



# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion 2023 Annual Report

 Bilzin Sumberg

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

It is my privilege to present Bilzin Sumberg's 2023 Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Report—the third installment of the firm's annual publication, which highlights our continuing commitment to maintaining a diverse and inclusive workplace, and ensuring that persons of all backgrounds, particularly those from groups that have been historically underrepresented or marginalized, are given a voice and afforded equal access and opportunities within our firm, the legal profession, and the South Florida community as a whole.

2023 brought with it several new obstacles to corporate DEI initiatives. Chief among them was the U.S. Supreme Court's decisions in *SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. University of North Carolina*, banning race-conscious admission policies in colleges and universities, which decisions predictably emboldened long-time DEI critics to attack the legality and necessity of diversity and inclusion programs at private companies, including law firms. Those challenges have in turn led many law firms and other private organizations to reconsider their DEI efforts.

Bilzin Sumberg believes that diversity and inclusion is important from both an organizational performance standpoint, as well as a societal standpoint. And, as I emphasized in our 2022 DEI Report, the firm views DEI as an open and iterative learning process—one that must be adaptable and continuously improve in order to meet our goal of having an inclusive and engaged workforce and community. The political and legal developments over the past year not only illustrate the significance of that point, but also why it is crucial to maintain a focused and unwavering commitment to the principles of DEI in pursuit of progress.

2023, to that end, was an excellent year for the firm. We strengthened and, in some instances, expanded, various programs and initiatives touching upon all four pillars of the firm's strategic DEI plan. Our ongoing efforts have not gone unnoticed, as the firm and its attorneys were recognized by industry associations and publications for our demonstrable DEI-related results within and outside the firm.

So it is with great enthusiasm and optimism that I present Bilzin Sumberg's 2023 DEI Report. The Report provides an overview of some of the initiatives that our firm undertook this past year to promote and ingrain the principles of DEI into our culture and the local community. The Report also highlights the myriad of ways in which law firms and legal professionals can engage employees, clients, and/or local organizations and community partners to take meaningful strides in their DEI commitments. I hope that you find our work as important and inspiring as we have.

Sincerely,

**Adrian K. Felix**

Chair, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee



# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Bilzin Sumberg



## **STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS**

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



## **RECRUITING & DIVERSITY PIPELINE**

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



## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT & INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE**

To provide voluntary DEI programming and experiential opportunities for firm employees through our business and professional networks.



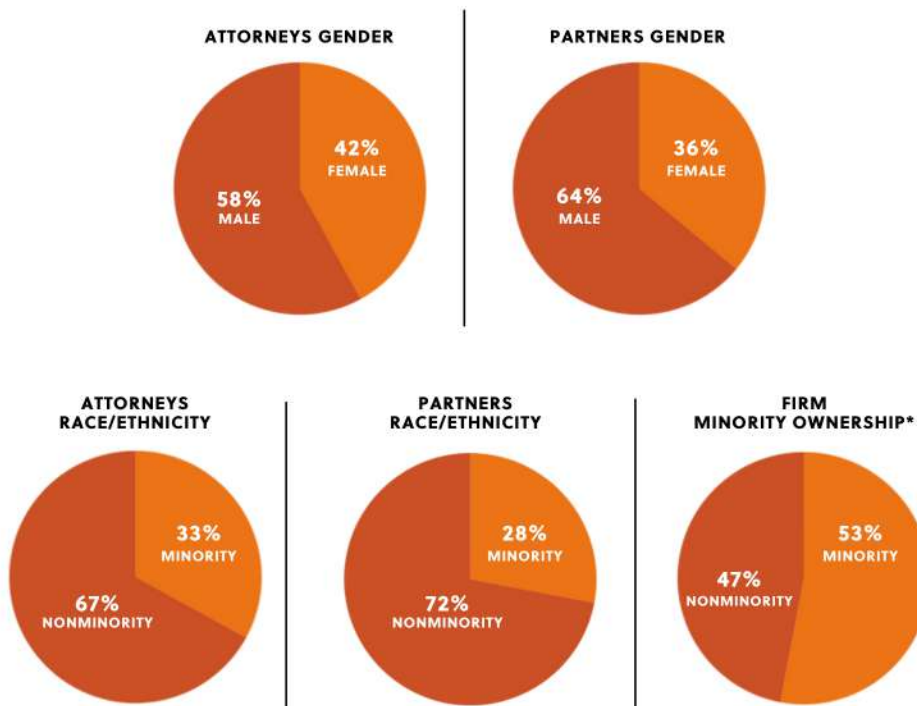
## **COMMITMENT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE**

To promote and participate in larger initiatives with the goal of promoting social justice in our local communities and around the country.

# Diversity By The Numbers

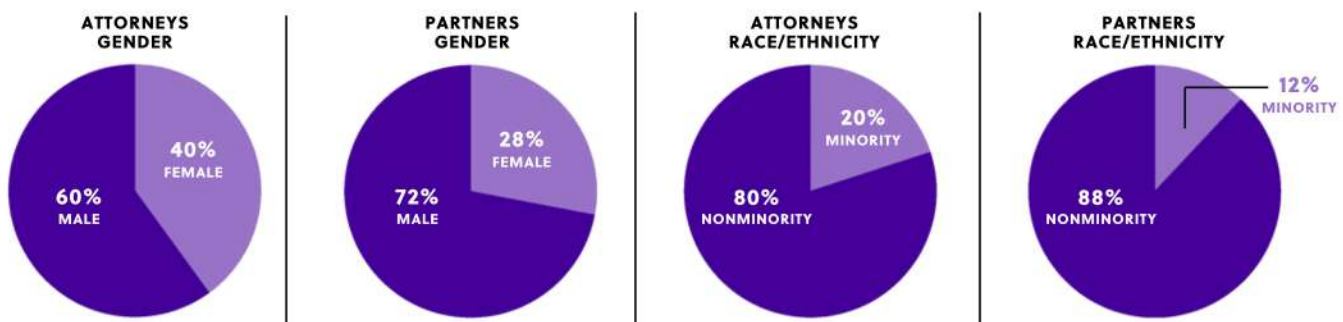
The legal profession still has a long way to go to reach the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion, as there continue to be challenges, old and new, posed at both the pipeline and industry levels. We take pride in making progress across demographics and identities, such that each year we get closer to establishing a more equitable and inclusive profession. So diversity at all levels remains a key metric to see just how much progress we have made.

## BILZIN SUMBERG 2023 DIVERSITY NUMBERS



\*Minority ownership includes women, racial, and ethnic minorities.

## NATIONWIDE LAW FIRM DIVERSITY STATISTICS\*



\*Taken from the National Association for Law Placement's 2023 Report on Diversity in U.S. law firms

# Strategic Partnerships

We know that developing partnerships with organizations that share our values and goals functions as a multiplier in terms of the social impact we can achieve. Over the past year, Bilzin Sumberg diligently sought out opportunities to leverage and strengthen our existing partnerships, and develop new partnerships, with local and national organizations to advance DEI in the legal and business communities. Below is a recap of some of those initiatives:

## Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD)

The firm joined the LCLD this year, making a formal commitment to help create a new generation of diverse leaders in the legal profession. As part of the firm's membership, LCLD invited four Bilzin Sumberg attorneys to participate in the Council's highly selective professional and personal development and leadership training programs. Real Estate Attorney Salomé Bascuñan was named an LCLD Fellow for 2023. Designed for diverse mid-career professionals, the Fellows program is an intensive, year-long professional development program that connects high-potential attorneys with leading general counsel, managing partners and their peers, for mentoring and career guidance. Litigation Attorneys Kayla M. Hernandez and Patricia M. Patino and Real Estate Attorney Hannah Lidicker were named LCLD Pathfinders for 2023. The Pathfinders program is designed to train high-performing, diverse attorneys who are early in their careers on foundational leadership and relationship-building skills.



LEADERSHIP  
COUNCIL  
ON LEGAL  
DIVERSITY

### Did you know?

*The Leadership Council on Legal Diversity is an organization of more than 400 corporate chief legal officers and law firm managing partners who have pledged themselves to creating a truly diverse U.S. legal profession. The LCLD's programs are designed to inspire and nurture new and more diverse generations of attorneys that can ascend to positions of leadership in the legal profession. LCLD Fellows and Pathfinders participate in training sessions and have opportunities to interact with key legal and business leaders of large U.S. corporations, as well as managing partners from the country's most prestigious law firms.*



Salomé  
Bascuñan

Kayla M.  
Hernandez

Hannah  
Lidicker

Patricia  
M. Patino

# Strategic Partnerships

## Legal Services of Greater Miami, Inc. - Economic Development Unit

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

## University of Miami OUTLaw, National LGBTQ Task Force, and SAVE Foundation: Supporting the drive for equality and equity across orientations and identities

### University of Miami OUTLaw

- On April 10, 2023, Bilzin Sumberg hosted the University of Miami OUTLaw Alumni Networking Event. The event served as a valuable opportunity to facilitate mentorships between UM LGBTQ+, and ally law students and LGBTQ+, and ally judges and legal professionals from the local legal community. Bilzin Sumberg has been a long-time partner of OUTLaw, whose mission is to support the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community at the University of Miami School of Law by educating the law school community concerning LGBTQ+ politics and culture.

## Bilzin Sumberg in the Community

*A prime example of Bilzin Sumberg's commitment to the community is the firm's continuing partnership with Overtown Youth Center (OYC). OYC's mission is to engage children in the historically black and under-served Overtown neighborhood of Miami in educational and recreational activities that promote their academic, social, emotional, and physical development.*

*Bilzin Sumberg has supported the organization and its mission since its inception, providing pro bono legal services and counseling on lease agreements, land use, zoning, and construction matters in connection with its expansion and redevelopment. In addition to securing all necessary land use and zoning approvals/entitlements for an expansion of the existing Center that will provide over 50,000 additional square feet of recreational, educational, and community space for Miami's youth, Bilzin Sumberg has assisted OYC with the completion of the renovation and improvement work, and processed a warrant to allow a charter school to operate on the site, thereby significantly expanding OYC's community impact.*

*The redeveloped facility can accommodate approximately 300 youth, but through key partnerships with Miami Dade County Public Schools and the City of Miami, the program serves over 1,000 students and families per year.*



# Strategic Partnerships



David Jessup, Jr., Liana M. Kozlowski, Brian Adler

## SAVE Champions of Equality Gala

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the SAVE Champions of Equality Gala on May 14, 2023, which featured an inspiring lineup of speakers and honorees on timely topics for the LGBTQ+ community, and included a silent auction to raise money for the SAVE Foundation, one of South Florida's longest serving organizations dedicated to protecting people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer, against discrimination.

## 50th Anniversary Task Force Gala

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the 50th Anniversary Task Force Gala hosted by the National LGBTQ Task Force on October 14, 2023. The gala invited LGBTQ+ people and their supporters to honor the community's heroes, and raise funds for allied organizations serving the LGBTQ+ community in South Florida.

## Black Professionals Network:

In 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. Since then, the firm has actively encouraged membership in the Network among its attorneys and has supported the organization through event sponsorships and participation, including the 2023 Black Professionals Summit.

Adrian Felix, Partner and Chair of Bilzin Sumberg's DEI Committee, spoke at the 2023 Black Professionals Summit on a panel discussion led by BPN's Black Real Estate Investment Council (BRIC). The panel explored the pivotal role that commercial real estate

investment plays in the development and revitalization of urban environments, covering the primary challenges and obstacles encountered in the urban real estate development space, Bilzin Sumberg's team approach to addressing those challenges/obstacles, and the unique opportunities afforded by Florida's Live Local Act.





# Strategic Partnerships

## Inspiring Service, Lifting Up Young People, and Combatting Hate

### YMCA of South Florida 19th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Inspirational Luncheon (January 13, 2023):

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the Inspirational Breakfast and Luncheon, which brings over 800 members of the business and civic community together to honor Dr. King’s legacy. Event’s proceeds support the “I Have a Dream” Youth Scholarship Fund.

### United Way Miami Martin Luther King Day of Service (February 4, 2023):

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the Martin Luther King Day of Service, joining other contributing organizations to clean and paint the inside of cabins and various picnic tables at Girl Scouts’ Camp Mahachie in Coral Gables, Florida.

### Haitian Lawyers Association (HLA) 25th Annual Scholarship Gala (April 15, 2023):

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the HLA’s Annual Scholarship Gala which, every year awards scholarships to law students of Haitian descent.

### American Jewish Committee, Judge Learned Hand Award Reception (May 18, 2023):

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the reception for the Judge Learned Hand Award, established by the American Jewish Committee in memory of Judge Learned Hand, who was renowned for his defense of civil liberties and championing of tolerance.

### MDFAWL 43rd Annual Installation & Awards Reception (June 8, 2023):

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the annual awards reception of the Miami-Dade Chapter of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers.

### Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr. Bar Association (WDFJBA) 42nd Annual Scholarship Gala (June 23, 2023):

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the WDFJBA Annual Scholarship Gala, which awarded over \$25,000 in scholarships to law students of color.



**Amber Kornreich, President of MDFAWL, with Diana Mendez, Bilzin Sumberg Partner and MDFAWL past President, at the MDFAWL 43rd Annual Installation & Awards Reception.**

### Anti-Defamation League (ADL) Partners Against Hate Luncheon (November 13, 2023):

- Bilzin Sumberg sponsored the ADL’s 2023 Partners Against Hate Luncheon, which presents the Florida Jurisprudence and Community Champion Awards to leaders who exemplify the principles and mission upon which the ADL was founded.

# Strategic Partnerships

## Inspiring Service, Lifting Up Young People, and Combatting Hate

### Letter to Law School Deans:

- On November 1, 2023, Bilzin Sumberg, along with more than 120 other major law firms, sent a letter to the deans of law schools across the country reminding them of their responsibility to stand up to instances of antisemitism and any other forms of racism and bigotry, and to guide their students in how to engage in exchanges of ideas that are free of hateful rhetoric.

Dear Deans,

Everyone at our law firms is entitled to be treated with respect and be free of any conduct that targets their identity and is offensive, hostile, intimidating or inconsistent with their personal dignity and rights. We prohibit any form of harassment, whether verbal, visual or physical.

Over the last several weeks, we have been alarmed at reports of anti-Semitic harassment, vandalism and assaults on college campuses, including rallies calling for the death of Jews and the elimination of the State of Israel. Such anti-Semitic activities would not be tolerated at any of our firms. We also would not tolerate outside groups engaging in acts of harassment and threats of violence, as has also been occurring on many of your campuses.

As educators at institutions of higher learning, it is imperative that you provide your students with the tools and guidance to engage in the free exchange of ideas, even on emotionally charged issues, in a manner that affirms the values we all hold dear and rejects unreservedly that which is antithetical to those values. There is no room for anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism or any other form of violence, hatred or bigotry on your campuses, in our workplaces or our communities.

As employers who recruit from each of your law schools, we look to you to ensure your students who hope to join our firms after graduation are prepared to be an active part of workplace communities that have zero tolerance policies for any form of discrimination or harassment, much less the kind that has been taking place on some law school campuses.

We trust you will take the same unequivocal stance against such activities as we do, and we look forward to a respectful dialogue with you to understand how you are addressing with urgency this serious situation at your law schools.

### Florida International University:

Acknowledging its responsibility in cultivating the diversity of the legal profession’s pipeline, Bilzin Sumberg continued its financial support of 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.

In addition, every year Bilzin Sumberg awards a scholarship to an FIU Honors College student in honor of the 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 of Caribbean descent who intends to pursue a career in law and has demonstrated leadership ability in extracurricular activities. In 2023, the Damion Dunn Scholarship was awarded to Nia Virgo, a pre-law track sophomore pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Global Studies and a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice.

“This scholarship means a lot to me, not just for the financial support it offers, but because it aligns perfectly with my aspirations. It will undoubtedly assist me in achieving my academic goals and continue my journey of making a positive impact in the world.”



**NIA VIRGO**

RECIPIENT OF THE 2023  
SCHOLARSHIP IN MEMORIAM OF  
DAMION DUNN

# Recruiting & Diversity Pipelines

Bilzin Sumberg is committed to diversifying the legal profession’s pipeline so that the industry and practice of law more accurately reflects our community and showcases the rich diversity of our country. The firm actively participates in recruiting events at HBCU law schools and minority job fairs, and is a regular sponsor of the Lavender Law Fair, with the aim of expanding the pool of talented attorneys and other professionals it considers for job opportunities.

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 Litigation Section’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. More than 3,400 students have interned with judges over the past 23 years through JIOP, including 159 students in 2023.

## Did you know?

*Adrian Felix, Partner and Chair of Bilzin Sumberg’s DEI Committee, serves as the National Co-Chair of JIOP, while Litigation Attorney Patricia M. Patino was appointed as a Co-Chair of Programming for the Section’s JIOP Committee for the 2023-2024 Bar year.*

*In 2023, the Miami Chapter of JIOP raised \$44,000 and secured 12 student intern placements in local, state and federal courts in Florida.*

Just as importantly, Bilzin Sumberg seeks to foster interest in, and encourage the pursuit of, careers in the legal profession among high school students from diverse backgrounds. For 16 years, the firm has worked closely with the National Association for Law Placement (NALP) through the Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program, which introduces students from underrepresented communities to the legal system and profession by connecting them to practitioners from local law firms.



Street Law Legal Diversity Pipeline Program

# Recruiting & Diversity Pipelines

Bilzin Sumberg employees participate in every aspect of the program, including leading in classroom interactive lessons on substantive areas of the law, hosting the students in the firm's office for a lunch-and-learn so they can experience firsthand the many professional roles that support a law firm, and how the law impacts people in their daily lives.

Some of the additional student engagement, outreach, and recruitment events in which Bilzin Sumberg participated in 2023 include:

## Sponsorship of Miami-Dade Urban Debate League (MDUDL):

- The MDUDL tournament brings together middle and high school students from urban Title 1 schools, the majority of whose attendees identify as students of color. The mission of MDUDL is to empower youth through competitive academic debate to become active learners, critical thinkers, and engaged global citizens who are honest and effective advocates for themselves and their communities. Bilzin Sumberg is a proud sponsor of the MDUDL, and its attorneys are actively involved in facilitating its tournaments. Litigation Partner Adrian Felix and Environmental Attorney David Jessup both served as judges in the Bilzin Sumberg Season Opener debate in 2023, while Litigation Attorney Benjamin Mitchel serves on MDUDL's Board of Directors.

## Did you know?

*Over 30 schools from Miami-Dade County Public Schools have participated in the MDUDL debate seasons since the start of the League in 2015, thereby serving over 500 students since that time. Nearly 100% of participating schools classify as Title I schools, meaning no less than 40% of the students from such schools are from low-income families. Serving Title I schools has been a core tenet of MDUDL's mission.*

*The MDUDL has partnered with local universities and colleges, regularly hosting tournaments at the campuses of Florida International University, University of Miami, and the Miami-Dade College North and Kendall campuses.*



David Jessup, Jr. and Adrian Felix with Miami-Dade Urban Debate League (MDUDL).

# Recruiting & Diversity Pipelines

## Clothing Drive for First-Gen Law Students:

- Bilzin Sumberg partnered with the University of Miami School of Law’s First Generation Law Association and Black Law Student Association to organize and host Clothing & Counsel: Professional Attire & Advice for Law Students, which provided a presentation targeted toward first-generation law students covering interview tips, networking, and resume building, in addition to offering the students lightly used professional clothing donated from Bilzin Sumberg attorneys and staff that could be used for professional interviews and networking events.



## Bilzin Sumberg College Essay Program:

- As in previous years, Bilzin Sumberg attorneys assisted in reviewing college essays with local high school students in partnership with United Way of Miami and Overtown Youth Center, in order to strengthen students’ college admissions applications (program runs October-November). 2023 saw the expansion of the program to support counseling for the entire college application process, with the possibility of partnering with additional organizations to provide support to a larger number of students in need.



## Law School Student Group Professional Development:

- Bilzin Sumberg partnered with a number of minority student affinity groups at law schools across Florida to organize panels of practicing attorneys to discuss various topics of interest to diverse law students, including interviewing for legal jobs, life as a summer associate, life as an attorney, and the work done by different practice groups at commercial law firms.

**UM students at the Clothing Drive for First-Gen Law Students, followed by a presentation by attorneys Saron Musa and Danielle Hall.**

# 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, 2023 featured a robust series of speakers from academia, the legal profession, the non-profit sector, and other areas to enlighten the firm on both historical and current topics with timely and valuable takeaways. The firm's 2023 Speakers Series program included:

## Inspiring Women Leaders:

- In honor of Women's History Month, Bilzin Sumberg hosted three female executives from the professional sports industry to share their experiences and insights on overcoming gender-based challenges and achieving success in a traditionally male-dominated field. Moderated by Real Estate Partner Sara Barli Herald, the panel featured **Laila Brock**, Senior Vice President for Strategic Partnerships and Community Impact for the Atlanta Dream (Women's National Basketball Association), **Amanda Herald**, Vice President of Marketing Strategy, Insights and Planning at the National Football League, and **Caroline O'Connor**, President of Business Operations at the Miami Marlins. All three panelists detailed their professional journeys, reflecting on the challenges and opportunities that led them to their current roles. In doing so, they demonstrated the diversity of pathways to leadership positions for women in the national sports industry.

## Neurodiversity in the Workplace:

- Bilzin Sumberg hosted an intimate discussion with **Haley Moss** on neurodiversity in the workplace. An author, speaker, and advocate for disability inclusion and neurodiversity, Haley shared her thoughts and experiences on the current state of neurodivergent individuals in professional settings, and the challenges that they continue to face in their careers. The discussion explored the ways in which employers and professional organizations could further the cause of neurodiversity and value the contributions of neurodivergent talent.

## Antisemitism 101 for the Workplace:

- With antisemitism rising globally, and business establishments identified as the fourth most common place where anti-Semitic incidents occur, Bilzin Sumberg presented a workshop for firm employees, organized by the Anti-Defamation League, on how to combat antisemitism and nurture cultural competency on Jews and Jewish issues.



## Hampton House Tour: Exploring Miami's Rich Black History

In honor of Black History Month, Bilzin Sumberg organized a walking tour of the historic Hampton House motel for firm employees and their families, followed by lunch at Red Rooster.

Located in Miami-Dade County's historically black Brownsville neighborhood, the one-time hotel is one of the few remaining Green Book sites from the Jim

# Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace

Crow era, and a valuable piece of Miami’s segregated history. The storied Hampton House served as a gathering spot during the Civil Rights Era of the 1950s, 60s and 70s, hosting influential figures from the arts, entertainment, athletics, and civil rights world, such as Sam Cooke, Sammy Davis, Jr., Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Muhammad Ali, Jackie Wilson, Althea Gibson, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcom X, Jackie Robinson, and Jim Brown. The hotel operated and thrived at a time when segregationist policies were still in force across much of South Florida, becoming a landmark of African American culture at a time when Miami was beginning to grow into the major city it is today. The only segregated hotel of that era still standing, the Hampton House has recently undergone a \$6 million restoration project to include a museum and community center, and was the setting for the award-winning film, *One Night in Miami* directed by Regina King.

Located in Overtown Miami, once the heart of Miami’s thriving Black community during the Jim Crow era, Red Rooster showcases comfort food celebrating the roots of American southern cuisine and the diverse culinary traditions of the neighborhood. The restaurant was awarded the Bib Gourmand by Michelin in 2022.



## 305 Break: The Taste of Diversity

During National Hispanic Heritage Month and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Bilzin Sumberg’s Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee organized a series of afternoon snack breaks for its employees with the goal of raising awareness of the diversity within the Hispanic American and Asian American communities. Each “305” Break featured unique treats and drinks from a distinct country, allowing firm staff and attorneys to socialize while appreciating the delicious diversity of the communities that form the fabric of American society.

### Hispanic Heritage Month highlights:

- Argentina, El Salvador, Mexico, and Nicaragua



### Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month:

- Japan and Taiwan



# 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 the summer of 2022, Bilzin Sumberg formalized an engagement with the Southern Poverty Law Center (“SPLC”) to support the organization’s ongoing efforts to use the court system and other forms of advocacy to expose and combat hate, racism, and unfair laws throughout the U.S., with the goal of bringing about meaningful reforms. Since the firm was engaged, its attorneys have invested over 250 hours assisting SPLC in analyzing U.S. constitutional law questions, reviewing and analyzing the legislative histories of various U.S. and Florida laws, preparing an amicus brief, compiling news reports and video content, and preparing and organizing public records requests.



Bilzin Sumberg also continued its multi-year partnership with the Law Firm Anti-Racism Alliance (“LFAA”) in 2023. Working alongside approximately 400 law firms and legal services organizations across the nation, Bilzin Sumberg lawyers have helped analyze, spotlight, and dismantle structural and systemic racism in the law. This partnership provides all Bilzin Sumberg lawyers with access to LFAA’s Bulletin Board, a repository of immediate and long-term pro bono opportunities, across a range of sectors and industries, aimed at creating deeper and more lasting change in terms of combatting racial injustice.



**Raquel Fernandez**

Raquel Fernandez, Partner and chair of Bilzin Sumberg’s Pro Bono program, has continued to serve in her role as a member of the LFAA’s Education Working Group. Raquel and fellow members are building coalitions among diverse stakeholders to develop scholarships, lead and contribute to impact litigation, aid in legislative and policy-change efforts, promote awareness of racial inequality in education, and increase funding for anti-racism efforts in schools nationwide.

Adrian Felix continues to serve as chair of the Addressing Community subgroup for the LFAA’s Banking Working Group, which subgroup has worked on compiling qualitative and empirical data from local leaders and organizations in various metropolitan areas regarding the needs and concerns of communities of color and other underserved communities when it comes to banking and financial services.



# 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 2023

Most notably, the Diversity & Flexibility Alliance, an organization that partners with law firms, associations, and corporations to foster inclusive corporate cultures, recognized Bilzin Sumberg as one of only 75 major law firms out of over 200, that saw over half of the firm’s 2023 partner promotions go to women. Their Tipping the Scales award is included in the organization’s 2023 New Partner Report, a yearly compilation and examination of publicly released data from its members, including the nation’s largest and top-grossing law firms. The 2023 recognition is the second time that Bilzin Sumberg, a proud member of the Alliance, has received the award since its inception in 2019.

Bilzin Sumberg CEO and Managing Partner Albert E. Dotson, Jr. was selected as one of only seven 2023 Inductees for YWCA South Florida’s prestigious First But Not The Last honor. The First But Not The Last honor celebrates the achievements of trailblazing leaders in South Florida who have broken barriers in their respective industries. In addition to this recognition, Al also received the YWCA’s 2023 Jason Jenkins Man-Kind Award, an honor given to only one man a year for his outstanding community leadership. Among his many leadership roles in community organizations, Al serves as an active member and as

part of the leadership of 100 Black Men of America. He is also a proud member of the Orange Bowl Committee for which he served as the second Black president of the organization.

Globe St. Real Estate Forum recognized Real Estate Partner Sara Barli Herald as one of their “Women of Influence” for 2023, specifically naming her for the Special Recognition, Mentor category for her mentorship and pro bono work aimed at supporting the advancement and well-being of women in addition to communities of color. Sara was also selected as a finalist for Chambers Diversity & Inclusion’s highly competitive Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year award, which included consideration of her pro bono counsel to Overtown Youth Center in Miami’s historically black Overtown neighborhood and to organizations working to preserve Miami’s rich black history.



**Sara Barli Herald**

## Did you know?

*In 2023 Bilzin Sumberg was honored with the Chief Justice’s Law Firm Commendation Pro Bono Service Award in recognition of the firm’s outstanding efforts in support of pro bono services in the state of Florida. Presented by the Chief Justice of Florida’s Supreme Court, the statewide award recognizes one law firm annually that demonstrated a significant contribution in the provision of pro bono legal services to individuals or groups that cannot otherwise afford the services.*

*Separately, Bilzin Sumberg also received the Julia Tuttle Award for Community Involvement and Corporate Citizenship from the Association of Fundraising Professionals. For both recognitions, Bilzin Sumberg’s extensive DEI-focused pro bono counsel was instrumental in being chosen for the prestigious awards.*

# 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. 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.

## 2023 MEMBERS OF THE DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE



**Adrian K. Felix**  
Chair



**Michelle R. Weber**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Jackie Gallego**  
Chief Human Resources Officer



**Enza Boderone**  
Chair, Strategic Partnerships



**Jennifer E. Fine**  
Strategic Partnerships



**Liana Kozlowski**  
Strategic Partnerships



**Benjamin Mitchel**  
Chair, Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline



**Salomé Bascañán**  
Recruiting & Diversity Pipeline



**Ellina Berdichevsky**  
Chair, Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace



**Ernesto Alarcon**  
Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace



**Stephanie Berrios**  
Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace



**Melissa Cejas**  
Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace



**Sara Barli Herald**  
Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace



**Marshall R. Pasternack**  
Professional Development & Inclusive Workplace



**Brittany Chung**  
Commitment to Social Justice



**David Jessup, Jr.**  
Commitment to Social Justice



**Saron Musa**  
Commitment to Social Justice



# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion 2023 Annual Report



1450 Brickell Avenue, 23rd Floor | Miami, Florida 33131 | Tel: 305.374.7580 | [bilzin.com](http://bilzin.com)

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