Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common.
Since our founding in 1924, Sutherland’s commitment to the highest standard of service to our clients and our community has been the hallmark of our practice. In 2015, we continued that tradition through our renewed dedication to diversity and inclusion as a critical element of our firm’s strategic plan. We make these efforts not only because clients expect it, but also because we must become more diverse in order to attract today’s best and brightest legal talent.

At Sutherland, we understand that diversity is about more than just numbers. It means attracting individuals from a range of backgrounds and perspectives who can provide us with a competitive edge in an increasingly global and diverse legal market. It means fostering an inclusive environment that yields creativity for our clients, so that we can provide the best advice in every situation. It means consciously recognizing the dynamics of difference and appreciating how we benefit from its power.

In 2015, we moved from understanding to action. More women and diverse attorneys assumed leadership roles within the firm than at any other period in the firm’s history. More than half of our summer associate class was composed of diverse and women attorneys. In addition, we earned notable industry recognitions, including being scored 100% in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s 2016 Corporate Equality Index for the seventh year in a row. We will work tirelessly to continue to build on this progress.

This year will represent a turning point for our strategic diversity and inclusion efforts. I am excited to assume the responsibilities of Chief Diversity Officer with an enthusiastic new Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and several innovative initiatives are already underway. There is much room to grow, but our firm remains steadfast in its commitment, and we will move forward in partnership with our colleagues and our clients. Obtaining the true value that diversity can yield can be challenging, but the results will be well worth the effort.

For more information on our diversity and inclusion efforts, please visit www.sutherland.com/diversity.
A Conversation with the Chief Diversity Officers

After five years of leading Sutherland’s diversity initiatives as Chief Diversity Officer, James L. Henderson III handed the reins at the beginning of 2016 to Vanessa A. Scott. In this interview, the two offer their thoughts on diversity at Sutherland and in the legal profession.

Jim, an Atlanta and New York partner with more than 35 years of experience in public finance and investment banking law, served as the firm’s managing partner from 1996 to 2005. He has been—and continues to be—a personal mentor to many of the firm’s diverse attorneys.

Vanessa is a partner in Sutherland’s Washington DC tax practice group, where she counsels some of the nation’s largest companies in Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), executive compensation and employee benefits matters. She joined Sutherland in 2006 and also has worked as legislative counsel to a member of the U.S. House of Representatives Financial Services Committee.

How do you explain the Sutherland difference in its approach to diversity?

Jim: Most large law firms pay attention to diversity and inclusion, and in that sense, we are not different. But we bring a very deliberate attention to diversity; it’s not just window dressing. As evidence of that, we put a lot of resources into our diversity programs for a firm of this size. We have a partner who devotes her full time to diversity and a senior staff member whose entire role is committed to managing our various diversity initiatives. We also put a lot of financial resources into these efforts. So, I think you could say that the Sutherland difference is the intensity that we bring to our diversity efforts.

How should a young lawyer or law student assess a firm’s openness to diversity and inclusion?

Vanessa: As a law student, I just looked at the numbers, and I now realize that didn’t give me a full picture of a firm’s commitment to diversity. My advice to students today would be to use social media to find out if you have a friend of a friend or another connection at a law firm. Ask that person for a candid assessment of what it’s like to work there. I encourage anyone considering Sutherland to seek out those connections, because I’m confident that our firm will come out well in those frank discussions.

Sutherland has an impressive array of programs. How important are they to your efforts?

Jim: It’s evidence of our tangible commitment to diversity. And we constantly assess the programs to focus on what’s working and shift focus if something isn’t.

Vanessa: These programs are very important, but we constantly ask ourselves if there are new initiatives that will help us adjust to the changing landscape of diversity at the firm. For example, we are launching new LGBT and Hispanic attorney affinity groups to complement our existing affinity groups for African-American, Asian and women attorneys.

Which programs have been especially successful?

Jim: Our Diverse Attorneys Working Group is unique, and we give it substantial budget support. This is a group of very successful, senior diverse attorneys who work collaboratively to enhance the professional profile and business development opportunities of the group’s members. They also work directly with younger diverse lawyers on business development skills. This group has been a huge factor in the advancement of the careers of some of our diverse partners. Another program that I’m proud of is the Sutherland Scholars program. This is a three-week summer program for diverse students before they enter law school. It simulates law school classrooms and gives them a head start in preparing for law school. We have recruited and hired law school graduates who went through the program. Sutherland Scholars is one of our firm’s long-range efforts.
Vanessa: You have to focus equally on long- and short-term strategies. Immediate results are always rewarding, but the reality is that this is a long game. We are making investments in where we want the firm to be, not just next year, but 10 to 20 years from now as well.

Are the numbers—achieving certain percentages of diverse attorneys—part of the long game?

Vanessa: Yes, the numbers are something in our long view. They’re an easy way to show progress, but we also want to bring in people who are invested in being here for the long haul. We want to hire attorneys who buy into our collaborative culture and who will feel comfortable building a career here. We know that the numbers will come if we do all the right things to make diversity part of our core culture.

Jim: The numbers are important. But I would also look at how many people representing diversity are in firm leadership positions and in the partner compensation ranks. Any firm can ramp up its diversity numbers in the junior ranks, but it’s important to see how many of those people stick around and become leaders of practices and part of senior leadership. In that regard, we’ve done very well.

Speaking of numbers, last year’s American Lawyer annual Diversity Scorecard issue began with this summary: “The percentage of minorities at large law firms has hardly budged.” Is this a fair assessment?

Vanessa: It certainly means we, as a legal profession, have work ahead of us. One problem that the numbers highlight is that while many large law firms do a good job of recruiting entry-level diverse attorneys, we are less successful in retaining them as they move on to in-house jobs and other sectors of the profession. We need to give them a better sense of what they have to do to make partner and achieve other goals. While there will be attrition among all attorneys, we find that diverse attorneys, in particular, will not stay if they cannot clearly identify the next step in their career trajectory.

How do you address that?

Vanessa: It’s very important for minority attorneys to have sponsors—not to be confused with mentors. A sponsor is someone willing to use his or her political capital to help advance another’s career. It’s someone who will teach a less-experienced lawyer about navigating all of the things needed to be successful in this highly competitive field—legal knowledge, relationships, and social and political skills.

Vanessa, what are your priorities as you take on this new role?

Vanessa: Learning more about the differences between our various offices and practices, and capitalizing on the strength of the diversity we already have within Sutherland. We are never satisfied with where we are, so I would like to obtain objective feedback on how we can improve our current strategic diversity efforts, and find out where we can build.

Jim, what’s your most important advice as you pass the torch to Vanessa?

Jim: Don’t shy away from difficult conversations. It’s important to be able to have candid conversations with all the participants—partners, associates and staff. It’s our nature as lawyers to operate in a defensive posture, but we have to put that on hold sometimes to assess where we are on diversity and how to move forward. We work very hard at Sutherland to create an open environment where we can discuss these issues in a collaborative manner.

Will law firms in general achieve the diversity that is representative of our overall society?

Vanessa: I don’t think we will have a choice, because the market for the best talent will continue to reflect our society. Many in-house legal departments have advanced strategic diversity programs, and they are growing impatient with law firms that haven’t moved on this issue. It is becoming an absolute market differentiator. The reality is that our continued commitment to diversity makes us more marketable to clients and makes us nimbler and more competitive in a global business environment.
Sutherland was named a “Best Place to Work for LGBT Equality” by the Human Rights Campaign for the seventh consecutive year. Sutherland again earned a perfect 100% score on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation’s Corporate Equality Index. The survey rates businesses on their commitment to LGBT inclusion in employee benefits, professional development and accountability, as well as public commitment.

Sutherland was awarded the “Gold Standard” designation by the Women in Law Empowerment Forum (WILEF) for the fourth consecutive year. The Forum educates women lawyers on how to become leaders in the workplace and in the community. Sutherland was one of only 44 law firms to receive the Gold Standard Certification in 2015.
For more than 50 years, Sutherland has been at the forefront of American law firms in developing the careers of women and promoting them to firm leadership. As a result, the empowerment of women and gender equality is ingrained in our culture. We foster a culture of mutual respect and collaboration among all of our attorneys, which enables us to better serve all of our clients. We back up our commitment to women with training programs, one-on-one mentoring and sponsorship, and policies that support women in all aspects of their lives. Our younger women attorneys are inspired by the leadership of senior women attorneys at Sutherland, who serve as role models and are proactive in helping their colleagues. The women of Sutherland are supported in reaching their full potential as leaders in the legal profession, in civic life and in achieving their personal goals.

Women in Leadership

33% of the Executive Committee Members are Women
43% of the Promotions to Partner are Women
22% of the Promotions to Counsel are Women
22% of the Practice Group Leaders are Women

Sutherland Women Attorneys Group

The Sutherland Women Attorneys Group (SWAG) provides career support to the firm’s women attorneys through a variety of activities that include mentoring, education, client development, community building, networking and public service.

Daphne G. Frydman, a capital markets and finance partner in our Washington DC office who helps guide SWAG, says programs in each local office are often driven by the goals of the women in that office.

“Each office has its own steering committee that asks women what kind of programs are of interest to them. It’s important to remember that women may have differing objectives and interests depending on where they are in their careers as well as their practice area and individual interests. We work hard to make SWAG relevant to our entire constituency of women.”

Every other year, SWAG has a day-and-a-half retreat for all of the firm’s women, but most activities are initiated by the local steering committees. Real estate associate Virginia E. Worthy co-chairs SWAG in Atlanta, and she credits her involvement with making her feel comfortable when she joined Sutherland almost four years ago. She says that SWAG programs range from purely social events that help younger women lawyers get to know senior attorneys, to educational seminars and community activities.

Women Stepping Up

Sutherland Women Stepping Up® is a philanthropic initiative founded in 2012 by a group of women attorneys who are dedicated to empowering women’s social and financial independence through impactful philanthropy. The initiative offers collective philanthropy projects and educational opportunities to instill a sense of power, confidence and unity among women attorneys; provides opportunities to build client relationships; and enhances recruitment and retention of women attorneys.

In 2015, the Sutherland Women Stepping Up® initiative donated $50,000 to Community Advanced Practice Nurses (CAPN) — a unique nonprofit organization whose professionals provide free health care services to Atlanta’s homeless and economically disadvantaged population. This donation allowed CAPN to complete the essential Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system migration that was necessary for the organization to achieve compliance with changing medical standards. The initiative also continues to raise additional funds to grow the principal of its donor-advised fund held by the Community Foundation of Atlanta.
Cynthia M. Krus, Washington DC Corporate Group partner, member of the Executive Committee, joined Sutherland in 1997.

Cynthia M. Krus has been an attorney since 1989, joining Sutherland in 1997 after working for a boutique M&A and securities law firm. She recalls from her early days at Sutherland how gender equality was a given at the firm. She heard other firms talking about all the things they planned to do to treat women and others equitably, but Sutherland was already well down that road.

“The empowerment of women is nothing new at Sutherland,” she says. “We’ve had women in management and senior leadership positions for more than 30 years. As long as I have been here, the firm has focused on allowing its people to rise to the top based on merit with no limitations. That’s woven into the fabric of this firm.”

Cynthia became interested in securities and corporate law between undergraduate and law school when she worked for a research company that monitored filings at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. The 1980s and 1990s were a busy period for corporate mergers and takeovers, and as a young lawyer, she decided she wanted to go where the action was taking place. Although the securities and financial services fields were dominated by men, Sutherland brought Cynthia into its corporate practice group, where she developed a robust practice advising public and private companies on a wide range of strategic and financial transactions, and rose to serve as co-chair of the corporate practice group.

Over the past 10 years, working alongside Steven B. Boehm, Cynthia has built a national practice in new areas, including advising business development companies on innovative funding vehicles for middle-market companies.

Cynthia now sits on Sutherland’s Executive Committee, a small group elected from among the equity partners to set policy for the firm. She is also Sutherland’s first chair of the Lateral Partner Committee, and as a lateral partner herself, she brings a unique perspective in championing the best lateral recruits, including women.

Cynthia has been instrumental in mentoring a new generation of partners and counsel, including numerous women: Lisa A. Morgan, Daphne G. Frydman, Ling Ling, Cynthia R. Beyea, Anne G. Oberndorf and Stephani M. Hildebrandt.

Cynthia is proud to be in a leadership position with a firm committed to rewarding attorneys on their merits.

“I tell younger women, you are an entrepreneur building your own business, and this firm will do everything it can to develop your career and position you for success,” she says.

“Having been a practice group leader and now as a member of the Executive Committee, I know that Sutherland is a true partnership among our attorneys,” she says. “Removing impediments to success—for women and others—is consistently part of our discussions at the Executive Committee. Our focus is to attract a diverse population of attorneys who have the drive to perform at a top law firm and give them the tools and the experiences they need to succeed. Moving people forward is the future of Sutherland.”
Lia J. Dorsey helps ensure that Sutherland’s good intentions are backed by action and accountability.

As the firm’s Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Lia stresses that diversity efforts are successful—at Sutherland and elsewhere in the legal profession—when there is a top-to-bottom commitment.

“We know that it takes a village to recruit diverse attorneys and to provide the support they need to be successful,” says Lia. The good intentions at Sutherland are real. Sutherland has long placed importance on recruiting those who share the firm’s values, and that has resulted in a culture that accepts and supports diversity and inclusion.

“But we also realize that we have to have a mechanism in place to be successful with diversity,” Lia says. “It doesn’t just happen without putting effort behind the intentions.”

One of the strengths of Sutherland’s diversity efforts is the breadth of its programs, which include affinity groups for Hispanic, African-American, Asian and LGBT attorneys; a moms’ support group; retreats and special programs; a Diverse Attorneys Working Group that shares business development techniques; and even one-on-one training opportunities for all of the firm’s attorneys.

The firm reorganized its Diversity and Inclusion Committee in 2015 to ensure that all of the firm’s practices are represented. A partner and an associate from each practice now sit on the committee, and there are liaisons to every important firm decision-making group, including the Executive and Hiring Committees.

While Lia certainly is a champion for diversity, she says Sutherland succeeds at diversity because it has champions throughout the firm. Each practice now has a member who is responsible for tracking the group’s success at recruiting diverse talent and furthering the career development of those attorneys, and that includes looking at metrics each month.

“We look at how the work is allocated each month for every practice,” Lia says. “We look at who is in meetings with clients, who is included in proposals, and other ground-level initiatives where inclusion is important.”

At the end of the day, says Lia, “my job is to make sure we’re building the programs that give us a way to implement our values. No matter how you identify yourself, if you’re smart and you work hard, there is a place for you at Sutherland.”

**Affinity Groups**

Sutherland supports its diverse attorneys with active affinity groups for Hispanics, African-Americans, Asians and LGBT. These groups are open to all attorneys who want to join, and participants organize educational and social activities that promote sharing ideas, networking and informal mentoring.

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As a member of the Hiring Committee, I have the opportunity to meet young lawyers and students. I tell them that we have great formal programs that enhance diversity, but it’s the informal training and mentoring that really set us apart. When I was a first-year at Sutherland, the partner I worked with would stay with me late into the evening and go through documents page by page, explaining the things I needed to learn to be a better lawyer. He took me to meetings, teaching me the soft skills about how to interact with clients. People here go out of their way to coach young attorneys and help them build their practices, and I think that positions our diverse attorneys for long-term success.

Raymond A. Ramirez
“The training and professional development of Sutherland lawyers during all phases of their careers is ingrained in the Sutherland culture,” says Kristy Weathers, the firm’s Professional Development Partner.

Sutherland supports the continuing education of its attorneys with more than 100 in-house seminars and workshops each year. Through its nationally acclaimed Sutherland Asbill & Brennan Legal Education (SABLE) program, the firm provides a wide range of instruction, including small group workshops and “learning by doing” courses on practice-specific legal skills and developments, business development, negotiation and organizational skills, to name a few. This training is available to all attorneys at the firm, but many of the courses are focused on associate development. Additionally, one-on-one coaching on writing, presentation skills and other areas is provided to best position Sutherland associates for success.

Although Sutherland has an extensive formal training program, Kristy says it’s the firm’s “informal” training—the willingness of senior attorneys to help their junior colleagues day-to-day and give them constructive feedback—that sets Sutherland apart. “We have a cultural expectation here that you will help others succeed and become better lawyers,” she says.

Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Mentorship Program

Sutherland is one of 240 large law firms and corporate legal departments where the managing partner or chief legal officer—the top leadership—has made a formal commitment to advancing diversity through the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity (LCLD). The LCLD and its members are dedicated to producing tangible results and a truly diverse U.S. legal profession.

Sutherland Managing Partner Mark D. Wasserman is a member of LCLD and is a signatory to the organization’s 10-point pledge, which includes building effective internal firm programs for hiring, developing, retaining and promoting diverse talent, and sharing best practices and data with other firms.

Sutherland is an active supporter of LCLD’s fellowship program, a year-long intensive professional development program that focuses on leadership and relationship building and connects fellows with chief legal officers in major companies. Five Sutherland attorneys have completed the fellowship program.

Sutherland Mentoring Programs

First-year attorneys at Sutherland are paired with associate and partner advisers who guide them during their first year at the firm. After their first year, associates are paired with a partner in the firm’s formal mentoring program. They are also encouraged to build a network of mentors to address their professional needs as those needs change over time.

In their formal career planning meetings, mid- to senior-level associates are encouraged to discuss long-term professional goals, how best to position themselves to meet those goals, what discussions to have with their partners about those goals, and the differences between mentoring and sponsorship. At Sutherland, sponsors are advocates in positions of authority who use their influence intentionally to help others advance, while mentors provide advice, feedback and coaching. Sutherland recognizes that both mentors and sponsors are critical to the success of associates, and the career planning meetings demonstrate the willingness of lawyers throughout Sutherland to work collaboratively and encourage others.
Vault Rankings

Sutherland consistently is listed in the top 25 in multiple categories of the prestigious Vault rankings, which are based on surveys of thousands of verified law professionals. The firm earned the following 2015 rankings:

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<td>SUBSTANTIVE WORK</td>
<td>ASSOCIATE/PARTNER RELATIONS</td>
<td>BEST LAW FIRMS TO WORK FOR</td>
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2015 Staffing Results and Other Metrics

Women of Sutherland

- Associates: 42%
- Of New Partner Promotions in January 2016: 43%
- Of All Attorneys: 32%
- Of Partners: 19%

All 2015 Hires

- Women: 48%
- Diverse: 32%

Attorneys of Color

- Of All Attorneys: 13%
- Of Partners: 8%

LGBT Attorneys

- Of All Attorneys: 2%
- Of Partners: 1%
Promotions to Partnership

Cynthia R. Beyea, Washington DC financial services partner, joined Sutherland out of law school. Sutherland has shown that it cares about women attorneys by providing opportunities for women attorneys to work together and learn from each other. The firm sponsors programming throughout the year and has also held retreats for women attorneys. I’ve personally enjoyed being a part of the Sutherland moms’ group and find that it’s very supportive to talk to other women who are juggling all the things that working moms manage.

Mentoring is one of the most important things that Sutherland does to support younger lawyers. You’re assigned a mentor your first year, and then you pick one the second year. That allows you to gravitate to someone with whom you have a connection and feel comfortable.

Certainly our clients tell us that diversity is important to them. They want to see their law firms hire and prioritize for diversity, not just to show numbers, but because a wider range of experience is a benefit to them. Collaboration works better within our firm and with clients when we work with those who have diverse ideas and experiences.

Meghana D. Shah, New York litigation partner, joined Sutherland as a lateral in 2012. I found the lateral integration process seamless; there was an immediate sense of inclusion and trust. Within months, I had received my first speaking opportunity. Sutherland has provided an optimal balance between allowing me to work independently while fostering a collaborative and collegial environment. The firm also supported my pro bono activities from day one. I’ve concentrated my pro bono practice on asylum and human rights issues since law school, and Sutherland provided extensive resources to support my ongoing efforts in this area. I even received the firm’s pro bono award for my work on a recent political asylum matter.

Every firm has diversity programs, but what impresses me about Sutherland’s initiatives are their breadth and genuineness. Whether you are interested in business development, mentoring, or some other element of personal or professional development, there are programs and resources available. I had the opportunity to grow and lead quickly. I helped coordinate the New York Office’s Women’s Initiative midway through my career here. In the same vein, the firm’s global perspective has been an ideal fit for my practice goals and background. As matters become more global in nature, Sutherland provides a dynamic and flexible environment for its lawyers to build and grow a practice with strong roots and global reach.

Maria M. Todorova, Atlanta tax attorney, promoted to partner in January 2016. I often read about the legal sector’s “glass ceiling,” but I can tell you there is no glass ceiling at Sutherland. I’ve had the same opportunities as my male colleagues. I’ve been fortunate to work with exceptionally smart attorneys who recognize high-quality work, and encourage and support female attorneys in achieving their goals.

It’s true that the tax field tends to have fewer women than men, but that has never been a problem for me. I have always concentrated on bringing unique value to the firm by seeking the tough cases and issues, working hard and delivering the best possible results to clients.

As I reflect on my career, there are three guiding principles that come to mind. First, and it goes without saying, doing top-notch work is imperative, and that applies whether you are a male or female. If you want to be successful in this competitive environment, find something you enjoy doing, something that inspires you, and do it well. Second—and this applies particularly to women—have confidence in your abilities. I think sometimes, as women, we don’t fully believe in our own abilities. Be humble, but don’t let anyone set limits for you. Figure out what your ambitions are and don’t be afraid to express them. And third, find a mentor. Our firm does a great job of connecting junior lawyers with senior lawyer mentors, but often the best mentors are those with whom a relationship evolves naturally. Seek the mentors who have achieved the career you’d like to have—regardless of gender. I’ve had three mentors at Sutherland—all men—and they’ve been enormously valuable in helping me succeed.
Sutherland values diversity and strives to identify diverse talent for open positions at every level. As part of Sutherland’s standard hiring practice, our Hiring Committee and Laterals Committee consider each candidate’s potential in an effort to hire attorneys who are representative of our society as a whole. The firm recruits candidates with impressive grades and work experience, and places particular importance on candidates who reflect Sutherland’s core values of being approachable, self-motivated, collaborative and professional. We also team up with external recruiting agencies that understand our hiring goals and the importance of recruiting diverse lateral candidates. Accordingly, the firm’s lateral hires were 30% diverse and 43% women in 2015.

Sutherland’s Hiring Committee takes an active role in the firm’s diversity initiatives through mentoring law students, participating in pipeline programs, and mock interviewing 1Ls. The Hiring Committee also works closely with the Attorney Recruiting Department to attract diverse candidates for the summer program and first-year associate class. The firm participates in diversity career fairs, considers candidates from diversity pipeline programs, conducts interviews at law schools with diverse student populations, and partners with diversity-focused client programs. As a result of these efforts, the firm’s summer associate class was 63% diverse and 69% women in 2015.

During 2015, Sutherland sponsored and participated in the following recruiting events:

- Lavender Law Conference and Career Fair
- HNBA Annual Convention and Career Fair
- Southeastern Minority Job Fair
- Mid-Atlantic Black Law Students Association Job Fair Resume Drop
- Southern Region Black Law School Association Job Fair Resume Drop
- Veterans’ Legal Career Fair Resume Drop
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity 1L Scholars Program

I left Sutherland to work in-house for several years and then returned last year because I wanted to get back to practicing law. A lot of factors went into my decision to come back to Sutherland, and the firm’s strong commitment to diversity was an important consideration. Having worked here before as an intern, summer associate and associate, I knew that the firm’s interest in diversity was not just to have diversity for diversity’s sake. There is an appreciation for how diversity brings more ideas to the table, and that translates into doing better work for our clients. I also appreciate the firm’s long-term efforts. Some of the diversity programs may not show full results for years, but the firm is willing to make that investment in its people.

Dwaune L. Dupree
Interviews with Laterals

Ellen McElroy, Washington DC tax partner, joined Sutherland in 2015 following tenures at a Big Four accounting firm, the IRS and another national law firm.

After I decided to change firms, I spent a year in a very deliberate process of interviewing and assessing the culture at law firms. I wanted to find a place where I felt comfortable and supported, as well as able to serve my clients. I’ve worked at the IRS, a Big Four accounting firm and another large law firm, so I felt like I had a good basis for comparison.

While I enjoyed my work at all of those other places, I will tell you that Sutherland is by far the most supportive and inviting place I have worked. It’s a culture that is set from the top—the leadership of the firm sets expectations, and it flows through the organization. We’re expected to work cooperatively and to be supportive of others in the firm, and we’re rewarded for it.

Lino Mendiola III, Austin energy and environmental group partner and Sutherland’s 2016 Fellow of the Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, joined Sutherland in 2015.

When I decided to make a lateral move to another law firm, my first concern was finding a national platform where I could expand my energy regulatory, transactional and litigation practice. My other criterion was to find a firm that was committed to inclusion. That was a deal breaker for me—I was not going to a firm that didn’t pay attention to diversity.

Fortunately, I was able to find both at Sutherland. Diversity is a core value at Sutherland, and the firm has put all the right processes in place. I was especially impressed with the LGBT representation. It’s important for firms to show they have diversity in place because nobody wants to be a pioneer for their group in 2016. Members of any minority group will find that they already are well-represented here, and they can just get to work and focus on becoming a great lawyer.

My clients tell me diversity is important to them, too. Many of them are way ahead of law firms in recognizing that drawing on a diverse pool of talent makes them stronger. They want to see this same emphasis on talent recruitment and development at their law firms.

Madeleine M. L. Tan, New York energy and environmental partner, joined Sutherland in 2015.

I grew up in Malaysia, completed high school in Australia, and first practiced law in Hong Kong before coming to the U.S. and eventually becoming a citizen. I used to think I could build a practice anywhere, but I’ve come to believe it really does matter where you practice. I chose Sutherland, first, because of the depth of its national energy practice and the strength of related practices, such as tax, real estate, regulatory and environmental.

Second, I noticed a keenness in the energy of the lawyers here. They were always ready to move forward and grow. In my practice, you can’t just do your own thing. The matters we handle are complex, and you can only stretch personally if you can collaborate with others who not only have the right skills, but who also understand the value in supporting each other. That’s the way this firm works. The lawyers here are cooperative not just because it’s the right thing to do, but because they know it makes all of us better at what we do.
Established in 2005, Sutherland Scholars is an intensive three-week, 40-hour program for students from historically black colleges and universities. The program is an initiative to ensure the success of minority students in law school. It also helps to demystify law school by exposing students to everything they will need to be successful. The program provides the students with a chance to hear from and visit with a variety of industry leaders. Guest instructors and panelists have included general counsel from Fortune 100 companies, presiding judges and university law professors. The program is offered in Sutherland’s Atlanta and Washington DC offices. To date, more than 350 students have graduated from the program.

The Sutherland Scholars program was special to me because it prepared me to get the most out of my law school experience from day one. Learning to brief cases and take notes, gaining the confidence to ask questions in the classroom and taking final exams made the transition to law school so much easier. Also, by connecting with the Sutherland attorneys, I gained valuable skills in networking and professionalism, which has been a big part of my law school experience. Much of my success is credited to the training and experiences I had during the Sutherland Scholars program.

Jani Mikel, 2015 Atlanta Sutherland Scholar
University of Illinois College of Law, J.D. Candidate 2018

Participating in the Sutherland Scholars program last summer was of great benefit to me. The exposure to the Contract Law course provided me with the skills necessary to succeed in my first year of law school. This was my first experience with the Socratic method of teaching. It gave me a leg up on most of my law school classmates and not surprisingly, I received the highest grade in my Contract Law class. Additionally, the program provided me with the opportunity to hear from and speak with various legal professionals and this was invaluable to me. I highly recommend this program to anyone planning to attend law school.

Jasmine Joseph, 2015 Washington DC Sutherland Scholar
Georgetown University Law Center, J. D. Candidate 2018
## Supporting the Industry and Community

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<td>Women in Law Empowerment Forum</td>
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<td>Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys</td>
<td>Women, Influence &amp; Power in Law</td>
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Sutherland 2016 Diversity Report
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