



DIRECTORS  
ROUNDTABLE

# WORLD RECOGNITION of DISTINGUISHED GENERAL COUNSEL

GUEST OF HONOR:

Chad Jerdee

& the Law Department of Accenture

## THE SPEAKERS



**Chad Jerdee**

*General Counsel & Chief  
Compliance Officer, Accenture*



**Regina Kline**

*Co-Leader of Brown, Goldstein &  
Levy's Strategic Consulting Group*



**Elizabeth Stern**

*Partner, Mayer Brown, LLP,  
Head of Global Mobility  
& Migration Practice*



**Robert Gonzales**

*Chair, American Bar  
Association (ABA)'s  
Commission on Disability Rights*



**Jill Houghton**

*(Moderator)  
President & CEO of Disability:IN*

(The biographies of the speakers are presented at the end of this transcript. Further information about the Directors Roundtable can be found at our website, [www.directorsroundtable.com](http://www.directorsroundtable.com).)

## TO THE READER

General Counsel are more important than ever in history. Boards of Directors look increasingly to them to enhance financial and business strategy, compliance, and integrity of corporate operations. In recognition of the achievements of our distinguished Guest of Honor and his colleagues, we are presenting Chad Jerdee and the Legal Department of Accenture with the leading global honor for General Counsel and Law Departments for their legal achievements and for leadership in the area of diversity. Accenture provides international services in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations.

At this event, Mr. Jerdee had a fireside chat on the role General Counsel can play in advocating across all aspects of diversity, including our own mental health and well-being in the legal profession. The distinguished panel analyzed how directors, C-suites [top senior executives] and lawyers are building a culture of inclusion and driving innovation, and what it takes to be authentically inclusive with customers, suppliers and talent.

The Directors Roundtable is a civic group which organizes the preeminent worldwide programming for Directors and their advisors including General Counsel. Join us on social media for the latest news for Directors on corporate governance and other important VIP issues.





**Chad Jerdee**  
*General Counsel &  
Chief Compliance Officer*



As general counsel, Chad Jerdee has ultimate responsibility for all legal support to Accenture, serving as principal counsel to senior leadership and the board of directors and leading the company's Legal department. As head of the Legal department, he oversees all legal services, the contract management function and government relations functions. As chief compliance officer, Mr. Jerdee is responsible for managing legal and regulatory compliance programs that enable Accenture to operate around the globe while adhering to the highest ethical standards. He is also a member of Accenture's Global Management Committee.

Prior to assuming his current role in June 2015, Mr. Jerdee held a variety of leadership positions in our Legal organization, working on many of our largest and most complex transactions, and helping Accenture expand into new areas of growth.

From 2010 to 2015, Mr. Jerdee served as Deputy General Counsel – Sales & Delivery. In this role, he was responsible for

leading global legal support for Accenture's client-facing business including sales, solution development and client delivery teams – approximately 1,750 Legal professionals in 48 countries. He was also a member of Accenture's Capital Committee.

From 2005 to 2010, Mr. Jerdee was the Legal lead for the Outsourcing Sales Legal team as well as for Accenture's growth platforms. Prior to 2005, he held a number of roles focused on negotiating client transactions and helping to develop Accenture's contract and negotiation standards.

Before joining Accenture, Mr. Jerdee practiced law in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he specialized in corporate, financing and real estate matters.

Mr. Jerdee joined Accenture in 1997 and became partner in 2003. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from the St. Olaf College and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Minnesota.

## Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world's largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and

create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With 469,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.

We have an unwavering commitment to diversity with the aim that each and every one of our people has a full sense of belonging within our organization. As a business imperative, every person at Accenture has the responsibility to create and sustain an inclusive environment.

Inclusion and diversity are fundamental to our culture and core values. We believe that no one should be discriminated against

because of their differences, such as age, ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, religion or sexual orientation. Our rich diversity makes us more innovative, more competitive and more creative, which helps us better serve our clients and our communities.

We also believe that government laws, regulations and business practices should uphold the principles of diversity, inclusion and equality. While laws may vary in the countries where Accenture operates, we remain committed to an inclusive and diverse workplace—where people can be who they are and be their best, professionally and personally.

**DANIEL A. MASUR:** Good morning. I'm Dan Masur, the partner in charge of the Washington office of Mayer Brown. We are very pleased to welcome you to this special event.

I want to give a special welcome to all of the Accenture lawyers who are here with us this morning. We are very happy to be hosting an event honoring Chad Jerdee, the General Counsel of Accenture, and the Accenture Legal Department.

I have had the pleasure of working with and opposite Accenture for more than 20 years, and I've known Chad almost that long. He was a baby lawyer at that time, and I was not. [LAUGHTER]

I will say that in the time I've known Accenture and Chad, I've always been struck by the fact that they are not only very smart and hard-working, but they have been willing to take on important issues, to really make a difference – issues like corporate responsibility, sustainability, and this morning's topic, diversity.

In my mind, Chad has always walked the talk, and for me, that's a not compliment I can give to anyone.

Karen?

**KAREN TODD:** Good morning. I'm Karen Todd, the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of the Directors Roundtable.

We're very pleased that you're here today. I want to especially thank the people of Accenture, the outside law firms, bar groups, university law schools, local chambers, and other organizations who are represented here today. We're also very appreciative to have Mayer Brown host the program. Their staff has done a wonderful job. I'd like to acknowledge them at this point. [APPLAUSE]



The Directors Roundtable is a civic group whose mission is to organize the finest programming on a national and global basis for Boards of Directors and their advisors, which, of course, includes General Counsel. Over the last 27 years, this has resulted in more than 800 programs on six continents. Our Chairman, Jack Friedman, started this series after speaking with Directors, who told him that it was rare for a large corporation to be recognized for the good that they do. He decided to provide a forum for executives and corporate counsel to talk about their companies, the accomplishments in which they take pride, and how they have overcome the obstacles of doing business in today's changing world.

We honor General Counsel *and* their law departments – it's a team effort – so they may share their successful actions and strategies with the Directors Roundtable community via today's program and the full-color transcript document on the special topic of disability and inclusion that's going to go out to over 200,000 people worldwide.

Today, it's our pleasure to honor Chad Jerdee, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer, and the law department of Accenture, many of whom are here today. I'd also like to introduce our Distinguished Panelists. Gina Kline formerly worked

at the U.S. Department of Justice in the Disability Rights Enforcement area. She now works for Brown, Goldstein & Levy's Strategic Consulting Group. Elizabeth Stern is a partner at Mayer Brown and head of their Global Mobility & Migration practice. Robert Gonzales is the chief of the American Bar Association's Commission on Disability Rights. Jill Houghton will be our moderator for today's discussion, and is the president and CEO of Disability:IN.

I have a special surprise for Chad, which is a letter from the Dean of the University of Minnesota School of Law, his alma mater, that I'd like to read to you.

Dear Ms. Todd:

We were excited to learn that Chad Jerdee, a member of the class of 1994 from the University of Minnesota Law School, will be recognized with the World Honor for General Counsel by the Directors Roundtable.

The University of Minnesota Law School has produced some of this country's most successful lawyer leaders. Our alumni are at the center of vital legal, business, political and social decision-making, and Chad Jerdee is a wonderful example of the impact our graduates have in their chosen profession and broader communities.



As a law student, Chad developed the analytical and problem-solving skills through moot court and our academic program to become General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer of one of the world's preeminent global management consulting and professional services firms. Professor Fred Morrison, when told of this recognition, said that he was not at all surprised by Chad's success.

Moreover, diversity is a critically important value at Minnesota Law, and we are particularly proud of Chad's leadership in disability advocacy and inclusion. Through his work at Accenture to recruit and retain people with disabilities, build relationships with minority and women-owned law firms, and through his volunteer work on the Board of Advisors for the Challenged Athletes Foundation, Chad combines his legal acumen with empathy to make a difference. The dedication and commitment he has demonstrated throughout his career and with his volunteer efforts inspires our entire community of students and graduates.

Please extend our warmest congratulations to Chad. We celebrate with you on this day and look forward to your continued success.

Sincerely,

Garry W. Jenkins,

Dean and William S. Pattee,  
Professor of Law

I'd like to acknowledge Chad. [APPLAUSE]  
And with that, I'm going to turn it over to Jill.

**CHAD JERDEE:** Before we go to Jill, I'm just going to give a few introductory comments.

First, I would like to confirm that I was a baby lawyer when I met Dan. Although, I've noticed that I've out-paced him in terms of white hair. And while Dan is always a pleasure to work with and negotiate with, I think I owe a few of those white hairs to Dan. [LAUGHTER]



Second, as you all heard, I graduated from the University of Minnesota Law School, which means, in all likelihood, I am a Midwesterner. I am, in fact, a Minnesotan – and, of course, it's very uncomfortable for me to be honored and called out in any way. But one of the things Accenture has taught me is that people in positions of authority have a responsibility to be a voice for those who don't have voices.

We have a robust and rich inclusion and diversity program, with a very committed senior leadership team going up all the way to our CEO. We have made a commitment to having 50 percent of our workforce be women by 2025, which makes us very unique in the marketplace. We have a rich and robust LGBTQ program, even in countries that still classify LGBTQ people as criminals. We provide support and take active positions in every country where we do work on those issues. Of course, over the past several years, we've developed what I think is a very robust, committed inclusion program around people with disabilities. Although, like all companies, we still have a long way to go in achieving what I would describe as success in inclusion in that area.

I also think that legal counsel – whether you're with a law firm or you're with an in-house legal department as a General

Counsel and we'll talk about this a little bit today – in today's society, people expect a lot more of companies than they ever have before. Whether it's the impact of technology on our lives and how it impacts consumers; how people are treated inside and outside of the company; and how the company takes responsibility for stewardship for its people and the larger society around us, the expectations have increased and are only going to increase. The role of General Counsel in companies has expanded significantly, and we ought to step up, accept that responsibility and look beyond what's merely legal in the moment in today's world, and think forward on what we can do to help companies be more responsible citizens in society. As importantly, build sustainable businesses that are being responsible not only in today's world but anticipating the issues that are going to present challenges to the company going forward. That's a real shift in the role of legal counsel as we serve our commercial clients and the individuals that we support in society.

Just briefly, I will tell my personal story and why I'm committed to inclusion for people with disabilities. About five years ago, I was hit head-on by a drunk driver, and through that incident, I lost my lower left leg. Now, I'm not going to say it was an easy experience; it was certainly challenging for six or seven months, adjusting to life as an amputee with a prosthetic and all of those things. I came out the other end feeling pretty much the same as I did before I lost my leg. I was able to get the right adaptive devices and do all the things I love to do – cycling, running (although I should run more), skiing, and a host of other activities – and it didn't impede my ability to do my job as legal counsel. I was very fortunate in that regard.

Two things really struck me once I got through that process. One, was that people tended to define me by my disability, even though, in my mind, it was a very small part of my identity. I'm a father, I'm a lawyer, I'm a member of the Accenture legal

team, and I like to do all sorts of other things outside of work. Combined with that, they made assumptions about my ability or inability to do things, combined with a discomfort with my physical condition.

Again, it didn't affect my ability to do my job. In fact, I was promoted to General Counsel shortly after I recovered from losing my leg. It did make me ask some questions. This doesn't impede my ability to do my job, but what is the experience like for a blind person or a person with hearing impairment, who couldn't easily get the adaptive technology they need to overcome their disability and perform on par with other people? What type of issues do they have to deal with? What challenges and biases do they have to deal with? How difficult is it for companies to make a commitment to include them as a productive member of their workforce?

I started talking to a lot of people and found out that because of these assumptions that people bring, because of the discomfort and lack of awareness, there were huge, unnecessary obstacles for people with disabilities participating in the environment. There is still too much of a mentality that they are charity cases, or if you bring them on, they're going to be substandard in some way in terms of performance. It was an incredibly enlightening experience, and I'm grateful for it, because it made me a better person.

Again, getting back to our responsibility as leaders to be a voice for people, it did fill me with a commitment to be an advocate and drive change within Accenture. I assumed that responsibility for our People with Disabilities program shortly thereafter – but, more importantly, across all of society and in the legal profession. We'll hear today about some work that leading companies are doing, as well as the American Bar Association.

That's why I'm passionate and committed about it. I'm incredibly grateful for all of you and for the Directors Roundtable for

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– Chad Jerdee

giving me the opportunity to highlight the issue and have a discussion about it today. Thank you for coming and thank you for listening and participating. [APPLAUSE]

In terms of flow for today, Jill and I are going to have a conversation about these topics, and then we're going to open it up to the larger panel for a panel discussion. Of course, we'll encourage audience participation, as well. Thank you.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** Good morning!

**AUDIENCE:** Hi!

**JILL HOUGHTON:** It is so awesome to be here and to be seated next to a man who is so humble, but the power in having a leader identify as being someone with a disability really matters. I wish more senior leaders would come out and share their stories, because that is what's going to drive change in this world.

Today, we're going to have a conversation. Let's talk about your role as General Counsel and how it has changed over time. What's your vision on it today?

**CHAD JERDEE:** I work for a technology company. [LAUGHTER]

I alluded to this a little bit earlier, and when it comes to inclusion and diversity, I'll give an example to illustrate the changing role of General Counsel.

When it comes to inclusion and diversity, historically, legal departments have been more focused on minimum compliance and

educating or dictating to them about what's appropriate in terms of not discriminating. It is very rules- and policy-focused. It actually ended up as running contrary to the interests of the people it was trying to protect. We've seen that through the #MeToo movement. I'm not going to dwell too much on that topic, but in other areas of diversity, when you actually look behind the curtain, it's going overboard and protecting companies and focusing too much on rules and policies. We haven't actually gotten to the heart of the issue when it comes to a lot of inclusion and diversity programs. With the People with Disabilities programs, it's very much the same, because the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA] was a fantastic law and a huge step forward, just to focus on minimal compliance with reasonable accommodations extracted from the real issues underlying the problem. Do you have a culture that's welcoming people with disabilities? Have you invested in understanding how you can provide market-leading, adaptive technology? Do you have a recruiting structure that helps you effectively recruit them so that there's an understanding of it? Do you have an educated population, so they understand how to communicate with and adapt, and provide adaptive help for people with disabilities?

The pressure is on, in terms of what we've seen, not only in these areas, but in areas like the use of technology and the impact that technology has on society. If you're not thinking about those things as legal counsel for a company, as you are advising them, you are selling them short. If you're focused just on the rules and how they apply to the company in today's world, and not thinking



beyond, you're setting your clients up for trouble. They're not ultimately going to accomplish their objectives, and they're going to be asked some really hard questions by their customers and by the larger society about the role that they play in shaping the world.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** You talked more broadly about your role as General Counsel. You're an attorney and a General Counsel at one of America's largest, most respected companies. Can you talk about your own story over the last 20 years?

**CHAD JERDEE:** Absolutely. One of the greatest opportunities I've had is working for a company like Accenture, with close to 500,000 employees in over 120 countries in the world. When I joined, we had 32,000 employees, mostly in the U.S. and Europe. I spent most of my career prior to becoming General Counsel working directly with our customers at companies from many different countries around the world, many different cultures, many different contexts. That gave me a tremendous opportunity to grow and learn about not just Accenture, the company, but also the global environment and the challenges all companies face. Of course, as a company, we're very focused on helping our clients deal with disruption in the marketplace. A lot of it is technology disruption and using technology to remain competitive in a global marketplace. That has been a fantastic experience and growth opportunity through my career, because it's really broadened my perspective about the role that I play and the potential impact that I can have, not only on Accenture, but – as we're a very customer-focused organization – helping our clients improve.

That's led to a lot of my thinking about my role as now a senior leader in the company. This is good, because my CEO assumes that I'm going to do my day job very well as a minimum standard. The impact that we, in the leadership team, have in running our business, including in areas like inclusion and diversity, is more important than



just meeting that minimum bar in terms of what we do. It's been a great, fantastic career opportunity.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** Along the lines of diversity and inclusion – you just touched a little bit on diversity – what kind of changes have you seen over your time?

**CHAD JERDEE:** It's been a really interesting journey. When I joined Accenture, we were a largely male-dominated, traditional consulting firm. We were privately held at the time, and very similar in structure and culture to a lot of law firms at the time. I would say we were a very driven, hard-core organization where the amount of commitment you had to the company and the hours that you worked, your willingness to travel, was a clear, simple, gold standard for what it meant to be – at the time, it was Anderson Consulting – an Anderson Consulting/Accenture employee. That really defined the career path.

We, like most companies 21 years ago, didn't have a focus on inclusion and diversity. In terms of the human experience for our employees, we really didn't look at issues like mental health, work-life balance, accommodating people that had differences.

It wasn't a bad organization; it just was an organization, like many, that wasn't focused on it.

A lot of the fear, particularly in the inclusion and diversity space in the early days, was if we soften what we view as some of the most valuable aspects of our culture, is it could be our undoing as a company. A lot of law firms have that very same view. If you start becoming more accommodating to people with disabilities or coming up with programs around parental leave, it starts to round the edges on people's commitment to giving all to the company. If you start to, as we have in recent years, focus on what we call "truly human experiences." People are encouraged to have work-life balance; they're encouraged to bring their unique selves to work. Where you have different points of view, you move away from the army that's trained to do one thing very well, and you move towards a rich, diverse culture. Will that hurt the company? What we found is that it's enriched our company substantially.

I can quote studies, including those that Accenture has sponsored in the disability space, that also prove that out analytically. Fundamentally, it makes you a more attractive company for your employees; it's *much* more relevant to the current generation of employees that are rolling in – and we recruit 100,000 people a year, at least, and most of them in their twenties – so you have to be relevant to what's important and on people's minds. It also makes us much better decision-makers. I've actually seen that play out, not just in the employee ranks, but on our leadership team, where people bring different views and perspectives. Sometimes we have very difficult arguments, but I believe we make better decisions for our customers and our people as a result, and I truly believe it's strengthened our company. I would point to our stock price performance over the last 17 years to demonstrate that. It's yielded good, positive business results for us as we moved away from that "hard-core partnership" culture.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** Along those lines, are there some initiatives that you're really proud of, whether it's as a company or as an individual?

**CHAD JERDEE:** I'm incredibly proud of our inclusion and diversity program. I spoke about it in my introductory comments a little bit. The commitment that we have to providing a rich environment for people of all different kinds of backgrounds, and the intersection of our employee resource groups, which are very active across all dimensions, where people with like backgrounds come together to discuss difficult issues – even in areas like religion. We have an interfaith ERG [employee resource group] that, over the past year, with all of the difficult issues we've been facing, has actually been a leading voice in the firm on those issues as we and society have struggled, particularly in the United States. The programs that we have to recruit and retain people, and our relentless focus on improvement and admitting frankly where we could do better, make more progress, have done things differently.

Diversity is a constant challenge; it is a constant learning process; it is a constant process of asking questions about what you can do better and listening to voices of other people inherent to the subject matter. After all, diversity is about diverse points of view and embracing that, as opposed to trying to create a company of like-minded people with like backgrounds, with similar backgrounds.

I'm also very proud of our progress in playing a role in disrupting society. Our inclusion and diversity program fits within that. We've really pivoted from a much more traditional firm, advising on how to install technology, to a company that's focused on applying disruptive ideas of technologies to companies that are struggling to change in a very fast-paced environment. If you look at the technology landscape right now, the level of disruption we've seen is like never before in history. There are important questions around the role of artificial intelligence,



the role of data and data analytics, the role that technology's going to play, and the impact on society. Our ability to lead that transformation and really transform our own organization will help companies not only become more competitive and deal with new players in the marketplace, but actually think about how to do that work responsibly. Having that is a real view for our vision in our role as a company in society.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** I love the work that Accenture's doing around disruption and technology. There are some great whitepapers out there called "Amplify Accessibility," where Accenture's doing really cool stuff to make technology accessible.

It's such an important topic. Outside of work, what are you passionate about?

**CHAD JERDEE:** I have two daughters – 13 and 17 – and I'm very passionate about them. My eldest daughter just took the SAT, so we're eager to hear what the results are! [LAUGHTER]

I'm advising her not to take life too seriously, because it takes its own path, but, of course, she's probably like her father – nervous and committed to doing well.

I am an avid skier. I have an adaptive skiing leg and I actually ski better now than I did before I lost my leg. [LAUGHTER]

As skiers, you spend a lot of time making sure your boots fit tight, and fortunately, I have a direct connection to my ski now. I don't have to worry about that anymore. That's a blessing! [LAUGHTER]

I enjoy travel quite a bit. I like traveling all over the world. Navigating airports has become more challenging in some countries, specifically now that I have lots of metal inside and outside my body. However, I really enjoy experiencing other cultures, which is why Accenture's such a perfect fit for me.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** This next question is on a really hot topic that we're not really talking about. I want to hear your thoughts in terms of the most pressing challenges that you see around mental health, and specifically as it relates to the legal and professional industry.

**CHAD JERDEE:** Absolutely. I know Robert will have some comments on this as well. When I started in the role as the senior management sponsor for our People with Disabilities program, I was more focused on physical disabilities, and not as much



on hidden and mental health disabilities, because it's a different thing altogether. But what we found as we rolled the program forward is our people have been more vocal on mental health issues than anything else. We've got, for example, a group with hundreds of people in England who are helping to drive mental health training and education in the UK, and in our UK practice globally. We've made mental health a big focus of what we call our "Truly Human" campaign, focused on helping people have work-life balance.

What we've found is companies have a direct impact on that particular category of disability, by their culture, of the demands that they put on people, and their sensitivity to people's needs in the space. There's a huge population of underserved people in companies that have, in some ways, created their own issues around mental health, by stigmatizing it or by the demands that they put on people or their lack of accommodation for people who need help and support, whether it's depression, addiction issues or other forms of mental health issues.

As a company and as a legal profession, we would be better off dealing with the issue head-on, acknowledging that we need to support people with mental health challenges, focusing on personal wellness, and not burying the issue. It has a tremendous amount of hidden costs for companies, but there are very good people who struggle with these issues that are being impeded in their ability to succeed at work where, if they got the proper support, they would.

It requires a little bit different approach, because it is a wellness and health issue. You have to do it in conjunction with your insurance providers and with your HR department, and deal with it in a sensitive way. It's also difficult to understand for people who haven't experienced those types of issues, so education is fundamentally important, as well.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** We've covered the bases. What we're going to do now is pivot to a panel discussion, and then we're going to open it up to Q&A.

Liz, tell us about your team's top priorities and goals for the Global Mobility & Migration practice in the year ahead.

**ELIZABETH STERN:** Hi, everyone. Just to give you a sense as we frame the answer to that question, global mobility and immigration, helping companies like Accenture and others be able to get their people to the right places on time, as often as necessary, is really what our practice does.

As you can imagine from the headlines, that has become a more challenging practice, which we find terribly exciting, to tell you the truth. Our goals for 2019 really reflect it. We represent clients that have multifaceted workforces with globally and culturally diverse points of view, as Chad educated us on. At every level of their enterprises, the ability to attract and retain talent from the world stage becomes increasingly important, particularly with the demographic trends that we all see.

As a veteran provider of immigration services, I see a historical trend happening now. There is a global crisis happening, an identity crisis, at the very time that global employers are striving to improve diversity and inclusion, national borders are becoming closed in country after country. Our country, for example, has adopted an America First policy. What does that consist of? Our president has not been mysterious about it – hire Americans, buy American.

Who is "American"? At its core that can be a difficult question to answer. The UK, whose Prime Minister has just survived a no-confidence vote, faces a similar trend as it struggles with the realities of implementing Brexit. Other Western countries are dealing with identity crises of their own – *Italexit? Frexit?* Even individual states have



gotten into the trend, witness *Calexit*. We are starting to see borders being drawn in a very narrow and artificial way.

We don't have the illusion that being effective global mobility lawyers is just doing great immigration filings, which we like to do. I'm looking at members of my team in the audience and I think they will agree that we don't have the illusion that that's enough. We think this requires a real campaign, that includes multiple facets and thoughtful strategies and programs. Three members of my core team are here, in front – all of them are diverse in different ways. Hi, team! Just saying hello! They have worked with me on developing an approach that we have dubbed – we like to have cool names, too – 10X Mobility. We think it takes 10 times the thought, the strategy. Chad used a phrase that I just loved – a relentless focus on improvement in order to navigate and have an influence in this environment. That's our primary goal, and that is where our objectives originate. We are passionate about them.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** Now we're going to switch gears and hear from Gina. Gina is a long-time disability rights advocate. You've seen, up close and personal, the challenges that people with disabilities face and how

this segment is often overlooked as being an important part of the workforce. What are some best practices that you've seen?

**REGINA KLINE:** Thanks, Jill. I just want to say, this is purposeful ambiguity, I'm filling in for my law firm partner, Eve. If I say anything untoward or inappropriate, Eve was here today. [LAUGHTER]

If I say anything brilliant, it's from Gina Kline at Brown, Goldstein & Levy. [LAUGHTER]

Yes, I was at the Justice Department; we were doing compliance in the disability space. Compliance is a different thing from diversity, but we should treat our focus on diversity. This is the challenge of our time: to define what diversity is and whether disability is a part of that paradigm. Clearly, there are benefits to including disability in the diversity space. We use some of the best practices for companies and our clients in our consulting practice at Brown, Goldstein & Levy, which we've named "Inclusivity." We have folks calling upon our years of ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] enforcement expertise. Forget the ADA; we want to move beyond it. We want to figure out how to have disability employee resource groups; we want to know how to put people with disabilities in the forefront of the innovations that are coming out of our company, to stay more in touch with the technologies that they need as innovators and as suppliers and producers of new technology and innovation.

The important space to be in right now is to figure out whether people with disabilities are at all levels of your organizations. Are your recruitment efforts treating disability, not as legal compliance and a conversation about reasonable accommodation, and more about how we get people who think differently all together at our table when we're innovating and having a conversation about our next step with the company?



**JILL HOUGHTON:** Thank you, Gina. At Disability:IN, our Board Chair is a woman from the UK, and she's the Chief Accessibility Officer at Microsoft. She often reminds us that blind software engineers are gold dust.

Going to Robert, 10 years ago, at the ABA's Commission on Disability Rights, he formed a pledge for change for legal employers to sign, around disability and diversity in the legal profession. I'm just wondering, in the last decade, do you believe that you've had a meaningful impact?

**ROBERT GONZALES:** Yes, I do. The value of the pledge, to me, is like a calling card. It opens the door to conversation. You go to a law firm and you say, "We'd like you to take this pledge and commit to diversity - particularly disability." When we talked to the managing partners of these firms we examined, they're very proud of their diversity plans. When we looked at the diversity plan and it doesn't include the word "disability," I can tell you this is like almost 100%. [LAUGHTER]

We go to law firms and they're very proud. They're good firms that want to be diverse, they want to do the right thing, but they

don't include the word in their plan. That starts the conversation. Once you start the conversation, you can start making progress, because then the law firm starts to look at itself and do some of its inside search. "Are we *really* trying to be diverse? Do we have disability members of our firm, and how do we find that out?" They start doing the demographics, taking down numbers and finding out who has disabilities and why they haven't thought about this in the past, and can we make something better for this person in the firm? We include mental illness in that, too. As Chad mentioned, that's probably the final frontier, as far as I'm concerned, in terms of commitment to diversity, because it's so hard, number one, to identify those people that have a mental illness or disability, because there's so much stigma involved with it. We've given programs where law partners in large firms have said, as soon as they came forth with the idea that they have mental depression, they were released from the firm - that was the result. We've got to get past that, and that's a strong thing to get past. Particularly in the legal profession, because we work in our little pockets and we're so individual in what we do. Your partner needs to trust you. Can that happen if you have this mental depression? Will you be able to hold your own in a big negotiation, or will you fall apart?

We've seen that change take place with the pledge. That's the key thing, to get that conversation going: get people talking about it and looking at it, making sure that they understand that these things are important to their firm and to their clients.

**CHAD JERDEE:** If you're asking, "What can I do?" One of the key challenges, if you want to recruit people with disabilities, is finding access to a pipeline of them. There are a number of organizations - Disability:IN is certainly one of them - that can help you navigate that. The ABA has a great summer program for bringing in summer interns and associates, and we've used them. Jim Stearns, who's a colleague of



mine in the back, has helped sponsor that program, and it's been a fantastic experience. We've had a lot of great interns and a lot of great feedback. It's also helped us shift our culture within our legal department, as well. Every step forward is important, and we're grateful for that.

**ROBERT GONZALES:** We're proud to have you as a partner! [LAUGHTER]

We have Microsoft and other companies that have interns. If you're interested in an intern in any of your organizations, contact me or Amy Albright, who's the executive director of our Commission and does yeoman's work every single day for us. We can find the lawyer or the person; we can screen them for you and send you candidates. We're ready, willing and able to provide these candidates.

**CHAD JERDEE:** I get feedback from our team about how inspiring it is to work with these people, and it's great to be inspiring, but it's the first step towards establishing a comfort level, and where we all value each other as human beings. We, from a work perspective, value each other for the contributions we all make. It's been phenomenal. Thank you.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** After your firm takes the pledge and gets involved in the internship program, another tool that exists out there to help you is something called the Disability Equality Index. It's a benchmarking tool that's available for law firms and corporate America. You can measure what you're doing; build awareness internally within your firm about disability inclusion issues; and make change. It's a tool that was created by Disability:IN in partnership with the American Association of People with Disabilities, and we're four years into the Disability Equality Index. We've been blessed to have the opportunity to work with Ted Kennedy, Jr. He's the chair of our partner organization, the American Association of People with Disabilities. He is passionate about what we call the DEI, or

“The role of General Counsel in companies has expanded significantly, and we ought to step up, accept that responsibility and look beyond what's merely legal in the moment in today's world, and think forward on what we can do to help companies be more responsible citizens in society.”

– Chad Jerdee

the Disability Equality Index. He has gone to the C-suite saying, “This is great, but we need a business case. We need something that demonstrates that disability inclusion positively correlates to the bottom line.” That's where Accenture comes in.

We had the sincere opportunity to work with the Accenture team and release this business case. Chad, can you tell us about the recent report, “*Getting to Equal: The Disability Inclusion Advantage*”?

**CHAD JERDEE:** Absolutely. I'm not too good at facts and figures, so I'm going to try to stay away from hard data, but you can access the report on our [website](#) (I believe it is also on Disability:IN's website, as well) and read a little bit of the details.

After companies submitted their information as part of the Disability Equality Index qualifications, we looked at the correlation between companies that had world market-leading disability inclusion practices and their financial performance as a company. You may have seen similar studies done on the area of gender diversity and other forms of diversity, as well, because no study like that had ever been done.

While it's difficult to draw direct correlations, the results are clear that companies that do have good, robust inclusion programs for people with disabilities out-perform on total returns to shareholders, profitability, revenue growth and other important metrics for publicly held companies.

You might ask why we're doing additional research in the coming months to provide more insight into the “why,” but I fundamentally believe that any company that embraces diversity and has a culture focused on maximizing the potential of their people will obviously do better in the marketplace.

The real intent of the study was to be the first study of that kind in its space, drive a dialogue around those issues, and put inclusion and diversity programs for people with disabilities on par with the focus that companies are putting on other important areas of diversity, as well.

We're very proud of it. My team, and the Accenture teams supporting it – obviously I don't do all this stuff – are a bunch of passionate, committed people, very focused in the space. We're incredibly excited to be able to partner with Disability:IN and the American Association for People with Disabilities to do this study. It's really ignited the fireworks in our company, as well. I'd encourage you to look at it.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** My favorite data point is that if you participate in the Disability Equality Index and you improve over time, that you have a four-times greater total shareholder return. That's definitely a reason to get involved and participate.

Now we're going to back to Liz, and we're going to shift, because we're still focusing on diversity and inclusion. You talked about immigration, which is obviously an issue that's very prevalent in the news today. Could you tell us a bit more about the connection

between diversity, inclusion and immigration; and the steps you're taking to grow a diverse and globally representative workplace?

**ELIZABETH STERN:** I'll address the latter part of that question first. I think Mayer Brown and its leadership believe that ~ if you're going to serve global clients in helping them to achieve diversity by moving their people globally ~ your own team, your own enterprise, must be representative of that diversity. That's really what Jill is asking.

We've gone about creating a diverse team quite deliberately, and then after a while, the momentum picks up and you have some good luck. We started with a core group that includes individuals working here in D.C., which is where we joined Mayer Brown in 2014 and incubated the global mobility practice out of this office. We brought in individuals that had all worked together but had, for most of us, lived, practiced law, worked, and grown up in other societies. I, myself, lived half of my childhood in Ecuador. I'm an American-born, birthright citizen who grew up in this area. But there was this whole other society which is Ecuador and the Latin-American diplomatic corps that I grew up with that is just as comfortable to me as the society that I faced as a child and a kid growing up in school. It's very interesting to me now, from an adult perspective, that I got the benefit of that dual society. It's simply one example. Again, Grace Shie ~ my partner who's here in the room ~ lead an immigration practice for five years out of Hong Kong, as well as in the United States, and she has an Asian-American background.

Without that ability to touch and understand the clients in building your team in that way, it would be very difficult to accomplish your goal. We now, of course, have a global team across regional centers, but I would say that every member of our team, down to our associates, have other languages and backgrounds. I can't think of



a diversity category that we don't have represented on our team, including disability, by the way, which is really terrific.

In terms of the clients, it is absolutely critical to them to diversify their C-suites with individuals from different backgrounds and cultures. I'll give one example, because in thinking about America First, and regardless of what your politics are, if you're really looking for diversity and inclusion, how can you do that if we try to limit it to something static in the United States today? One of the opportunities that we get to work on is to help companies transfer senior executives for very critical roles in other countries. As I was thinking about the list of recent executives in my head, I had to chuckle that one of the key executives we brought over for a major megabank is a Canadian woman, and her story is very America First, because she is the architect of Small Business Saturday. Now, isn't that cool? Is she a U.S. citizen? No, she's Canadian and female, and has only been in this country for about 20 years.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** That's awesome. Gina, you were at the U.S. Department of Justice, in the Office of Civil Rights, doing disability rights enforcement and working on a lot of issues, representing people with disabilities. What kinds of things do we have left to do? What's still undone?

**REGINA KLINE:** What a loaded question! [LAUGHTER]

I'm happy to answer it, too, Jill. It's really interesting that Chad mentioned the word "disruption," and we're at a pivotal moment in the history of work in the United States, where work is changing form for everyone. It's being reconceptualized for all of us, because of technology. We've spent much of the last century pulling, kicking and screaming for people with disabilities to be included in an exercise about whether they should be hired. We need to spend the next century utilizing the vast resource that is people with disabilities and see them as true innovators in the next century of technology.

We mentioned a little bit about this earlier, but when you talk to employers across the country who have adapted their workplaces for universal design, they have not only accommodated the person, but they have changed their business practices to accommodate *everyone* better. They've found more productivity with greater efficiencies in their workplaces. The other thing they're doing is using technology in a cool and different way. Instead of thinking about technology on the back side, when somebody needs accessibility or accommodations or a work-around, now we're seeing people with disabilities who have technology needs or need for accommodation coming in and saying, "Here's a better way to do this for everyone; here's a better technology for the marketplace." Don't forget about the market segment that is enormous, which is people with disabilities.

As our culture and economy become more dependent on technology, what we're really looking for is accommodation-based technology for everyone. Everybody is receiving accommodations through technology. This century should be the century of disability being presented as a pool or a resource for innovators.



**JILL HOUGHTON:** That's a perfect setup for Robert on the topic of technology. Technology has transformed *every* industry, and it's transformed your industry – the legal industry. That being said, sometimes it's an accelerator, and sometimes it's a hindrance. Can you touch on that?

**ROBERT GONZALES:** I would have to say that in the legal field, technology has been somewhat of a disappointment, across the boards. For example, we did a survey of software programs for lawyers in law practice management – how to operate your law firm – all these very valuable topics for any lawyer. We examined close to 15 different software programs, all of which said that they were accessible, and not one of them was. Not one was available.

We've had a very long struggle trying to get more software developed for law firms and for people with disabilities in law firms. It shouldn't be that difficult, but it seems that it is. Part of that is driven by what customers require. Law firms do what their clients ask, and if their clients aren't asking for it, they seem to overlook it in their own firms. One of our biggest struggles is to get law firms to think about technology on a law firm basis. What they've dealt with in the past is accommodations for individuals. For example, an individual in our firm has a disability, so let's get some accommodation for that person. When you could look at it more globally. Say that the next time we do a software update, or buy new computers, let's go across the boards and look at all the possibilities, and do this for everybody. Someone at your firm doesn't use it, so what? Your clients are going to use it; lawyers in the firm are going to use it. You're ahead of the game. You are representing to your clients and to the people that you deal with that we are advanced; we are moving ahead of the game. Technology is something that's wonderful for people with disabilities, it gives them the opportunity to practice law. The practice of law is a great area for people with disabilities. You can work in an office. Oftentimes, you don't



have to do a lot of traveling. Sometimes there are hindrances in other professions. In the law, you can progress, you can do wonderful things with *any* kind of disability as a lawyer – if you have the right tools and the right support.

When I say “support,” I want to mention an anecdote that I think is important. I have a member of our Commission who has definite visual disabilities, is in a wheelchair, and has speech problems. He said when he joined a law firm as a younger lawyer, he was concerned about how he would be represented in the firm and to clients. The partners of his law firm made a commitment to him, and said, “We’re going to give you the same kind of work that everybody else gets, and we’re going to tell your clients that you’re the best person to do this work. If they don’t like that, they’re not our clients.” He excelled in that law firm and is now a judge in Arizona’s courts. He excelled with the support of the people in his law firm, who understood that it’s not just enough to hire the person; you have to provide the technology, the wherewithal and the commitment mentally to advance this person in your firm, in the community, and with your clients.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** Talking about creating new tools, Chad, can you tell us about some of the emerging technologies that Accenture is building in the legal industry?

**CHAD JERDEE:** Yes! The legal industry is largely fueled by technology accessibility in particular, and just to the comments that were made earlier, we are at an inflection point in technology, and its potential for accessibility. I’ll start by saying that most companies overestimate the costs of providing accessibility to people with disabilities. Certainly, our experience as a company is it’s just a tiny fraction of even our CIO [Chief Information Officer] budget globally. It’s really getting competent people to advise you on what accessibility is and, most importantly, having people with disabilities involved in designing and shaping the technology around their needs. Unless you get real feedback from people who are experiencing the use of the technology, you’re likely to miss the mark and waste some money.

In terms of accessibility for tools that lawyers use, I would encourage you all to look at the work that Microsoft has done to make their software platforms accessible. It’s often not fully known just how many accessibility tools are built into their products, whether it’s accessibility checkers – a simple, drop-down menu item when you send out a document that allows it to be accessed by various people with disabilities – as well as growing voice recognition software and things like that.

Accenture – and this is what happens when you light the fire for people who are passionate about the topic, and it’s not difficult to find people who are passionate about it – has developed several tools for our employees. We’ve developed a tool called Drishti. Our India development team created a tool that allows people with visual impairment to wear glasses – I don’t know if they’re Google glasses or one of the similar technologies – that will actually connect with their cell phone and give them a read-out of what’s happening in the room. It will report people’s facial expressions; who’s sitting where; if it’s a white male between the age of 40 and 50, etc. and help guide them through meetings. We’ve developed,



for our people who are at call centers for IT support in India, voice recognition software that allows them to have live conversations with people over the phone, either texting back or not.

The pace of change in the technology environment is only going to accelerate, and the ability to have documents read to you – as opposed to reading them, highlighting and editing, using verbal tools – is fantastic. Again, there's only going to be a proliferation of those technologies. The Drishti tool was developed in a week and a half by our team there, as a side project. I think the potential is unlimited.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** I have a cool story about that kind of technology. I was with a CEO of an organization called the American Council of the Blind, and he's blind. He's also a husband and a dad. He said that similar technology allowed him to do homework with his kindergartener. He was able to know that his little boy was learning the alphabet and was supposed to practice his ABCs, because the voice was telling him what they were looking at. It allowed him to be interactive in his child's education; that's very powerful. There are many good stories out there.

Going back to mobility and the areas you work on in your practice, Liz, could you tell us about the biggest challenges for companies when it comes to navigating a global workforce?

**ELIZABETH STERN:** There are many challenges, but as far as having people move the way they do today, mobility is really

mobile. Chad was just talking about how much he enjoys travel. I talked to ten people before this session, most of whom told me that they were traveling on their way in to this meeting. We are all aware that Gina is here because Eve was traveling.

The hardest thing for many companies is having the ability to facilitate timely travel in an environment that places traditional restrictions on individuals who are attempting to qualify for a particular employment visa category. They have to register; there are finite durations; and there might be a quota in a particular country that dictates a number of local nationals who must be employed before a foreign national may enter for work. Those are outdated approaches to managing immigration. They don't address the real and valid concern of border security. The policy shifts reflected in the Hire American-Buy American executive orders and the Brexit referendum are the products of a movement on the part of some sovereign nations to protect their populations against crime, terrorism and economic loss. There is a need right now for companies to face the brutal reality that the traditional framework still exists, to get ahead of it and to be strategic and innovative in the placement of key resources. Multinational companies need state-of-the-art compliance programs to demonstrate to government auditors that they are serious about compliance. Technology is a critical component of any such program. Leadership must be convinced of its importance, so that the appropriate investment is made in mobility and it's not handled simply in the way that it used to be, as an HR function.

Finally, give some thought to how the individuals who are engaged in this can be made more comfortable. We talk about the service experience – I was thinking about it in my area – sometimes, even providing a very people-oriented service, such as moving an employee from one country to another can present challenges, even hardship, for the employee and dependent family members. If we can provide a service experience focused on the needs of the family, it allows the transferee to arrive at the destination feeling productive and empowered and includes arriving with some energy to bring to the workplace.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** As we start to bring this panel to a close, I want to hear your thoughts – and we'll allow everybody to touch on this – Chad talked about the term “relentless focus,” and Liz picked up on that. I want to hear your parting thoughts in terms of what would be your relentless focus, what would be your guidance to this audience as it relates to diversity and inclusion, and specifically disability?

We'll start with Gina.

**REGINA KLINE:** I love the Accenture study, between Accenture and Disability:IN's recent publication this month. It's phenomenal, because it gives data to what we've been saying for quite a number of years. It's in the best interests of companies and their bottom lines to get on-board and include people with disabilities throughout every level of the organization.

My concluding thought about this is on the legal profession. We can't afford not to allow innovators to enter the legal profession. In fact, we can't afford not to increase the diversity of our profession, but do it in a way, with a certain level of intentionality on “diversity.” I found – it's rather redundant – people with disabilities wake up in the morning, and many people innovate all the way to work. They are cutting through obstacles from the time they wake up in the morning until the time they get to their



desk. These are innovators, and yet, are they included? Are these folks present in the legal profession? I work in a law office. Many of you know, we sponsor a fellowship with blind lawyers that come and have made vast contributions to our office and to our work. We are very inclusive of lawyers with disabilities. But I question whether we're going to make it, as a legal profession, without this level of diversity, without this level of innovation. We should all be having conversations about what to do to make sure that we're on-boarding and recruiting young lawyers with disabilities, with the right level of intentionality.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** Now we'll go to Liz, and then Robert, and we'll wrap up with Chad.

**ELIZABETH STERN:** I want to mention that whether it's lawyers with disabilities or other aspects of diversity – I believe Chad touched on this, as well – we have to include individuals in a way that will allow them to be authentic and to bring their voices into the workforce. We can't discount the impact of what huge supermajority views can be on individuals, including veterans, but certainly for young lawyers. The desire to exceed can be significant, the equivalent of the peer pressure that our kids feel in school. In order to invite that creative, fresh thinking that leads to greater returns on the investment that a company or firm makes in its people, welcoming diversity has to become habitual; it has to be intentional, as Gina said; it has to be promoted by a leadership that includes these different, diverse groups, so you don't get like-minded thinking. It's very important to bring the "minority" voices into the discussion in a way that invites fresh thinking.

The level of energy, excitement and innovation that can happen, if that's done, is very significant. But that piece has to happen within the workplace environment.

**ROBERT GONZALES:** I would say we have to have a ruthless sense of honesty, and that is a ruthless sense of what your



company is doing or not doing. You can't just provide lip service – it's too late for that. You have to step down and talk to your employees and have employee disability affinity groups. You need to bring these people into the conversation and say, "We think we're doing a good job; are we?" You need to ask those hard questions among the people that work for you, the people that have decided not to work for you for some reason. You have to be very honest about your approach; you can't just say, "We're going to give it a good college try." It's not good enough; you have to dig down deep and ask whether you have a culture in your firm that meets today's standards. Without that, you're going to fail. You're not going to succeed as a firm; you're not going to succeed as a business.

**CHAD JERDEE:** I'll start by saying – from a company perspective, but particularly in the U.S., this is an issue that we're at a unique point in history in this particular area of diversity. A lot of companies are paying a lot more attention to this area, globally. Particularly for the law firm folks in the room, it is something you should think about and be focusing on, because your clients will be interested and focused on it.

The second comment that I would make is there's a lot of this call and demand for diversity initiatives across companies now, and there's a lot of different issues to

tackle. But we don't have to make it hard. The most important thing is education and culture, and you can accomplish a lot by getting the right people to advise you. Folks in Jill's organization – in our case, Dan Ellerman is sitting close to the front here – when I took on my role, I immediately realized that we needed a pro, because we were making it far too hard on ourselves by not having someone who actually knows how to have an impact. We hired Dan; he gave us clarity of purpose; he put a simple program together; we motivated people; we leveraged the power and the passion of the people at Accenture. We've got a long way to go, but we've accomplished a lot in a very short period of time.

It's really just getting the right advice from the right people to help you, and, of course, you can't ignore all the other areas of diversity, as well: ethnicity, gender equality, LGBTQ, and other areas, depending on where you're practicing.

That would be my second closing comment.

Third, I would like to thank everyone for attending today. I know we may have a little time for questions, but a lot of the folks in the room support Accenture directly, and I'm incredibly grateful for that; you do a fantastic job. I'd like to thank Mayer Brown for hosting us today. We have a fantastic partnership with them; they do great work supporting us. Dan, as I mentioned earlier, I always enjoy negotiating with you, as well. [LAUGHTER]

**JILL HOUGHTON:** Dan Ellerman, why don't you raise your hand? Because I know that you're always accessible to folks if they want to reach out and just share challenges or ask guidance.

We want to open it up to questions. We want to have dialogue; we've got microphones, so that it's accessible and we can hear what you're saying! [LAUGHTER]

You are attorneys; we know you have questions!

**KAREN TODD:** You have touched on some of the emerging adaptive technologies that are available out there. I was wondering if you could tell us more about those, either from a personal or business aspect or just what you've experienced in your practice areas, including immigration.

**CHAD JERDEE:** I guess I can start. This is not directly applicable to the legal profession, but the prosthetics industry has made a number of innovations in the last several years. I'm waiting for an actual meaningful robotic leg to come out, because the ones they have now are extremely heavy, and the batteries only last two or three hours. They're not waterproof, so it's difficult to do much with them.

Fortunately – or unfortunately – prosthetics development tends to advance with wars, because – in particular in the U.S., but elsewhere, the U.S. government heavily subsidizes the prosthetics industry for the veterans that are returning. That's fantastic; that's exactly where that money should go.

We're seeing it in the news already, that with advances and things like 3D printing, robotics, and materials that are available out there, it's only going to accelerate in the coming years. It's kind of cool. I've been trying to convince Microsoft to build a robotic leg for me for some time now. [LAUGHTER]

They have a hackathon every year where they come up with these little adaptive technologies, because they encourage all their coders to build accessibility into their programs and products. Maybe they'll come through for me one day.

**ELIZABETH STERN:** Frankly, adaptive technology support for law firms is sorely lagging behind support for other functions. Technologies such as voice recognition software helps, but I don't think that's enough at all; we have quite a bit more to do. I don't think law firms are innovating in the technology area, in that way. For mobile

“The commitment that we have to providing a rich environment for people of all different kinds of backgrounds, and the intersection of our employee resource groups, which are very active across all dimensions, where people with like backgrounds come together to discuss difficult issues – even in areas like religion. We have an interfaith ERG [employee resource group] that, over the past year, with all of the difficult issues we've been facing, has actually been a leading voice in the firm on those issues as we and society have struggled, particularly in the United States.”

– Chad Jerdee

travelers, we, of course, have the rapidly advancing mobile technologies that come from companies like Accenture and from the IT industry, so we benefit from that. But I still think we have a long way to go to make the practice of law more accessible.

**[AUDIENCE MEMBER]:** Good morning. Thank you for the program and the information. I'm the current chair of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee for the Maryland State Bar, as well as previously chair of the Diversity Committee for the ABA Family Law section.

One of the issues and topics that constantly come up is how do we get everyone to the table to have the discussion? When you're talking about diversity and inclusion, it doesn't make sense when you only have certain groups coming to the table. Quite honestly, the person who's missing at the table is the heterosexual, white male. Do you have some suggestions for making it relevant to *everyone* to come to the table and have that discussion?

**CHAD JERDEE:** I'll start, as a heterosexual, white man! [LAUGHTER]

You didn't notice, but someone who, for most of his life, was in the majority and just recently, I guess, became diverse.

It's interesting, because I'm also – as we look at different diversity initiatives as General Counsel – a bridge within our organization, because people oftentimes come to me when they're questioning whether what we're doing for a particular program in diversity is the right thing to do. It's oftentimes people in the majority who are struggling to get their heads around a particular initiative, while we're being proactive.

One, you have to invite them to the table. In our company, for example, I get invited. We have a school for leadership development for LGBTQ employees that they attend every year. They're very proactive on inviting allies to that, and I get invited to that every year. You *have* to be open to people who are willing to support and include them in the discussion.

We've received a lot of complaints over the years from the men that we have women's dinners as senior executive get-togethers. It's funny that they felt excluded! We started proactively inviting men who are interested in attending. This is a somewhat controversial comment, but different people are at different points in the journey, and people who are advanced in their thinking or are part of a group that is struggling to be included oftentimes don't understand that sometimes you need to step back and do



some remedial education on why you're doing certain things or why it's important to have a specific pipeline that you look at for the women that you're trying to advance in your organization, or people from different ethnicities. What you're really trying to accomplish is a meritocracy. It's not undermining the meritocracy. You shouldn't be afraid of or overly judgmental of people who haven't completely made the journey, because there's a lot of good people out there who want to get to the right place. They just need a little bit more education on what you're doing. Then you shouldn't be afraid of having open and honest conversations with them, to get them to where you need them to be.

Now, again, I don't have all the answers, and I don't pretend to have all the answers, and I certainly haven't experienced a lot of what other people have experienced, but those are some thoughts on how to advance things.

**ROBERT GONZALES:** It's a process, and it doesn't happen overnight; it doesn't happen in a week; it doesn't happen in a month, or a year. You have to find the right people. You have to find the Chads. You have to find the people in that hierarchy who are sympathetic to what you're trying to accomplish and have the one-on-one with *them*. Build an ally; build an advocate. That advocate will advance your cause amongst those who have the ear of the other people who are a little less reluctant to get involved.

It's time to be forthright; you need to have honest conversations with the individual and say, this is what's happening, and this is how the firm is not doing well because of this. That person, if they're sympathetic – and I'm sure there *are* plenty of good ones – it's just a matter of finding them. Give them an opportunity to perform. They're there; you have to look around to find them and develop that chemistry a little and let them carry the ball for you.



**ELIZABETH STERN:** I couldn't agree more with that comment, Robert. Also, the top leadership ultimately does have to listen and embrace it. One of the things that I'm very excited about ~ and the jury is out because we've only just started this at Mayer Brown ~ is that our top leaders, the chair and the managing partner of the firm have made one of the top five strategic priorities of our firm, a new and enhanced, reenergized talent management program, of which diversity is a linchpin. That approach requires all of our leaders, including those of global practice groups, to measure to a plan, demonstrate the plan and its results, and engage workers. It is an engagement-based approach, so it isn't just about the number of people you hire that are diverse, but how you engage them. Making that one of the five strategic priorities of the firm is a real opportunity. Those of us who are passionately interested in the topic have to be giving feedback to them so that it optimizes this moment. We have to capture the momentum of that. I'm really excited about it, but we're talking about something that we're starting in 2018. I want to make that clear. There have been diversity priorities and focus, but to do it as a holistic program, that's starting right now. We'll let you know about our progress next year!

**JILL HOUGHTON:** I would also add to consciously include disability in diversity, because 70% of us have disabilities that you cannot see. I was born with a learning

disability. I wanted to be a lawyer like you, but I didn't do well on the LSAT. It was before the Americans with Disabilities Act, and there wasn't an accommodation. You wouldn't know that about me unless there was a culture where I felt safe to identify. I could be a white male, and I could be depressed, have anxiety, have diabetes, have a learning disability, and you would not know that.

**[AUDIENCE MEMBER]:** Going back to what Chad said earlier, about what motivated him to become active, as the discomfort, silence and awkwardness of people dealing with physical disabilities and mental disabilities. My question is, how do we tackle improving communication coming from leadership? Do you, as panelists, have any tips for law firms to excel in communication and make progress in that area?

**ROBERT GONZALES:** I mentioned employee affinity groups and that's within the company or within a firm. People that meet have disabilities or have a family member that has a disability or are concerned about disability rights. Let them meet as a group, and talk, including about the firm and their disabilities, and let people know that this group exists. Then people from the firm will say, that's kind of interesting. I would like to be a part of that and learn more about your disability and how difficult it is for you to practice in our firm. I'd like to be a part of the solution.

An employee affinity group, groups that have this as an issue and are part of it, will expand to the forum itself. That's a good way to start. Find those individuals in your firm that have the disabilities or are willing to talk about them and meet with people, because interaction, working with someone that has a disability, is an education. That's how you educate yourself and that's how you learn about the value that person brings. Your discomfort – and that's really what we're talking about – will then just drop out. That's one of the biggest problems – the individual who *doesn't* have a disability – how do they interact with the person *with* the disability? How do they not insult them in some way? How do they not say something wrong? How do they not do something that embarrassed the other person? Communication, as you say, can be improved with an affinity group, spending time, and working with them.

My disability was 20 some years ago; I was diagnosed with chronic depression. I lost a job because of it. But I dealt with people that helped me get back into the profession, and I have not been a problem. It's not something that I tell people all the time. I don't bring it up in conversations. You would have not known if I had not told you this today. You would not have known that I have a depression or that I suffer from depression, but it's part of my life. I get along fine with it. We have no problems wherever I go; it's just part of what I do.

Those affinity groups, working and talking and being with the people, is the answer. They are no different; they just have a disability; they just do things in a different way. That's my thoughts.

**ELIZABETH STERN:** I'd like to say thank you for sharing that, Robert. It's terrific that you shared that. In addition to the affinity group, there are various elements of the program. The affinity group is very important for that, to be able to relate to one another, but there also has to be an onus on the leaders of different units within

“As a company and as a legal profession, we would be better off dealing with the issue head-on, acknowledging that we need to support people with mental health challenges, focusing on personal wellness, and not burying the issue.”  
– Chad Jerdee

the firm. That's why it has to include not just the top leadership, but also the distributive leadership – the practice group leaders or the office leaders. There have to be open dialogues where it is okay to describe what your problem is, and the challenge that you're dealing with – whether it's that you're feeling excluded or that you're new and young – maybe there's no disability, no minority group, but you're just intergenerational and you're the new person and you're not quite sure what your role is. There has to be more open dialogue about our limitations, real and perceived.

We were talking before, when Robert talked about mental illness and how, in law firms in particular, it's a challenging issue. As lawyers we make our trade on our intellect to some extent, and so having mental illness is probably seen as a major challenge. We've got to bust that wide open, put the transparency and the sunshine in there, so that we can have a dialogue that brings people in.

Probably Chad has views on this, because they've addressed this at Accenture.

**CHAD JERDEE:** Yes, we have the benefit of having a very large organization, so we can have a lot of people who speak up and express their voices. If you are faced with a person that has a specific disability, I would encourage you to do two things. One is just reading the Internet is a wonderful thing. You can find all kinds of stories about people's perspectives on how they want to be treated and how they want to be accommodated, what the different biases and prejudices are associated with their specific disability. It's a wide-ranging topic, because disability is even difficult to define in and of itself.

Second, don't be afraid to ask them. Someone's in a wheelchair, “How would you like to be greeted? How would you like to be spoken to? Do you like to communicate at eye level?” Basic communication, things that fundamentally get to mutual respect and how people like to be treated, is how to treat each other. Everybody has a different story and a different perspective. Not being afraid of engaging in those kinds of conversations is a fundamentally important thing.

Finally, the tone from the top is that we all respect each other. Of course, we all run businesses. Results are important; but we value each other on contributions and ideas, and again, it's the quality of the contributions and ideas that are important.

This is a little bit off-topic, but I'll leave you with another thought. I have done a lot of work in this space and I've met a lot of people and we've employed a lot of people with disabilities. The prevailing prejudice, unspoken for most people – and it's not an area where prejudice is prevalent because most people have very charitable attitudes – is that disabled people are going to be needy, demanding and cumbersome.

That's not my experience. My experience is that they're adaptive, creative and grateful. To the extent that they're needy, it's probably consistent with the rest of the population. [LAUGHTER]

They are creative and adaptive at a level that you don't see with the general employed population, simply because people with all forms of disabilities have to learn how to do things differently, and that creates a resilience that I think any employer would value.



**REGINA KLINE:** I have nothing to add except for this, which is that employers have options as to how you interview people, how you identify talent. It's not that you're asking different questions or the essential functions of being a lawyer in your firm have changed for that person; but establishing an alternative way of evaluating a candidate for a job, because you are being inclusive of how different people might present themselves in an interview. Establishing an alternative view of how you'll recruit – and where you'll recruit from – and how you'll express how inclusive you are as a firm. Determining who in your leadership will be singing the praises of that diversity, and how people will feel when they come in the front door – whether they know someone who's in a leadership position within your firm – for which they can aspire to that position as a person with a disability.

It's not just employee affinity groups, but it's really baking in, for all of your lawyers who don't have disabilities, a culture of inclusion and awareness. That may take disability training for those with and without disabilities together in your firm, to create an inclusive culture that will allow you a talent pipeline that you might not have tapped until this point.

**[AUDIENCE MEMBER]:** First, to your comment, I want to say I present as a straight, white male, but I am gay, an adopted child of multiracial parents with two disabilities, and none of those things are things you would know about me walking into this room. Just as I have been asked not to make assumptions about people based on their race or their gender, please don't make assumptions about me based on my race or my gender.

Now, to my question and your comment about a ruthless sense of honesty. How do we change the culture that we all live in, called the “legal education profession”? I pulled up a couple of quick stats, looking at where law school professors come from, and which law school partners come from



in the hundred largest firms. I don't think any of us would be shocked to find that Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Georgetown, NYU, Stanford, Berkeley, Michigan, are in the top 10 of both lists. What we may be surprised to find is that they are in the top 10 of both lists by more than 25 times. Do we actually believe that Harvard produces 25 times more legal scholars than Wisconsin or Minnesota? If not, how can we change our practices to get away from just saying, “You went to the #3 ranked school, and you went to the #20 ranked school, so you must be better from the #3 school”? How do we start to have that conversation? **[LAUGHTER]**

**ROBERT GONZALES:** That's a small question! **[LAUGHTER]**

You've described the whole makeup of the legal profession in the last 300 years in the United States! I don't think there's a simple answer. People are used to or have a culture of hiring from the best law schools or the best medical schools. Their goal is to hire the best talent we can find, and traditionally, they use law schools that have been known to produce the best “talent,” if that's the word you want to use. “Talent” is in terms of what they provide to your firm.

I don't know what to tell a managing partner to say, “You shouldn't hire the #2 guy at Stanford or the #2 woman at Harvard, hire

somebody from Minnesota (like Chad).” It comes from the firm itself, people that *didn't* come from Harvard and *didn't* come from Michigan asserting themselves and saying, “Look, there's some great people out there. Let's intern a few people from Minnesota or our local law schools and give these people a chance to work in our firm; maybe we'll find out something that's a little bit different. Maybe we'll find someone with a different perspective.” We're not going to change the culture of law schools or law firms very easily.

**CHAD JERDEE:** Yes, I'll give an in-house perspective. Where you see more diversity in education backgrounds is in in-house departments. We tend to hire people with experience, not right out of law school. I'm not going to comment on the larger issue about who law firms hire and who they don't, but people have an opportunity to demonstrate their commitment.

Law firms provide lateral hiring opportunities for people they might not have hired outside of law school, as well as for people who've proved themselves accomplished in the legal profession.

I do think that over the past decade there has been a real shift towards in-house departments as a primary provider of legal services. I have a department of 2,600 people, so I run a department on the scale of the largest law firms in the world just to serve my company, and we still rely on outside counsel for some things. That's part of the answer in terms of where you're looking for people from different backgrounds.

Interestingly enough, there is a diversity element to it. I was talking with probably one of the most talented people on my team. She's the daughter of immigrants from India. She got a full ride to a small school in Texas and was given the opportunity to go to Harvard and Stanford. She got a full ride at the University of Illinois, and took that, because she didn't feel she could burden her family with the expense of going to the more

expensive schools. She said that her first law firm experience, people oftentimes questioned her credentials. It was a journey for her, but once she got past the first few years, it was irrelevant. She's been a tremendous success at Accenture, runs our compliance program and has done some fantastic work, really innovating how we direct compliance through our culture and our organization. The in-house departments play a role in helping to transform that, as well.

I went to the University of Minnesota, incidentally. There was a school called William Mitchell in town that was ranked in the top 20, and the U was considered the premier, but Warren Burger graduated from William Mitchell Law School.

**[AUDIENCE MEMBER]:** Forty years ago, I worked for the National Transit Agency on issues about disabilities. One of the lessons that I learned in trying to work with transit agencies, who were very recalcitrant, was that after the initial efforts, there were a lot of spillover effects that helped people who were not disabled. On your way home, you can see this, whether it's curb cuts or escalators or elevators. This point about not just helping employees, or clients, but more broadly, either in the measuring of the impacts or of justifying why employers might want to hire people with diversities, those unintended consequences may have some value when reaching the arguments.

We should also consider accommodations for occupations and clients who do blue collar work or retail sales or a whole variety of things, where they might be more innovative than just desktop computers.

Thirdly, what are law schools and business schools doing to introduce these ideas about disabilities and diversity to incoming students? Are there cases they can study to produce more understanding and support?

**“I started talking to a lot of people and found out that because of these assumptions that people bring, because of the discomfort and lack of awareness, there were huge, unnecessary obstacles for people with disabilities participating in the environment.”**

*– Chad Jerdee*

Lastly, what are the consequences of global warming and climate change on disability rights, in terms of people with sensitivities to heat, or where climate change introduces mobility problems or other kinds of spillover effects?

**JILL HOUGHTON:** If folks want to comment, go ahead. Then we're going to turn it over to Karen, because we're a little over time.

**ROBERT GONZALES:** I'll take the easy question **[LAUGHTER]**, which is law schools. One of the things the Commission works on regularly with the ABA – and the ABA has some control with respect to law school standards – is how they get accredited. We've been working the last couple of years on the standards that deal with diversity in the law schools. We've been coming up with a stumbling block in terms of changing the current standards that do not now include the word “disability,” and do not include the words of any sexual orientation. We've been fighting over this with the law schools. I don't know, individually, what law schools are doing; we get anecdotal information. I can tell you it's not part of the written standards now for accreditation to have disability as part of your law school class or faculty. We are working on that with them now to try to get that changed. We're getting feedback from various groups. Some of the religious schools don't want to deal with the sexual orientation question. Some of the ethnic groups don't want to lose what, in their mind, is a protected spot for them by increasing the definition. It's an ongoing problem, and we are working on that, trying to get the standards moved in that

direction, and we're not giving up, and we're moving forward. That's what I know with respect to law schools.

**CHAD JERDEE:** There's a lot to contact in those questions. We'll probably need to take them away and think about them. I had not thought about some of the topics that you raised, but I really appreciate you raising those issues, because, again, discussion and identifying the issues is an important part of the process.

**JILL HOUGHTON:** In terms of accommodations, there is an example here in D.C. I would encourage you to go to the ASL (American Sign Language) Starbucks, it's at 625 Eighth Street N.E., by Gallaudet University. Everybody that works there is deaf. It's the coolest thing ever. You can go in, and if you don't know sign language, you write on the tablet what you want. I was in there just last weekend, and the baristas were deaf, and it was full of customers who were deaf. The coolest part was a police officer who came in, out of nowhere, and started signing. I was jealous! It was really great.

Please join me in giving a round of applause for our speakers today. **[APPLAUSE]**

Thank you very much for joining us. I'm going to turn it back to Karen, who's going to wrap it up.

**KAREN TODD:** Thank you, everyone, for coming, and all of the people who offered questions – we really appreciate it. Thanks very much to Chad and the Distinguished Panelists for sharing your expertise and views on this important topic.





**Regina Kline**  
Co-Leader



Regina Kline is nationally known for her litigation and policy work in advancing the rights of people with disabilities to move from sub-minimum wage and segregated employment to competitive integrated employment. Through her work as a Trial Attorney and then Senior Counsel at the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, and in private practice as a Partner at Brown, Goldstein & Levy and Co-Leader of Inclusivity, she has been involved firsthand in many of the changes to the employment landscape for people with disabilities in recent years.

Ms. Kline served as Senior Counsel in the Office of the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Justice, where she provided legal and policy counsel regarding efforts to implement the ADA and the *Olmstead v. L.C.* mandate for community integration in employment, education, law enforcement/criminal justice, homelessness, and health care. Ms. Kline was co-lead on multi-agency efforts to address federal policy developments and law enforcement in disability employment

programs nationwide and provided counsel and advice and collaborated across the Federal Government regarding the ADA, Fair Labor Standards Act, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the False Claims Act.

At the Department of Justice, Gina filed three landmark cases that reached the nation's first settlement agreements to transform employment programs to serve people with disabilities from segregated sheltered workshops to competitive integrated employment. On April 11, 2014, the Editorial Board of the *New York Times* endorsed the Rhode Island case as "a model for the treatment of the nation's 450,000 developmentally disabled who are still largely kept in [segregated employment settings]." As a result of these settlements, more than 10,000 people with disabilities are slated to receive the services and supports necessary to transition over the next decade. Now in the private sector, in addition to her work as Co-leader of Inclusivity, Gina continues to represent individuals with disabilities in employment.

## Inclusivity

Led by two of the nation's preeminent civil rights attorneys, Inclusivity is dedicated to helping public and private sector organizations and industry groups navigate the rapidly changing landscape of disability and civil rights with strategic consulting services.

Inclusivity is part of Brown, Goldstein & Levy, a leading civil rights law firm with offices in Baltimore, MD and Washington,

DC. Eve Hill and Regina Kline joined the firm as partners in February 2017 and started Inclusivity to support businesses, organizations, and government agencies that want to achieve real inclusion of people with disabilities in their workforces and communities. Inclusivity offers solutions that advance the civil rights of workers and students with disabilities and helps organizations become more effective, inclusive, and diverse. Our advice enhances opportunities for businesses, government agencies, individuals, and communities.

Brown, Goldstein & Levy is a 23-lawyer law firm of trial lawyers who handle cases of every stripe, both civil and criminal. We also have an active practice in many other areas, including family law and health care law. Above all else, we are a client-centered law firm. We strongly identify with our

clients and their problems, and we have the skill, the experience, and the tenacity to solve those problems.

Our lawyers have been listed in numerous categories in *Best Lawyers in America*. They have been selected for Maryland's Top 10 *Super Lawyers* and Top 50 Women *Maryland Super Lawyers*; the *Daily Record's* Leaders in Law and Maryland's Top 100 Women; as Fellows of the American College of Trial Lawyers; and as Maryland Trial Lawyer of the Year. In 2019, Brown, Goldstein & Levy is celebrating its 35th anniversary, and we are proud of our history. As a firm, we have been named the Pro Bono Firm of the Year by the Maryland State Bar Association and have earned an AV rating (the highest possible) for legal ability and ethical standards in the Lawyers.com/Martindale-Hubbell Peer Review Ratings.



**Elizabeth Stern**  
Partner

## MAYER • BROWN

### Mayer Brown, LLP

Mayer Brown is a distinctively global law firm, uniquely positioned to advise the world's leading companies and financial institutions on their most complex deals and disputes. With extensive reach across four continents, we are the only integrated law firm in the world with approximately 200 lawyers in each of the world's three largest financial centers – New York, London and Hong Kong – the backbone of the global economy. We have deep experience in high-stakes litigation and complex transactions across industry sectors, including our signature strength, the global financial

Elizabeth Espin Stern, a partner in Mayer Brown's Washington, D.C. office, leads the firm's Global Mobility & Migration practice, which forms part of the Employment & Benefits group. She is a seasoned veteran who has advised companies through every major immigration policy change since 1986. Liz is consistently ranked as a leading business immigration lawyer by *Chambers Global*, *Chambers USA*, *Who's Who Legal*, *The International Who's Who of Business Lawyers*, and national and local publications. In addition, she has been named in *Best Lawyers in America*, *Super Lawyers* and "Women in Law Awards 2014" by *Lawyer Monthly* and named one of *National Law Journal's* "Outstanding Women Lawyers 2015."

Liz spearheads Mayer Brown's market-leading global worksite management initiative, which addresses U.S. and global immigration compliance, HR functions and mobility services. This proprietary Mayer Brown Global People Solution™ offers multinational clients in a variety of sectors, including financial services, consulting, IT, defense, consumer

goods, telecommunications and multimedia, a comprehensive compliance and management program in connection with their mobile workforce. Liz regularly speaks and writes about immigration policies and contributes to major news agencies and publications, including *Law 360*, for which she serves on the Immigration editorial advisory board; *Quartz.com*; *Global Business News* and a host of global HR publications.

Liz focuses on issues that are unique to dynamic commercial entities with a global work force. She helps companies establish global compliance and management programs to move their executive and professional work corps to various locations around the world. Liz is knowledgeable in global HR disciplines and transactions, including visas, work permits and compliance and how immigration transactions interface with tax, employment, compensation and benefits, corporate formation, data privacy, export controls, and anti-corruption and anti-bribery regulation.

services industry. Our diverse teams of lawyers are recognized by our clients as strategic partners with deep commercial instincts and a commitment to creatively anticipating their needs and delivering excellence in everything we do. Our "one-firm" culture – seamless and integrated across all practices and regions – ensures that our clients receive the best of our knowledge and experience.

In Brazil, Tauil & Chequer Advogados in association with Mayer Brown offers clients access to a full-service Brazilian domestic law practice. Tauil & Chequer has offices in Brasília, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

Mayer Brown is committed to diversity and inclusion because it is the right thing to do and because it makes sound business

sense. Diversity and inclusion broadens our knowledge and heightens our sensitivity to cultural issues, which empowers us to respond to the challenges of serving a clientele that spans the globe. Diversity and inclusion initiatives are hallmarks of Mayer Brown's heritage and will be key drivers of our future success.

At Mayer Brown, we view the attainment of a diverse and inclusive workplace at all levels of our organization as critical to, and a natural result of, building a cohesive, successful law firm. We recruit, develop and promote the highest caliber lawyers and staff and are committed to providing them with opportunities to realize their potential regardless of race, religion, beliefs, ethnicity, national origin, gender, gender identity, age, disability or sexual orientation.





**Robert Gonzales**  
Chair

Robert T. Gonzales is of counsel for the firm of Hylton & Gonzales in Baltimore, Maryland. His primary areas of interest are Special Needs Trusts, Real Estate, and Non-Profit Organizations. He was a professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law where he was the director of the Community Development Clinic and also taught Professional Responsibility.

He has been very active in bar associations and has served as the President of the Maryland State Bar Association, the

Bar Association of Baltimore City, and the National Conference of Bar Presidents. He has served as a member of the ABA Board of Governors and currently serves as Chair of the ABA Commission on Disability Rights.

Additionally, he serves as a member of the Maryland Legal Aid Bureau Board of Directors and the Center for Diversity of the ABA.



## American Bar Association Commission on Disability Rights

The Commission works to promote the ABA's commitment to justice and the rule of law for people with mental, physical, and sensory disabilities, and to promote their full and equal participation in the legal profession.

In furthering its commitment to diversity in the legal profession, the ABA Commission on Disability Rights is promoting "Disability Diversity in the Legal Profession: A Pledge for Change," a one-page pledge for legal employers to sign. The Pledge affirms the signatory's commitment to diversity,

specifically disability diversity, and recognizes that diversity is in the best interest of the profession, those the profession serves, as well as the organization making the commitment. The Pledge also announces that the signatory will encourage others in the legal industry to make this commitment.

The Pledge was created in response to the lack of lawyers with disabilities in the profession, and was the centerpiece of the Second ABA National Conference on the Employment of Lawyers with Disabilities held in June 2009. Its distribution was approved by the ABA Board of Governors Operations and Communications Committee. In 2012, the Pledge was amended to specifically include judges and judiciaries as signatories. In 2014, the Pledge was again amended to include law schools and state and local bar associations.

The American Bar Association (ABA), through its Commission on Disability Rights (CDR), recognizes a law firm or corporation that have made measurable progress in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and advancement to leadership positions of lawyers with disabilities.

For the 2018 Award, the American Bar Association will honor Accenture, a leading global professional services company, which provides services that span strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations services. The ABA Commission on Disability Rights selected Accenture for its commitment to and leadership in creating and sustaining an inclusive, barrier-free work environment where persons with disabilities across the globe experience a real sense of belonging, can be who they are, and perform at their full potential.



**Jill Houghton**  
*President & CEO*



Jill Houghton is the President and CEO of the Disability:IN. There she oversees the strategic direction of the organization as well as provides guidance on global disability inclusion best practices to more than 100 Disability:IN partners. She represents Disability:IN when testifying before congressional committees, working with various government agencies and numerous other functions.

Jill Houghton's creative spirit and passionate approach to the inclusion of people with disabilities comes from her core. While pursuing her bachelor's degree from the University of Kansas, she interned for U.S. Senator Robert J. Dole and the experience, as well as her challenges associated with having a learning disability, ignited the direction of her professional aspirations.

Ms. Houghton has more than 25 years of diverse leadership experience at the federal, state and local levels working with businesses to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities. Prior to joining Disability:IN, Jill served as the Executive

Director of the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel until its legislative sunset in January 2008. The bi-partisan panel was housed independently within the Social Security Administration and provided advice to the President, Congress and the Commissioner of Social Security on issues related to the Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare work incentives programs for individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Houghton has testified before the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives on issues related to businesses' commitment to recruit, hire and retain employees with disabilities. She currently serves on the board of the U.S. International Council on Disabilities and the New York City Comptrollers Advisory Board Council on Economic Growth through Diversity and Inclusion. Additionally, she serves on the Boston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on "Improving Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities" Knowledge Translation and Utilization Advisory Council.

## Disability:IN

Disability:IN is the leading nonprofit resource for business disability inclusion worldwide. Our network of more than 170 corporations expands opportunities for people with disabilities across enterprises. Our organization and 50 Affiliates raise a collective voice of positive change for people with disabilities in business. Disability:IN promotes disability inclusion by heightening awareness, advising corporations and sharing proven strategies for including people with disabilities in the workplace, supply chain, and marketplace.

We expand opportunities for people with disabilities by helping companies invigorate their disability initiatives, explore best practices, incorporate culture changes, and realize positive business outcomes.

### Our Vision

An inclusive global economy where people with disabilities participate fully and meaningfully.

### Shared Commitments

To collaborate with purpose to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities, to inspire accessible innovation for all, and to foster cultures of inclusion.

### Our Purpose

We empower business to achieve disability inclusion and equality.

### The Disability Inclusion Advantage

Companies that improve disability inclusion over time outperform their peers

Groundbreaking research from Accenture in partnership with Disability:IN and the American Association of People with Disabilities reveal financial benefits of including people with disabilities in business.