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DIVERSITY SCORECARD 2016

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THE DIVERSITY SCORECARD RECORDS THE average number of full-time-equivalent minority attorneys—Asian-American, African-American, Latino or Hispanic, Native American and self-described multiracial attorneys—at Am Law 200 and National Law Journal 250 law firms in the calendar year 2015. Lawyer counts are average full-time-equivalent (FTE) figures. Partner statistics include both equity and nonequity partners. Nonpartner figures include associates as well as special counsel, of counsel and other staff attorneys. The survey does not include contract attorneys.

The heading “Other Minority” includes Native Americans and attorneys who said they were multiracial. Lawyers of Middle Eastern heritage are counted as nonminority attorneys for the purposes of this survey.

THE FIVE TOP-RANKED FIRMS

2015 Diversity Rank	Firm Name	% of Minority Attorneys	% of Minority Partners	Total U.S. Attorneys
1	WHITE & CASE	34.1%	22.3%	598
2	FRAGOMEN	29.3%	21.6%	277
3	WILSON SONSINI	26.2%	19.8%	670
4	WOOD SMITH	25.9%	20.0%	189
5	FENWICK	30.1%	10.9%	297

A SLOW RISE

White & Case remains the top-ranking firm for diversity for the third consecutive year. Some 34.1 percent of its 598 lawyers in the United States were members of a minority group in 2015, as well as 22.3 percent of 166 partners. Fragomen, Del Rey, Bernsen & Loewy, a law firm whose practice centers on immigration, ranked second. Some 29.3 percent of its 277 U.S. attorneys were minority lawyers, a slight decline from its results last year, when 30.5 percent were minorities. But the firm saw improvement in its percentage

of minority partners: 21.6 percent, up from 20.8 percent the previous year.

Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati again ranked third in diversity, but Wood, Smith, Henning & Berman rose from seventh place to displace Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle for fourth place. Fenwick & West displaced Munger, Tolles & Olson to rank fifth, up from ninth a year earlier.

Minority representation at big U.S. firms has seen only incremental gains for several years amid a generally slow-growth environment for legal services and employment. At 15.02 percent, the percentage of minority lawyers in Big Law is far short of the nearly 38 percent of the U.S. population that counted as members of racial or ethnic minority groups in the U.S. in 2014. However, it's nearly in line with the 14.5 percent of employed lawyers who were black (4.6 percent), Asian (4.8) or Latino/Hispanic (5.1) in 2015, according to data from the U.S. Department of Labor. Similarly, the National Association for Law Placement's annual compilation of legal employment data found 13.97 percent minority representation at law firms in 2015.

NALP found that most of the increase in the overall number of minority lawyers since 2011 has been driven by rising numbers of Asian-American associates, whose numbers increased to 10.93 percent in 2015 from 9.28 percent in 2009. The share of African-American associates, on the other hand, declined in the same period to 3.95 percent from 4.66 percent, according to NALP. Latinos make up 4.28 percent of associates, according to NALP.

Our Diversity Scorecard data similarly shows that the largest increase in minority lawyers overall came from modest gains in Hispanic (up 0.3 percent) and Asian-American (up 0.4 percent) nonpartners. Asian-Americans constituted 6.67 percent of lawyers at Am Law 200 and NLJ 250 firms; Latinos, 3.48 percent; African-Americans, 3.0 percent; self-described multiracial attorneys 1.69 percent; and Native Americans or Alaska natives, 0.18 percent.

Evidence that the so-called leaky pipeline of minority lawyers starts early can be seen in NALP survey results showing that racial and ethnic minorities accounted for a much higher share of summer associates: 31.16 percent. And since 2000, the percentage of minority law school graduates has ranged from 20 percent to more than 26 percent, according to the American Bar Association, NALP says. But those numbers are not reflected in the percentage of minority lawyers among Big Law associates. NALP executive director James Leipold says, "We continue to see women and minorities leave [law firms] at disproportionately high rates."

Yet corporate and government clients are increasingly asking for law firm diversity numbers in their proposal requests. In an emailed statement, Josephine Chang, deputy general counsel of GE Capital, and Felipe Paez, chief compliance counsel of GE Global Research, said that their legal department tracks the amount billed to GE by law firms for work performed by women and minority lawyers. "We are currently working on more streamlined ways to provide this data to hiring counsel, so they can consider it when they are looking at which firms to select," the GE lawyers said.

THE FIVE TOP-RANKED FIRMS

These firms had the survey's highest percentages of minority attorneys.



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