

PUBLICATION

Diversity Matters: Note from the Editor

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In the last edition of *Diversity Matters*, I asked each reader to consider: What actions can you individually take to create more inclusive environments? I hope you have pondered this question and taken action. Still, I thought it would be helpful to discuss one of the greatest actions: becoming an ALLY. In a very recent meeting, a colleague mentioned something that hit home for him and rings true for me. During a conference he attended, it was explained that to be great allies we must: Be It. Do It. Say It. This reminded me of words I used in a prior edition about "being about it" when it comes to DEI-related issues and my request that we each identify individual action items. The truth is, we cannot simply read and talk about these topics. We must act.

So, the "be it, do it, say it" mantra seems fitting. To be a great ally, we should first *be an ally*. This includes finding ways to support a cause that is personally meaningful. Some thoughts that come to mind include supporting an underserved group, such as homeless youth, finding ways to help address child hunger, supporting transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals, or supporting individuals with different abilities by identifying and finding ways to address challenges they may face daily. Whatever cause is meaningful or personal to you, become an ally. Next, we should do it. This simply means do the work. People need you. Yes, they need you to do your part in your circle because your efforts may be connected to others' journeys. As the song goes, it's a small world after all. We are connected. Although I was born in and still live in Mississippi, I find someone who knows someone I know wherever I travel. The connections are endless, so be sure to do your part to stay engaged in a positive and meaningful way.

Finally, we should say it. Let's not toot our own horn until after we have become an ally and done the work. Then our words will not just be reflections of our intentions or of possibilities; our words will reflect our reality, which will undoubtedly help encourage, motivate, and uplift others. As we all strive to become or be a better ally to certain causes, particularly for those in underserved and underrepresented groups, let's remember to Be it. Do it. Say it. In that order.

This edition of *Diversity Matters* spotlights General Motors (GM's) leadership in diversity and inclusion and how GM intentionally focuses on DEI and sets goals to keep it a priority; explains the personal and legal impacts of misgendering individuals and not calling transgender individuals by their preferred names and pronouns; follows a conversation between an associate and her mentor about the importance of allyship; discusses the perspective of a Child of Deaf Adults (CODA) and reviews the film *CODA*; and summarizes season one of *Diversity Ever After*: A Baker Donelson D&I podcast. We also discuss how Baker Donelson has achieved Mansfield Certification Plus status; assists underserved populations; and welcomes opportunities to partner with corporate legal departments to become better allies. As a colleague said during her common ground interview, "If we're not allies, who will be?"