

# DIVERSITY

## WINNER **Bowman and Brooke L.L.P.**

Category: \$25 million-\$100 million

The Southeast Michigan office of product liability defense law firm **Bowman and Brooke L.L.P.** has added diversity to its ranks at all levels, even if it shuns any effort to lump those initiatives into a formal program.

The Minneapolis-based firm has three black attorneys among its staff of 18 in Troy, including two partners, while two are of Middle Eastern heritage, including one partner.

Five of its nine associates are women, as are two of its nine partners.

The firm has 30 minority attorneys out of 138 lawyers across its six national offices, including 18 of its 70 partners.

Some 35 of its associates are women, as are 16 of its partners.

Lawrence Mann, managing partner at the Troy office, said the firm has been committed to diversity since its 1985 inception, but those efforts accelerated after the firm's expansion into the Detroit and Los Angeles metropolitan areas in 1990 and 1991.

He credits corporate clients and communities where the firm has grown with adding to the firm's employment mix.

"We're responding to diversity concerns in the client base," he said.

"**Ford Motor Co.** and **General Motors Corp.** in particular have wanted a diversity of attorneys in their trial teams who can handle their cases around the country. Many women and (minority) attorneys owe a great deal of trial experience early in their careers to that client interest — including me."

The firm organized a strategic planning committee, and diversity was among the areas it explored in an internal report on the firm's future.

But Mann said the committee deliberately set no quotas or timetables.

Bowman and Brooke also recruit new talent for the firm's summer associate programs from historically black col-

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Lawrence Mann,  
Bowman and Brooke L.L.P.

leges and universities, such as Washington-based **Howard University School of Law.**

Mann said very little of the Detroit office's makeup comes from such schools, and some diversity simply reflects the communities where its offices are based.

Troy has more Middle Eastern attorneys than the firm as a whole, he said, but has none of the Hispanic representation that Bowman sees at its offices in Western states.

"We are making a kind of goulash that's very spicy and well-seasoned," he said. "But no one who tastes the stew necessarily thinks it's good because of one ingredient or another. We try to get the best attorneys from a mix of sources."

— Chad Halcom

Crain's Detroit Business, the **Detroit Regional Chamber** and the **Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion** have launched the **Innovation in Diversity Awards** to recognize companies proving that diversity initiatives are good business. Winners will be recognized at an April 21 conference for their efforts in improving workforce diversity, increasing spending with diverse companies or serving diverse constituencies.