerships with multiple organizations working to mainstream diversity, equity, and inclusion in the professional arena and in organizing a plethora of DEI-focused and awareness-raising events stood out as a model for other law firm leadership working on DEI initiatives.

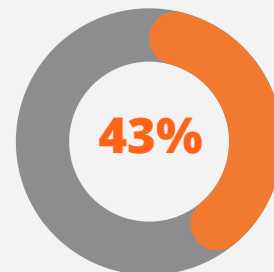


Albert E. Dotson, Jr.
Bilzin Sumberg
Managing Partner

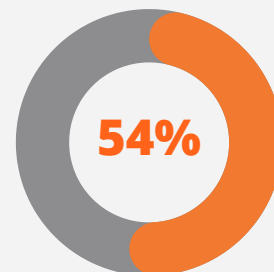
The firm also saw itself ranked at the top of an exhaustive list of preeminent Florida law firms by Daily Business Review (DBR) for its high proportion of minority attorneys and minority partners.

With 43% of its attorneys and 53% of its partners from minority backgrounds, Bilzin Sumberg affirmed the seriousness of its efforts to integrate DEI into its corporate identity.

Rounding Out Diversity and Inclusion at Bilzin Sumberg



**Attorneys from
minority backgrounds**



**Partners from
minority backgrounds**

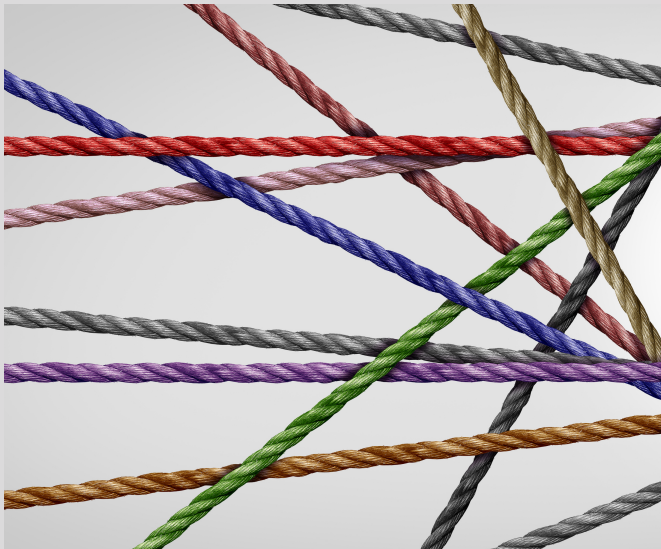
Thank You to Our DEI Committee Members

All the accomplishments outlined in this report would not have been possible without the exceptional commitment and resolve of the members of Bilzin Sumberg's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee. Achieving DEI in our places of work and the places we call home can be challenging but also deeply rewarding, and despite the uncertainty and hardship imposed by the coronavirus pandemic over the past two years, the committee members never let their dedication to our DEI efforts slip. From everyone at Bilzin Sumberg, we thank you for making our firm and our community richer, more embracing, and more forward-looking.

2021 Members of the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

- Adrian K. Felix (Chair)
- Michelle Weber, Firm COO
- Enza G. Boderone (Strategic Partnerships)
- Jennifer E. Fine (Strategic Partnerships)
- Alexander G. Leon (Strategic Partnerships)
- Paul J. D'Alessandro, Jr. (Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline)
- Osvaldo Garcia (Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline)
- Benjamin Mitchel (Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline)
- Brianna H. Sainte (Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline)
- Ellina Berdichevsky (Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace)
- Marshall R. Pasternack (Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace)
- John V. Chibbaro (Commitment to Social Justice)
- Manuel Gonzalez (Commitment to Social Justice)
- Phillip S. Sosnow (Commitment to Social Justice)

BILZIN SUMBERG
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION
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