

WEGALA The LGBT Affinity Group of Weil

WEGALA, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Affinity Group of Weil, was established with the primary purpose of enhancing the recruitment and retention of LGBT attorneys and fostering a better understanding among all of the Firm's attorneys and staff of the unique issues facing the LGBT community.

WEGALA Affinity Group Conferences



Weil is unique among law firms for bringing together affinity group members firmwide for biennial professional development conferences. Weil's LGBT affinity group held its third firmwide conference in June 2016 in New York City. The most recent conference featured alumni panels, pro bono presentations, a strategic planning session, and a networking reception.

Sixth Annual WEGALA Pride Month Networking Soiree



Weil hosted its Sixth Annual Pride Month client networking event at the Standard East Village hotel in 2016 with over 120 people in attendance from leading client organizations.

Event Highlights

- In June 2016 and in celebration of Pride Month, Weil hosted a panel on Out Women, addressing the intersection of gender, sexual orientation, and career advancement in the workplace.
- Each summer, the Dallas office hosts an annual multicultural luncheon. In June 2016, the featured speaker was Liji Thomas, Senior Manager of Diversity and Inclusion at Southwest Airlines.
- In May 2016, the Silicon Valley office hosted a California Elimination of Bias CLE workshop and networking reception with clients.
- WEGALA members and their guests attend an annual holiday dinner benefitting the Ali Forney Center for homeless LGBT youth.
- During Diversity Month, WEGALA in the London office hosted a networking event for clients and peer law firms with our pro bono client Terrence Higgins Trust. Previous London office programs included "Global Working: Supporting Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Staff Overseas" by the Stonewall Equality LTD.
- In November 2015, Professor Kenji Yoshino of NYU Law School shared his award-winning findings on "covering," or the pressure at work to downplay outsider attributes to blend into the mainstream. He also spoke about his book, *Speak Now: Marriage Equality on Trial*, and the critical role of "ethical bystanders" and "allies" in making society and the workplace more inclusive.
- Weil's European offices participated in a program on LGBT rights in Europe, the London office's LGBT-related pro bono work (including with the Human Dignity Trust's efforts to decriminalize homosexuality in Malawi), and broader plans to support LGBT issues across Europe.
- A documentary screening of "Brother Outsider," on the African American and gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin was held with a post film discussion featuring the filmmaker and Rustin's surviving partner.
- Weil's Houston office held a panel featuring a transgender rights attorney and representatives from HATCH and PFLAG.

Diversity Recruiting

Weil hosted or participated in **60 targeted diversity recruiting events**. The incoming fall 2016 associate class is 10% self-identified LGBT. The 2017 summer associate class is 8% self-identified LGBT.

Weil launched a **Diversity Fellowship Program** for first and second-year law students offering **\$10,000** in scholarship awards to recipients. The program has awarded **29** fellowships since it was founded in 2011.

Karen Ballack

is the Management Committee Sponsor for WEGALA.

Management Committee Sponsors demonstrate the strength of our leadership commitment. These appointed senior leaders serve as sponsors to affinity groups for which they are not already a member. They are charged with understanding key issues the group members face and advocating for necessary change.



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Our People

in the Hong Kong,
London & U.S. offices

6

Partners

2

Firm Leaders



Marco Compagnoni
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Management
Committee



Dan Dokos
Head, Global
Finance Practice

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Counsel

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Associates

Weil is a signatory of the Texas Competes Pledge, a commitment among major businesses in Texas to seek fair treatment for the LGBT community.

Weil was named among the "Best Places to Work" for LGBT individuals by the Human Rights Campaign's 2015 Corporate Equality Index and has been on the best companies list since 2008.

"Best Places to Work"

Community & Pro Bono

- In response to the tragic event in Orlando in June 2016, Weil contributed to the Florida Equality Fund for victims and families as well as to our longstanding nonprofit partner, Lambda Legal, to further the cause of LGBT civil rights.
- A Weil Team secured recommended approval of asylum for a man from Serbia who feared persecution on account of his sexual orientation if forced to return to his country.
- Weil is assisting the Human Dignity Trust (HDT) with a long term project to challenge laws in Malawi which continue to criminalize homosexuality.
- Weil has been supporting the work of the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund's Name Change Project. This initiative helps transgender people complete the name change petition to be filed with the civil court. Volunteers also accompany the client to court for the name change hearing.
- Weil is a substantial contributor and sponsor of many LGBT related nonprofit organizations including ACLU/NYCLU LGBT & AIDS Project, the Ali Forney Center, Out Leadership's Out in Law program, Lambda Legal New York and DC, and Whitman-Walker Health in Washington, DC, amongst others.
- Globally, Weil is an inaugural member of Out Leadership and Out in Law and recently joined the Hong Kong Gay & Lesbian Attorney Network (HKGALA).
- Weil hosts an annual law student reception at the National Lesbian and Gay Law Association's Lavender Law Conference and Career Fair.

Inclusive Policies

- Transgender health benefits
- Same and opposite sex domestic partner benefits, including a tax "gross-up" payment
- Inclusive parental leave policy, including adoption leave