

Diversity Committee Update

October 2006

- ▶ Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCAA) has announced the winners of the Lloyd M. Johnson, Jr. Scholarship Program. Groom is very pleased to announce that Lisa Gonzalo was named the Groom Law Group Fellow. Lisa was an undergrad at Rutgers University and is currently a first year law student at Fordham University. Groom participates in the program by contributing \$10,000 a year toward Lisa's law school expenses.
- ▶ During August, Groom held a series of lunch programs to discuss careers in benefits law with our summer interns in paid administrative positions. Three students participated. Sharnita Goins is a senior in high school and awaiting her acceptance letters from colleges. Catlan McCurdy, a junior at The George Washington University, majors in English and plans to attend law school. Leslie Rayno, a junior at Georgetown University, entered college at sixteen years of age and majors in Russian and French.

In four lunch meetings, the program covered Groom's legal practice areas, including Health, Litigation, Fiduciary Responsibility (ERISA Title I), and Employee Benefits Tax (ERISA Title II). Attorneys from each group discussed their practice areas and offered thoughts on topics such as - why they chose law as a profession, getting into and succeeding at law school, balancing career and family, and what it is like to be an employee benefits attorney. Our Health practice was represented by Heather Meade and Nicole Cerquitella; Litigation by Alvaro Annillo, Christina Crockett, and Tom Gigot; Fiduciary Responsibility by Jon Bourgault and Jennifer Eller; and Employee Benefits Tax by David Powell,

Shannon Salinas, and Bill Evans. Diversity Committee members and members of Groom's paralegal staff also participated. At the end of August, Groom sponsored an evening of bowling, which included interns, paralegals, and attorneys who participated in the lunch meetings.

Special thanks to LaTaunja Beckwith, our paralegal coordinator who organized and managed the lunch series, other activities, and attended all of the events.

- ▶ Members of Groom's Recruiting and Diversity Committee interviewed students at the Mid-Atlantic Black Law Student Association's job fair held September 9 in Washington DC. After the interviews, we attended the networking reception that was hosted by BLSA groups from local law schools.
- ▶ The Diversity Committee is working with the Black Law Students Association (BLSA) of The George Washington University Law School to present a panel discussion on career opportunities as an ERISA lawyer. A panel of six practitioners, including lawyers from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Treasury Department, and "in-house" benefits attorneys at local companies and law firms, will present their perspectives on practicing law in the employee benefits field. Groom hopes to work with BLSA chapters at other area law schools to present similar panels in order to encourage law students to consider a career in benefits law.