

DIVERSITY

BakerPride

At Baker Donelson, diversity and inclusion are essential to our Firm culture, and we strive to create a welcoming and nurturing workplace for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning or queer) attorneys and staff.

We value diversity not only because it is the right thing to do. Our diversity allows us to serve our clients better because we can bring to bear a variety of perspectives on the legal matters we handle, and with diverse lawyer teams we can relate better to the diverse client base we serve. Increasingly, many of our clients request diverse attorney teams to handle their matters, so their attorneys better reflect their own organizations and the communities they serve. With our shareholders, associate attorneys and staff members throughout our many offices, the Firm culture reflects an openness and acceptance that makes Baker Donelson a great place to practice law, and our clients appreciate that we are striving to be as diverse as they are.

BakerPride is Baker Donelson's large and active employee resource group for LGBTQ attorneys and staff, as well as "straight allies" in the Firm. We have regular meetings and events throughout our offices and direct the Firm's LGBTQ diversity efforts. Through BakerPride, Baker Donelson sponsors and supports numerous LGBTQ community organizations and events in our footprint and provides a means for our members to become involved in the Firm's efforts to promote LGBTQ equality inside and outside our Firm. BakerPride drives our Firm's goal to be a beacon for diversity and inclusion in our geographic footprint and throughout the communities we serve.

We believe that when LGBTQ attorneys and staff are enabled and motivated to succeed to their maximum potential, while being themselves, the Firm is more successful and provides better client service and outcomes. At Baker Donelson we don't just "talk the talk" about LGBTQ diversity-- we put our beliefs into action:

LGBTQ Recruiting – To provide the best possible service to our clients, Baker Donelson strives to hire, train and retain the most talented attorneys and staff. LGBTQ attorneys actively participate in Baker Donelson's recruiting efforts, and the Firm is a long-time and committed participant and recruiter at the annual Lavender Law Conference and Career Fair, sponsored by the National LGBT Bar Association, an affiliate of the American Bar Association. Baker Donelson also recruits at several well-known minority job fairs which attract LGBTQ applicants and actively seeks out qualified LGBTQ law student and lateral candidates.

Vault Associates Survey Ranking – The importance we place on diversity and inclusion at our Firm is reflected in our external rankings. Since 2013 and most recently in 2020, Baker Donelson has been ranked in the Vault Associates Survey as one of the "Best Law Firms for Diversity" in the United States. Baker Donelson was also ranked #30 for "Diversity for LGBTQ Individuals" in 2020.

Community Organizations and Efforts – Baker Donelson actively supports numerous LGBTQ organizations and events throughout our footprint. We believe leadership in the area of LGBTQ equality requires us to go beyond the walls of our offices. Here are some of our recent efforts:

Pride Celebrations – Baker Donelson has proudly sponsored Pride Festivals for years in our communities, including events in Fort Lauderdale, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Chattanooga, Nashville and Memphis.

Law School Outreach – Baker Donelson attorneys host and sponsor law student events through the LGBTQ student organizations at numerous law schools, including Tulane Law School, the University of Alabama School of Law and Vanderbilt Law School. Baker Donelson is also a long-time sponsor of the LGBT Symposium produced annually by the University of Mississippi Law School.

Sponsorships – The Firm regularly sponsors events in our communities. For example, Smart Ride, a two-day, 165-mile bike ride from Miami to Key West, which benefits HIV/AIDS organizations in South Florida. In 2015, BakerPride members helped organize and produce a Mayoral Forum held at Vanderbilt University, where the candidates for Nashville mayor fielded questions about LGBTQ issues facing the city.

LGBT Chambers of Commerce – Baker Donelson is an active member in several LGBT Chambers of Commerce. For example, it is the lead sponsor of the Nashville LGBT Chamber of Commerce. In 2016, our Firm received their Corporate Diversity Award recognizing Baker Donelson's outstanding leadership and commitment to LGBT equality in the business community.

Human Rights Campaign – Baker Donelson is a proud local and national sponsor of the Human Rights Campaign and supports their annual Equality Dinners in several offices in our footprint.

LGBT Bar Associations – In addition to supporting the National LGBT Bar Association, Baker Donelson supports several local LGBT Bar Associations, including the Georgia Stonewall Bar Association. Baker Donelson is also actively involved in the Tennessee Stonewall Bar Association, which promotes and advocates for LGBT diversity in the legal profession.

Pro Bono Legal Services for LGBTQ Clients and Organizations – Baker Donelson attorneys regularly donate their services for LGBTQ individuals and community groups that could not otherwise afford representation. For example, our Firm represented pro bono the victims of two separate hate crime incidents where LGBTQ individuals were brutally attacked. Baker Donelson worked with the police to apprehend the assailants and prevent future attacks. In another matter, our Firm represented a not-for-profit organization in a lawsuit with its landlord. Through Baker Donelson's efforts, the organization which serves the LGBTQ community was able to continue operations in its location.