



2014

ANNUAL REPORT



It has been an incredible year at Ms. JD!



Dear Ms. JD Supporters:

We kicked 2014 off with our Passion Forward Conference in Austin, Texas. With the support of the Center for Women in the Law, we welcomed over 150 students and attorneys to the University of Texas in Austin. We celebrated our first Ms. JD Honors awards ceremony, recognizing six incredible women and organizations for their contributions to the profession and, in the process, helped promote some of the incredible work that women are doing in the law. The Ms. JD Honors awards were an important first step for Ms. JD in our campaign to tell positive stories about what it looks like to be a woman in the law. If you would like to be a part of the **2015 Ms. JD Honors, nominations are open until January 14, 2015.**



Passion Forward continued with two days of inspirational training, growth, and career planning. Women who walked away from the conference had resoundingly positive things to say. One of our attendees from Puerto Rico was so inspired that she founded the first National Women Law Students' Organization (NWLSO) in a U.S. Territory. This year, a group of women from Puerto Rico are already registered to attend Ms. JD's Stronger Together conference in San Francisco. We are so proud of the Puerto Rico chapter and the way they have come together to support one another.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

In March, Ms. JD officially expanded our programming to include pre-law women. Ms. JD's Programs Manager, Laura Bladow, designed programming and recruited bloggers, speakers and a new sponsor, PowerScore, to be a part of Ms. JD's efforts to ensure we are addressing all sections of the pipeline. We are thrilled with the results of the Pre-Law Program, which have included three online programs, one in-person program, and a lot of excellent advice on the Ms. JD blog.



In June Ms. JD welcomed Heather Byrd Asher as Ms. JD's Third Executive Director. Heather brought her experiences at Howard University, Harvard Law, and Alston Bird LLP in Atlanta to Ms. JD. She hit the ground running and you have probably already seen some of her excellent work on Ms. JD's Programs. If you have not met her yet, we hope you will join us at Ms. JD's Annual Conference in March 2015 so that you can meet Heather personally.

OCI BOOTCAMP

In July, Ms. JD was pleased to host our second annual OCI bootcamp. Ms. JD Sponsor, Latham & Watkins, hosted 60 students in its New York office. The students got personalized resume reviews and interview critiques while also hearing from panelists about how to have a successful OCI experience. This year Ms. JD hopes to host OCI bootcamps in cities throughout the U.S. If your firm is interested in hosting one, please contact us.

We also launched the Ms. JD Journalists Program, which provides another way for volunteers to be a part of the Ms. JD community - by researching and writing about issues requested by our community.



In August, Ms. JD, with sponsor Lieff Cabraser, hosted the second annual Global Education Fund silent auction and fundraiser. This year the GEF was pleased to welcome two lawyer bands, the R23s from Lieff Cabraser and Diversion from Latham & Watkins as entertainment for the evening.

THE INCREDIBLE MAN (TIM) INITIATIVE

Also in October, Ms. JD was proud to welcome ABA President-Elect Paulette Brown as our National Event Speaker. Paulette spoke from O'Melveny & Myer's offices in New York to hundreds of men and women across the country. Paulette talked about being the first African American woman to lead the ABA and a number of other firsts that she has accomplished. We are grateful for her participation as a National Event speaker.

In October Ms. JD launched The Incredible Men (TIM) Initiative. Ms. JD's TIM Initiative honors men who invest in and sponsor women and women's initiatives. We have already featured a number of men on Ms. JD's blog and we look forward to telling more of their stories both through the blog and as part of our first TIM Initiative Award at the 2015 Ms JD Honors awards ceremony.



As we look ahead to 2015, Ms. JD remains committed to being a place where aspiring and early career women lawyers come for advice, community, and inspiration. We will kick the year off with the UC Hastings Chapter of NWLSO at Ms. JD's Seventh Annual Conference, Stronger Together. We hope we will see you there! In the meantime, if there are specific ideas you would like us to consider, please let us know! From all of us at Ms. JD, thank you for an incredible year!

THANK YOU

Sincerely,

Katie Larkin-Wong
President, Ms. JD

Amazing.



That's the best way to describe my first six months as Ms. JD's Executive Director. It's been amazing to come in contact with women and men dedicated to enhancing the careers of young diverse lawyers (and aspiring lawyers), those that are willing to jump on that late evening conference call, to spend time reaching out to someone in the face of increasing calendar appointments and more. It has helped motivate me to uphold what Ms. JD has accomplished and work hard to figure out the best way to also move forward. In the short period of time since I joined the Ms. JD team, we've welcomed a new board member, launched a prelaw program and TIM Initiative, organized regional and national events, put together the framework for our upcoming "Stronger Together" conference and broadened our base of supporters. I expect no less in 2015!

Sincerely,

Heather Byrd Asher

Executive Director, Ms. JD

2014

BY THE NUMBERS



50,000

ms-jd.org
Website Page Views
Per Month

5,564

Newsletter
Subscribers



5,603



Ms.

JD

Determined to Rise.

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3,421



**Determined to Rise:
A Conversation on Law,
Leadership and Being “The
First” with Paulette Brown,
President-Elect of the ABA**

Over 400 attendees registered for an insightful conversation with Paulette Brown, President-Elect of the American Bar Association. Paulette answered questions taken directly from the Ms. JD community and shared her experiences.



**Cutting to the Front of the Line:
OCI Preparation Skills**

Ms. JD and Latham & Watkins LLP hosted Cutting to the Front of the Line: OCI Preparation Skills Directly From the Source, a boot camp for on-campus interview success. The program featured panels on creating a strong resume and interviewing tips. Each panel was followed by individual feedback sessions where students met with a faculty of experienced attorneys.



**Growing Your Grit: The Law Students’ Guide
to a Positive Mindset for Career Success**

Ms. JD, Diversity & Flexibility Alliance, and George Washington University Law School hosted Growing Your Grit. Industry experts outlined the ABA Commission on Women in the Profession’s The Grit Project with interactive scenarios and discussions.



Decision Point: Law School

Ms. JD partnered with PowerScore and George Washington University Law School for Decision Point: Law School. This event provided pre-law students with the opportunity to have their pre-law questions answered directly by admissions officers, law students, and attorneys.



Improving Diversity on Law Reviews

Ms. JD and New York Law School hosted a special program at Fish & Richardson, P.C., in New York, to discuss the Ms. JD Women on Law Review survey results, as well as the significance of law review membership and leadership and suggestions for increasing the number of female and minority students in these positions.



Ms. JD Presents: Women in Appellate Law

Ms. JD and O'Melveny and Myers presented a two-hour lunch panel discussion providing attendees with valuable insight on the practice of appellate law.



The JOBS Act: How Silicon Valley Won in Washington

Ms. JD, Latham & Watkins LLP, and the Bay Area Council presented the story of how Silicon Valley won in Washington by spearheading the Jumpstart Our Business Startups (JOBS) Act of 2012. In less than a year's time, the IPO reforms went from concept to legislation adopted with overwhelming bipartisan support. This event explored how it all happened through a case study with Kate Mitchell, a co-founder of Scale Venture Partners, and Joel Trotter, a partner at Latham & Watkins, who worked with Kate as a member of the IPO Task Force.

Ms. JD's Annual Conference on Women in the Law

2014 Ms. JD's 6th Annual Conference on Women in Law: Passion Forward



Sponsors: Arnold & Porter, Latham & Watkins, Munger Tolles & Olson, Norton Rose Fulbright, Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen & Katz
CLE: 1 ethics credit
Host: University of Texas School of Law
Attendees: 150 (60% students / 40% attorneys)



“What’s great about the Ms. JD conference is the opportunity to build a national peer network. I’m still in touch with friends I made at my first Ms. JD conference 6 years ago and I go back every year to meet more.”

2015 Ms. JD’s 7th Annual Conference on Women in Law: Stronger Together

“Stronger Together,” will be held in San Francisco, CA on March 5-6, 2015 at UC Hastings College of the Law. A culmination of Ms. JD’s national programming, this conference brings aspiring and early career women lawyers from legal markets around the country together for a summit on the progress and remaining challenges for women in the profession.

On Thursday, March 5, 2015 Ms. JD will host an awards ceremony celebrating recipients of the Ms. JD Honors awards, including the first inaugural TIM (The Incredible Men) Initiative Award.

The Stronger Together conference will continue on Friday, March 6, 2015 with all-day conference panels and a closing reception. Conference attendees will gain career insight from panels focusing on young trailblazers, the relationship between women’s initiatives and affinity groups and the importance of and approaches to mentorship. In the afternoon, conference attendees will be able to choose from various break-out sessions that will provide step-by-step practical advice on how to apply for a grant, clerkship, or fellowship, how to write a business plan and how to succeed as a private practice associate.

“Take the best life lessons you learned and the most inspiring people you met in law school, multiply by 100 and you get a Ms. JD conference.”

**Thank you
to Ms. JD's
2015
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GOLD LEVEL



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COMMUNITY CO-SPONSOR



Neeta Saran - Microsoft

What did you enjoy about last year's "Passion Forward" conference?

The Passion Forward conference offered law students and new attorneys an opportunity to focus on building invaluable career skills such as networking, creating personal brand, business development, and interview preparations. I enjoyed the 'learning by doing' boot camp format and watching the students make great strides in developing confidence and insights into their own professional development.



Why did you decide to sponsor Ms. JD?

Diversity and inclusion are core values at Microsoft, and Microsoft is delighted to participate with organizations like Ms. JD that also have a passion for focusing on these issues in the legal profession. For over a decade, Microsoft's Legal and Corporate Affairs department has been actively involved in executing on Microsoft's diversity strategy, with worldwide initiatives in place to attract, mentor and retain women legal professionals. Ms. JD is an exciting organization with similar dedication to the success of women in the legal profession, and Microsoft looks forward to additional opportunities to partner with Ms. JD to advance this mission.

What are you looking forward to at the 2015 "Stronger Together" conference?

The Stronger Together conference will continue to teach students and new attorneys vital skills required of successful professionals. In addition, it exposes participants to possible legal career paths that help open their minds and creativity to thinking 'big'. Finally it's a chance to celebrate individuals who have dedicated their careers to advancing the success of women in the legal profession. I look forward to participating in these discussions, as well as meeting and strengthening my relationships with the next generation of women entering the legal work force.

Ms. JD Pre-Law

Laura Bladow, Programs Manager

Building on [Ms. JD's Pre-Law Prep Guide](#), Ms. JD launched a [series of pre-law programming](#) to further develop resources for pre-law women. This programming aims to provide pre-law students with the resources they need to make an informed decision as to if law school is the right path for them. Thanks to several guest bloggers, Ms. JD began a [weekly pre-law blog series](#) providing students with an in-depth look at all aspects of application process. Google Hangouts On Air, [Twitter chats](#), and an [in-person panel event](#) provided pre-law women across the country with direct access to the Ms. JD Board of Directors, the Ms. JD Fellows, and the greater Ms. JD community of law students and legal professionals. We are excited to welcome Ani Torossian as Ms. JD's Pre-Law Program Director and we look forward to expanding Ms. JD's pre-law content in 2015 to continue providing resources for pre-law women!



Ms. JD Journalists

Sunny Choi, Content Director

As the Content Director for Ms. JD, I am proud to share the success of the new Ms. JD Journalists program that was launched earlier this year. The Ms. JD Journalists are a group of volunteer writers who are “on call” to write articles as determined by Ms. JD’s content needs and requests at any given time. While Ms. JD clearly benefits from the writers’ valuable contributions, one of the goals of the program is to also help volunteers who enjoy writing put something extra on their resume, help them make contacts and network with successful women, all through the channels of journalism. There are currently nine Journalists who have produced articles on everything from mental illness resources, interviews with distinguished women in law, minority scholarships and fellowship opportunities. These ladies are a wonderful addition to the Ms. JD family and it’s been a pleasure to supervise their writing endeavors. I have high hopes for 2015!



Ms. JD Fellows

Raychelle Tasher,

Ms. JD Board Member & Fellowship Coordinator

This year the **2013 Ms. JD Fellows** wrapped up their fellowship term by publishing a free e-book, **Acing Law School**. The 2013 Fellows also hosted an open discussion of their e-book online in a Google Hangout. Over the summer, Ms. JD awarded 17 law students Fellowships. You can learn more about the 2014 class of Fellows **here**.



National Women Law Students' Organization

Chelsea Zimmerman, NWLSO Newsletter Editor

The first edition of the National Women Law Students' Organization (NWLSO) monthly newsletter was released in October. Each monthly newsletter provides members with information on Ms. JD activities, job and internship opportunities, as well as tips and advice geared toward 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls. We also started featuring a NWLSO chapter each month to highlight the wonderful and innovative programs that exist around the country. The newsletter highlights important events, opportunities, and goals for NWLSO members and creates further opportunities for them to engage with Ms. JD.



Public Interest Scholarship

Natalie Molz, Public Interest Scholarship Director

It was such a privilege to be involved with the Ms. JD 2014 Summer Public Interest Scholarship Competition, and to have a part in selecting this year's deserving winners. We had a really amazing turnout this year—with more than 50 women law students applying and sharing their advice on law school, networking, and public interest law with the Ms. JD community. All of this year's applicants demonstrated their zealous commitment to serving their communities.

Ultimately, **our five winners** were selected for their standout advice and outstanding public interest achievements. Our winners had diverse summer experiences in public interest law; ranging from a legal internship with the District Attorney's Office, to a position with a nonprofit organization providing legal services to individuals on welfare. Notably, however, their commitments to public interest law did not end with their summers. The winning students cumulatively provided and had plans to provide legal services for children, veterans, prisoners, human trafficking victims, and animals in need.



Global Education Fund

Neha Shah, Global Education Fund Program Director

Ms. JD's Global Education Fund (GEF) provides access to a legal education to disadvantaged women in Uganda at Makerere University by funding all four years of university tuition, housing, academic support, and day-to-day needs. This year is the first year in Ms. JD's history that the Global Education Fund Program created a program council. GEF currently has a wonderful team of 5 council members, located across the nation, that help run day-to-day GEF operations. GEF hosted its 2nd Annual GEF Cocktail Benefit and Silent Auction, which raised over \$3,000 in scholarship funds for GEF legal scholars. GEF also added two more women as scholarship beneficiaries, bringing the total to eight GEF scholars. This year, the inaugural GEF scholars graduated from Makerere University, obtaining their degrees in law.



Writers in Residence

Juliana Siconolfi, Academic Director & 2014 Writers in Residence Director

This year, the Writers in Residence (WIR) Program featured another wonderful array of engaging, unique, and helpful columns. The WIRs discussed some of the most important issues pertaining to today's legal profession. We are honored to have received specific mention in the **ABA Journal's 2014 BLAWG 100 Hall of Fame**, and can't wait for the 2015 WIRs to carry on the Program's exciting work!



In addition to supporting our current Writers in Residence and further strengthening the infrastructure of the Program, we were thrilled to pursue opportunities to reach out to former Writers in Residence, too. In particular, we launched the **Ms. JD Writers in Residence Interview Project**, featuring blogging advice and insights from past and present Ms. JD WIRs. We also began to use a WIR LinkedIn group page, in an effort to provide past and present WIRs with an ongoing opportunity to connect with Ms. JD, and with one another.

I will greatly miss my involvement with the WIR Program but am excited to serve as Ms. JD's inaugural Academic Director. Alongside Ms. JD Board Member and Academic Committee Chair Julie Silverbrook, as well as other Ms. JD team members, I look forward to participating in projects regarding diversity in the legal academy. These projects will include the launch of the 2015 Law Review Diversity Survey.

Writers in Residence

Ashley Ahlbrand, 2015 Writers in Residence Director

Months never seem to fly so quickly as when you're facing a monthly column deadline. As a 2014 Writer in Residence, I cannot believe how fast the year went! As the Educational Technology Librarian at Indiana University Maurer School of Law, I try to make legal research accessible to everyone. And thus was born my column, **"Research Makeover: The Tips, Tricks and Trade of Legal Research in the Digital Age."**



Serving as a Ms. JD Writer in Residence has been an incredible experience, and I am so honored to stay on as the Director of the 2015 Writers in Residence Program. This year a few writers will offer a glimpse into their decision to attend law school and the process of getting there. A few more will offer advice on surviving law school, both as a traditional student and as an evening student. Still others will discuss how to balance law school and your legal career with having a family, and even how to strike this balance when both spouses are JAG attorneys based overseas! Our readers will hear of experiences practicing law on Capitol Hill, as in-house counsel, and in the male-dominated world of law and technology. And this is just a sampling! Thank you so much for the opportunity to extend my work with Ms. JD. Let's get started!

SPOTLIGHT ON INDIVIDUAL GIVING

**Bill Voge - Chair and Managing Partner,
Latham & Watkins LLP**

Why did you decide to become an individual donor?

I applaud Ms. JD for the work they've done to enhance diversity in the legal profession. To effect true change, I believe you have to make a commitment. We all have a responsibility to support and develop current and future generations of women lawyers, and I'm committed to help further this cause.



SPOTLIGHT ON PROGRAMMING

The Incredible Men (TIM) Initiative

Launched in 2014 to celebrate men who are active champions for women's advancement in the legal profession.

These men not only value equality and diversity in the profession, but earnestly and enthusiastically support women and women's initiatives.

Ms. JD's **TIM Initiative** was named after **Timothy Miller** who currently serves on the Board of Directors of Ms. JD.



Latham & Watkins LLP

**Nadia Sager, Corporate Partner and
Chair of Diversity Leadership Committee**



Latham has been a sponsor of Ms. JD since its founding. Why have you continued to support Ms. JD year after year?

We support Ms. JD because we believe in the power of women. Our firm and the profession at large benefit immensely from the success of talented women attorneys. Ms. JD provides concrete tools for women in law school and women lawyers to thrive and contribute to the quality of our profession.

What has been the greatest benefit of your sponsorship? Has Ms. JD helped your internal initiatives?

The greatest benefit of our Ms. JD sponsorship has been enabling us to form genuine relationships and connections with law students who are the next generation of women lawyers and leaders. We are inspired by the talent of tomorrow.

The firm is also a conference sponsor, what are you looking forward to this year at the conference?

The theme “Stronger Together” rings especially true for us at Latham. We have long understood that success is not built on any one individual’s achievements, but is the result of our collective commitment to each other’s success. We look forward to the experiences and lessons that will be shared by the women and men who are committed to helping others succeed.

White & Case LLP

**Nicole Erb, Executive Partner
of the Global Women’s Initiative**



What made the firm join as a national sponsor?

White & Case is proud to be a national sponsor of Ms. JD because preparing young women lawyers for success and leadership is a business imperative critical to the success of our Firm. Through our award-winning Global Women’s Initiative, we are dedicated to developing women leaders and providing them with the experiences and tools they need to succeed at all levels of their legal careers. Our national sponsorship of Ms. JD complements the priorities of our Global Women’s Initiative, which include implementing career management programs, client partnerships, and professional development programming, as well as supporting flexible work arrangement and leave policies for both men and women over the course of their careers. We look forward to partnering with Ms. JD to continue to advance the success of women in the legal profession by creating a strong foundation for women law students and young lawyers as they commence their careers.

What are the most difficult diversity issues for firms to tackle? How do you think Ms. JD will help?

The retention of women attorneys is an ongoing challenge facing the legal profession. At White & Case, we are keenly focused on addressing this challenge through our talent management strategies, including the continued design of new, comprehensive development and retention plans for our women associates and leadership programs for our women partners. Our national sponsorship of Ms. JD will allow us to continue to empower our women attorneys by giving them direct access to the supportive professional community that is the hallmark of Ms. JD. Through Ms. JD’s online resources, networking opportunities, and scholarship and other programming, Ms. JD provides the tools for women attorneys to manage their careers from the outset and create professional identities that will allow them to become the next generation of leaders in the profession. We are excited about the year ahead.

Lieff Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP
Kristen Sagafi, Partner

What made the firm join as a national sponsor?

LCHB is committed to leveling the playing field for the communities we serve and also within the legal profession. We are delighted to support Ms. JD's efforts to support a diverse community of women in law school and in practice.



What are the most difficult diversity issues for firms to tackle? How do you think Ms. JD will help?

Law firms need to stay flexible if they want to support a diverse community of legal professionals. We applaud Ms. JD for creating a forum for idea-sharing and discussion around what the next generation of lawyers needs and wants to thrive in the law.

O'Melveny & Myers LLP

**Mary Ellen Connerty,
Director of Diversity & Inclusion**



Why have you continued to support Ms. JD year after year?

The legal profession has made great strides in increasing the number of women who enter and achieve leadership positions. However, there is more to be done. Organizations like Ms. JD that focus specifically on women -- their challenges, their goals, their successes -- and provide resources for networking and support are critical to keeping the momentum going. The breadth of Ms. JD's reach makes it valuable for women attorneys at all stages of their careers.

What has been the greatest benefit of your sponsorship? Has Ms. JD helped your internal initiatives?

Ms. JD provides valuable support for many of O'Melveny's Diversity & Inclusion programs. For example at the recruiting level, Ms. JD's outreach at law schools helps us to reach potential candidates. We are looking forward to some of Ms. JD's regional events and we are grateful for the resources the organization provides, such as documentaries and research.

The firm is also a conference sponsor, what are you looking forward to this year at the conference?

This year's conference theme "Stronger Together" acknowledges that collaboration among women is a formula for progress. It also gives credit to the men who have recruited, promoted and mentored women. At O'Melveny, we recognize that our ability to attract and retain diverse talent goes hand in hand with our long-range goals for success. To build and sustain enduring client relationships, we need diverse teams whose backgrounds and experiences reflect those of our clients. We are proud of how many women are in partner and leadership positions within the firm. In fact, this year O'Melveny's new partner class is 44 percent women. We are honored to work with Ms. JD to provide some insight as well as learn from others at the upcoming conference.

Thank you to our Annual Sponsors!

For more information on
sponsorship opportunities,
please contact Ms. JD's
Executive Director.

Heather Asher
director@ms-jd.org

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