



## News & Trending

PUBLICATIONS & ALERTS

### YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF IS AN ASSET TO YOUR OFFICE

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I have been Smith Anderson's Chief Diversity Officer for over a year now. In this new role for our firm, I have contributed to the impactful Diversity and Inclusion ("D&I") efforts of our firm's longstanding D&I Committee and led other new and exciting efforts and projects.

As a Black and Asian woman, I know how it feels to feel "othered" in many spaces throughout my life. This personal experience inspires me to do everything I can to make sure that every individual who works at Smith Anderson feels that they are home and can bring their full authentic selves to work. When people are fully authentic at work, we all benefit from learning from one another and having people with differing backgrounds and perspectives all working towards the same goal.

Some of my favorite D&I efforts at Smith Anderson have been our community building work because it facilitates opportunities for real and authentic connection (beyond the standard elevator conversation about the weather and other small talk). Our efforts include quarterly social events for diverse associates, diversity mentorship programs, and panels with diverse in-house counsel.

We recently put on an event where all mentors and mentees in the diversity mentorship program selected a book that was meaningful to their life and experience. Each person then explained why they chose this book and then the book was given to another participating lawyer for them to read. Copies of all the books were gifted to a local school for future scholars to enjoy. This event was particularly meaningful because it built community and connection within Smith Anderson while also giving back to the Raleigh community in which we live and work.

I'm also proud to lead our firm's **Mansfield Certification** efforts. "The goal of the Mansfield Rule is to boost the representation of diverse lawyers in law firm leadership by broadening the pool of candidates considered for these opportunities." In participating in Mansfield Certification, we have had the opportunity to exchange ideas about D&I efforts with our fellow Mansfield cohort and to make sure that we are considering our diverse attorneys for key opportunities and positions within our firm.

My most cherished parts about being the Chief Diversity Officer are the open and honest conversations that I have with my co-workers about ideas for new D&I efforts, their lived experiences, and their paths to becoming a lawyer. Through these open and vulnerable conversations, I learn so much from them and can incorporate their feedback into new efforts or changes to our existing efforts. We have to be able to adapt and tailor our efforts to the needs of our internal community, and having these conversations allows us to do just that.

I cannot wait to build upon my experience from the first full year to create even more impact for 2023!

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## PROFESSIONALS

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