Diversity and Inclusion at Carlton Fields
Appreciation of diversity is one of Carlton Fields’ core values and an integral part of the firm’s strategic plan. We promote and embrace diversity in all things, encouraging our attorneys and managers to prioritize the inclusion of diverse individuals in everything we do. This philosophy extends to recruiting, hiring, leadership appointments, case assignments, committee responsibilities, and the development of successors for leadership positions and client relationships. We believe that persons with diverse backgrounds enrich our work environment, add value to the legal services we provide, and enhance the overall culture of the firm.

For more information about our diversity initiatives, contact Chief Diversity Officer Nancy Faggianelli at 813.229.4321 or nfaggianelli@carltonfields.com.
When it comes to diversity, Carlton Fields has been a pioneer in many ways. Our firm founders recognized that a climate of diversity promotes more thoughtful communication, more purposeful collaboration, more varied perspectives, and more creative solutions as we address our clients’ problems and help identify opportunities.

Long before our clients expected it, and before diversity gained currency in the legal marketplace, we actively recruited, hired, and promoted men and women with different ethnic, religious, and racial backgrounds, religious beliefs, orientations, and perspectives. Carlton Fields embraced the changing needs of its workforce, leading the way in offering alternative work schedules as far back as the 1960s and extending domestic partner benefits in 1999.

The firm’s commitment to advancing attorneys with diverse backgrounds has resulted in numerous women and minority attorneys serving in key leadership roles across the firm. Women and diverse attorneys have served as chair of our board of directors. Our Chief Executive Officer and Chief Diversity Officer, who are themselves diverse attorneys, work directly with team leaders to encourage diversification within team structures, including staffing client teams and key matters with diverse teams.

The firm’s initiatives to promote diversity include:

A 360-degree review process through which our attorneys and government consultants rank their practice group leaders on factors that include how well they promote diversity — their effectiveness weighs into their compensation.

A review of the top 50 clients by revenue every six months to evaluate diversity of the client teams.

Networking, informal mentoring, and professional development opportunities through the firm’s LGBT, Minority, and Women’s Business Resource Groups, which work to spur opportunities for these diverse groups within the firm, the legal profession, and the community.
DIVERSITY AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index: Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality
100% Perfect Score
10 Consecutive years

Ranked 13th out of 200 law firms in the country in American Lawyer’s 2018 “Diversity Scorecard”

Ranked nationally among the top law firms for diversity by Law360

2nd The Best Law Firms for Minority Equity Partners (Firms with 300-599 attorneys) Law360’s 2018 “Diversity Snapshot”

5th The Best Law Firms for Female Equity Partners Law360’s 2018 “Glass Ceiling Report”

Since its inclusion on the list in 2010, Carlton Fields has earned top national rankings for diversity in the annual Vault Guide to the Top 100 Law Firms. Each year, the firm has ranked among the country’s top 15 law firms for creating, maintaining, and fostering a diverse workplace.

Ranked #1 law firm in the country 6 of the last 10 years.
Of the firm’s newly elected shareholders in 2019:

- 40% are women, and
- 20% are minorities.

Carlton Fields was honored to receive the 2016 T-Mobile Legal Department Diversity Excellence Award. The annual award recognizes a law firm with strong associate and equity partner diversity, as well as exceptional diversity programs and policies.

For the second consecutive year, Carlton Fields was recognized by Leadership Council on Legal Diversity for its efforts to promote diversity in the legal profession and named as a 2018 Top Performer. The designation is given to corporations and law firms that commit the most time and energy to its programs. The firm has been a leader of the LCLD since it was founded in 2009.
LCLD is a premier national organization that provides opportunities for women and minority in-house counsel to connect with women and minority law firm partners and senior associates. Each year, the firm nominates a mid- to senior-level associate to be an LCLD Pathfinder and a junior shareholder to be an LCLD Fellow. In addition, LCLD has an active alumni program that allows alumni to maintain and grow their relationships. Shareholder Jin Liu served as historian and executive council member of the Fellows Alumni Association.

LCLD FELLOWS

**Current**

Alana Zorrilla-Gaston  
West Palm Beach

M. Derek Harris  
West Palm Beach

Fentrice Driskell  
Tampa

**Past Fellows**

Jin Liu  
Tampa

Lori Baggett  
Tampa

Christopher Aird  
Miami

Kristin Gore  
West Palm Beach
LCLD PATHFINDERS

Current

Eric Coleman
Miami

Yolanda Strader
Miami

Daniel Enriquez
Miami

Gregory Boulos
Miami

Past Pathfinders

LCLD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gary L. Sasso, President and CEO, served on the LCLD’s board of directors, and co-chaired the Fellows Program with the chief legal officer and secretary of Proctor & Gamble.

“"Our culture values innovation, client service, inclusiveness, mutual respect, and professionalism. They’re just words. Until you put them into practice."

Gary L. Sasso, Shareholder, President and CEO
LEADING BY EXAMPLE: SELECT RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

Carlton Fields President and CEO Gary L. Sasso and Chief Diversity Officer Nancy Faggianelli were featured in the American Bar Association Journal article, “Nine Tips for Building a Diverse and Inclusive Law Firm,” about embedding diversity and inclusion into the law firm workplace. Gary received the 2010 CEO Diversity Leadership Award from Diversity Best Practices, and co-chaired The Florida Bar’s Gender Diversity Task Force.

Atlanta Associate D. Barret Broussard serves as vice president/president-elect for the Stonewall Bar Association of Georgia, and is a member of the National LGBT Bar Association and the Atlanta Leadership Council for Lambda Legal.

Hartford Shareholder Robert Simpson has held several top leadership positions in the National Bar Association’s Commercial Law Section. The NBA is the country’s largest and oldest organization of African-American attorneys and judges.


Los Angeles Shareholder Barry Leigh Weissman was appointed to the State Bar of California’s Council on Access and Fairness (COAF) for a three-year term. COAF serves as the State Bar Diversity “think tank,” and advises the Board of Trustees on strategies to enhance diversity opportunities and advancement in the legal profession.
In 2014, Miami Shareholder Yolanda Strader co-founded the Judicial Diversity Initiative (JDI), a coalition of the South Florida black bar organizations, to help identify and promote qualified judicial candidates. Yolanda is a former president of the Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. Bar Association and co-chaired the Dade County Bar Association’s diversity committee.

Miami Shareholder Rahul Ranadive serves on the board of directors for the South Asian Bar Association (SABA) of North America, and is vice president, South Florida, for SABA Florida.

West Palm Beach Associate Amanda Romfh Jesteadt serves as president of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers, Palm Beach County Chapter, and is on the Diversity and Inclusion Committee of The Florida Bar.

Tampa Shareholder Laurel Lockett spearheaded a partnership with Equality Florida to create and distribute several editions of A Legal Handbook for LGBT Floridians and Their Families, a guide to assist LGBT citizens in understanding their rights concerning discrimination, adoption, parental rights, domestic partnership agreements, and estate planning before the legalization of same-sex marriage.

Tampa Shareholder and Florida State Representative Fentrice Driskell served as president of the George Edgecomb Bar Association. She recently served as vice chair of The Florida Bar’s Standing Committee on Diversity and Inclusion and as co-chair of The Florida Bar’s Committee on Gender Equality.
Carlton Fields hosted members of the CREW (Commercial Real Estate Women) Network at our Miami office for several educational and networking events, including a panel discussion led by CREW members on the obstacles women face as they try to negotiate challenges in a male-dominated industry.

Carlton Fields and the Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC) Tampa Bay Women’s Group hosted an inaugural networking Summer Mix and Mingle event, a unique and fun opportunity for women of ACC Tampa Bay to meet colleagues and engage in thoughtful discussions.

Carlton Fields regularly partners with CREFC Women’s Network of Atlanta to provide networking and programming for the region’s commercial real estate and finance professionals. Recently, the firm hosted a Senior Lending Roundtable program on hot topics and disrupters affecting CRE lending, spearheaded by Atlanta Shareholder Marci Schmerler; speed mentoring sessions with industry leaders; and the first annual Leadership Lessons 360 event, an interactive professional development program designed to promote communication, connections, and confidence among women in commercial real estate finance in all career stages.

Carlton Fields’ Miami office hosted the South Asian Bar Association’s 2018 Leadership Retreat. Attorneys traveled from cities across North America to attend the day of leadership workshops. The weekend’s events were organized by Miami Shareholder Rahul Ranadive, who represents SABA’s Florida Chapter in the national organization’s board of directors.

2019: 20th anniversary of the firm extending benefits to employees’ domestic partners.
Carlton Fields supports several pipeline programs for students of all ages, including:

- The Judicial Intern Opportunity Program (JIOP) at both the national (ABA) and state level.
- The Donald J. Weidner Summer for Undergraduates Program at Florida State University College of Law.
- Local Law Week activities for elementary, middle, and high school students.
- Teen Court Diversion Programs for first-time youthful offenders involved primarily in misdemeanors.
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Pipeline Partnership.

Carlton Fields’ Chief Operating Officer Anastasia ‘Annie’ Hiotis is an advocate for the firm’s longstanding diversity initiatives, which are recognized at a national level. Openly gay at Carlton Fields since 2008, Annie has been extensively involved with Equality Florida since 2009 and to date, either chairing or being an active member of the St. Petersburg Equality Florida Steering Committee. She currently serves as chair of the board of Equality Florida. As a result of years of activism, she was honored to serve as a Grand Marshal at the St. Pete Pride Parade in 2016, was recognized by the Tampa Bay Business Journal as an Outstanding Voice in their 2016 Business of Pride edition, and in 2014 was presented the Voice of Equality Award from Equality Florida at its St. Petersburg Gala. Annie and her partner of 26 years have been staunch supporters of the Tampa International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, sponsoring its annual launch party each year since 2011. They were also significant benefactors to the St. Petersburg LGBT Welcome Center.
The firm actively supports pro bono work furthering diversity, equality, and civil rights. For example:

- The firm partnered with the ACLU, Public Counsel, and Arnold & Porter in filing an application for a temporary restraining order in *Cruz v. State of California*. The court’s opinion is an overwhelming and powerful condemnation of the breakdown of inner-city schools. It addressed a crisis at a high school in South Central Los Angeles where scores of students were held in auditoriums for weeks without substantive classes, placed in overcrowded classes, assigned to classes they had already passed, and/or denied classes they needed to graduate or qualify for college. The court adopted the novel theory of the case that failure to provide substantive educational hours comparable to other California schools in more affluent areas is a denial of a constitutional right to “basic educational equality.” The case received national publicity for its creative approach to equal education being founded on “equal time.”

- The firm co-counseled with the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law to bring an action in Georgia under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, as part of a broader effort to build a body of law with which to challenge the dilution of minority votes. The case involved elections to a Georgia County’s seven-member School Board where each member represented a single district. The district lines were drawn in a way that concentrated African-American voters in one district. As a result, they consistently elected only one of the seven members (14%) of the School Board even though they constituted over one-third of the voters. After the firm filed the complaint,
the County agreed to enter into negotiations over a new district map, which culminated in defendants’ signing of a settlement agreement that will create a second “majority-minority” district and partial reimbursement of plaintiffs’ attorneys’ fees.

- Atlanta Shareholder Gail Podolsky is the recipient of the ACLU of Georgia Volunteer Leadership Award. Gail has been involved with the ACLU of Georgia since 2008 and has served in multiple leadership roles, including president of the board from 2012-2019. She served as cooperating counsel, representing a Muslim woman who was not permitted to enter a municipal court while wearing her religious headgear and was jailed for contempt of court when she protested. On behalf of the ACLU, Gail also filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit demanding government documents regarding the implementation of the Muslim bans.

- Carlton Fields has partnered with Equality Florida and other LGBT organizations over the years to expand LGBT rights. Our firm has represented several LGBT individuals in trial and appellate court cases involving family law and adoption matters, including:
  - A teenager whose school would not allow students to participate in the annual Day of Silence.
  - Equality Florida and six same-sex couples in a successful challenge to Florida’s ban on same-sex marriage.
  - Equality Florida as an amicus in two federal court cases where Equality Florida is aligned with local governments who are defending ordinances banning conversion therapy on minors.
In honor of Black History Month in 2019, Carlton Fields hosted Mayors Oliver Gilbert III (Miami Gardens), Wayne Messam (Miramar), and Matthew Pigatt (Opa-Locka) for a firmwide video conference. The Mayors discussed their paths to public office, the opportunities and challenges associated with being a mayor, the reasons their respective cities are special, and the importance of diversity and inclusion within governments and communities.

Carlton Fields launched a bilingual microsite to help startups and entrepreneurs grow and thrive. With content in both English and Spanish, LaunchToThrive.com provides legal documents, resources, and free counsel to entrepreneurs in the technology industry, including a population of Hispanic entrepreneurs that has been underserviced nationwide.
Carlton Fields champions diversity within our communities. Our lawyers participate and serve in leadership roles at associations focused on advancing diversity, and routinely sponsor events and organizations promoting and supporting inclusion, including:

- ACC Tampa Bay Women’s Network
- ACLU
- American Intellectual Property Law Association, LGBT Subcommittee
- Arab American Lawyers Association of Southern California
- Association of Professional Insurance Women
- Brazilian Bar Association
- Caribbean Bar Association
- Commercial Real Estate Women (CREW) Network
- Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association
- Connecticut Italian American Bar Association
- CREFC Women’s Network
- Cuban American Bar Association
- Equality Florida
- Florida Association for Women Lawyers
- George W. Crawford Black Bar Association
- Georgia Association for Women Lawyers
- George Edgecomb Bar Association Scholarship Banquet
- George Washington University Law School Black Law Students Association
- GFWC Tampa Woman’s Club
- Girl Scouts of America Women of Distinction
- Gwen S. Cherry Black Women Lawyers Association
- Hispanic National Bar Association
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity
- Mexican-American Bar Association
- Muslim Bar Association of Southern California
- NAACP Annual Freedom Fund Dinner
- National Association of Women Business Owners
- New Jersey Women Lawyers Association
- National LGBT Bar Association
- South Asian Bar Association
- Stonewall Bar Association of Georgia
- Suncoast Association of Chinese Americans
- Tallahassee Women Lawyers
- TBBJ Business of Pride
- Virgil Hawkins Florida Chapter National Bar Association
- VISIONS Manhattan Advisory Board Awards
- Wilkie D. Ferguson Jr. Bar Foundation
- Women’s Chamber of Commerce of Miami-Dade County
- Women Economic Developers
- Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles