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NJWLA 'Call to Action' Networking Breakfast a huge success

NEWARK - October 12, 2007: Greenberg Dauber Epstein & Tucker hosted the NJWLA Call To Action Networking Breakfast at their Newark office. The program focused on Call to Action, an effort to encourage general counsel to advance the progress of diversity in the law firms with which they do business.

The keynote speaker, Thomas J. Sabatino Jr., Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Schering-Plough Corporation, stated that he can appreciate where the NJWLA was, and where it is now, and this is largely due to the courage and tenacity of Kirsten Scheurer Branigan, NJWLA President. Mr. Sabatino acknowledged that there are often difficulties in the workplace for women, struggles for women being lawyers and Moms.

Mr. Sabatino stated that women lawyers are currently leaving Law Firms at a staggering rate to join corporations. These corporations are benefiting from all the women leaving the law firms. Three years ago the percentage of women lawyers at Schering-Plough was 23%, and today it is at a staggering 40%! The benefits to women leaving Law Firms and going to Corporations are obvious: Better quality of life, still demanding but better; Women feel there is more flexibility at the office; and Women are getting a "Better Tuned" life. The elements of their lives such as family, sports, family time and work can all work together.



◀ Lynda Bennett (NJWLA Director of Programming / Robertson, Freilich, Bruno & Cohen, LLC), Kirsten Scheurer Branigan (NJWLA President / Law Office of Kirsten Scheurer Branigan), Thomas J. Sabatino Jr., Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Schering-Plough Corporation, and Linda Harvey, (Greenberg Dauber Epstein & Tucker).



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Mr. Sabatino said the Schering-Plough Corporation believes in a diverse workforce, and recruits not only from within, but outside the company too. They believe in starting with the right pool of people. Schering-Plough reaches out to bar associations for African-American, Hispanics and women. Schering-Plough also has a Diversity Committee of males and females, as well as minority and non-minorities, and a Pilot Mentoring Program that is not only about women, but also about diversity. Their Summer Intern Program is well known in the legal community, and provides many diverse opportunities.



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The Schering-Plough Corporation partners with law firms to review issues for women. Mr. Sabatino said that there are still a lot of firms that are not getting it, despite the analysis, case studies & clarity on the business benefits of diversity. There are male/female differences and companies/firms should be aware of this. His advice to law firms to retain women lawyers is: Bring in high quality women and men at interviews. Maximize the number of well-qualified lawyers. Treat lawyers as individuals, especially women. Know that you need productivity, but do not single out billable hour performance. Do not give up on programs the company/firm have in place already. Include the men, demand changes, and embrace diversity in communication.

NJWLA would like to give special thanks to Linda G. Harvey and Greenberg Dauber Epstein & Tucker for hosting the breakfast, and all of the attendees for making this networking breakfast such a success. NJWLA look forward to networking and working with our members on efforts to advance and retain women in the legal profession in New Jersey. 🍷



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