

Seizing the Moment

On Saturday November 5, 2016, around 8:00 a.m. at the Montgomery County Circuit Court Courthouse, fifteen law student candidates, along with attorneys and judges quietly filed on to the 8th floor to begin the process of match-making. This of course was no ordinary big dance, but a measured movement of selecting Summer Scholars for the Montgomery County Summer Scholar Pipeline Program. A steady din of noise began as members of law firms settled in and gathered at their respective rooms to interview the candidates for the long day ahead.

For the last six years, the Diversity Committee of the Montgomery County Bar Foundation has organized and implemented the Summer Scholars Pipeline Program. Along with the participating Montgomery County law firms, the specialty bars such as the J. Franklyn Bourne Bar Association, the Maryland Hispanic Bar Association and the Asian Pacific American Bar Association, participated in the program to fulfill its mission of diversifying the legal community in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Each of the specialty bars nominates five student candidates, and the total group of fifteen law students become interviewees for summer clerkships. The Speed Interviews, as they are called because they resemble speed dating, all took place on November 5th, with the fifteen candidates interviewing with all ten firms. Because of their ongoing commitment to the program and to diversity in our County, we are honored to recognize these firms by name. They are:

Armstrong, Donohue, Ceppos, Vaughan & Rhoades;
Bregman, Berbert, Schwartz & Gilday;
Jezic & Moyse;
Joseph, Greenwald & Laake;
Lerch Early & Brewer;
Paley, Rothman, Goldstein, Rosenberg, Eig & Cooper;
Pasternak & Fidis;
Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Porcy & Ecker;
Stein Sperling Bennett De Jong Driscoll;
Whiteford, Taylor & Preston.



One of the highlights during the Interview day were remarks made by Montgomery County Circuit Court Judge Sharon V. Burrell. The Honorable Judge Burrell, reminded the audience of treating each other civilly and with respect because you never know with whom you may come across down the road. With leaders from all three of the specialty bars also present that day, it is clear that this program holds a distinctive place in Maryland, with Montgomery County leading the way by example.

Over the years, Summer Scholars have gone on to serve as law clerks to Montgomery County Circuit Court judges as well as federal judges, and some have found permanent homes with the firms they were recruited by for the summer. The program provides a tremendous opportunity for the fifteen candidates to showcase their talents in ways that their resumes alone may not reveal. In turn, the firms have an opportunity to gain from cultural perspectives and viewpoints that they may not already have on board. By connecting law student nominees of the specialty bars with participating law firms for summer clerkships, it is the goal that these students may later become associates of the firms following graduation and members of our County Bar.

The commitment to diversity and inclusion is a call to action, not just rhetoric, by working to make the halls of our courts and our law firms look more like the community-at-large. We reflect upon what it means to have a legal system that works for all. We applaud the firms who participate year after year and who strive to promote the promise of opportunity and achieve the goal of diversity in their own ranks.

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The Diversity Committee of the Montgomery County Bar Foundation