

## ABOUT



### DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Foulston is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that reflects and enjoys the diversity of the communities in which we practice. Multiple viewpoints provide us a greater opportunity to generate creative solutions. To that end, we are committed to fostering an atmosphere that is inclusive of individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, military or veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression. We embrace different experiences, perspectives and ideas. We believe that diverse teams are a necessary component of providing excellent legal and client services by helping us better understand our clients and their needs. We believe that a diverse workforce adds a richness to our professional community that might not otherwise exist. Indeed, the Wichita Business Journal in 2018 recognized Foulston as a “Leader in Diversity.”

Foulston has always valued diverse ideas and opinions. Foulston leads and actively engages with the diversity committees of the bar associations where we practice. For example, in 2006, Foulston senior partner Mike Stout played a key role in formulating the Wichita Bar Association’s Diversity Initiative action plan, which focuses on the recruitment and retention of under-represented groups of staff, associates, and partners in Wichita firms. Foulston signed this action plan and has taken significant steps to implement its recommendations.

In addition to its role in the legal community, Foulston supports advancing the ideas of diversity and inclusion in the local chambers of commerce as well as other local, state, national business and professional groups and faith-related organizations in the communities where our offices are located (Topeka and Kansas City as well as Wichita). Firm attorneys participate in the Wichita Chamber’s CEO Roundtable addressing diversity and inclusion initiatives and the Kansas-City-based Allies for Racial Justice, a partnership of two churches seeking to bridge the racial divide.

Women play a key role at Foulston. For more than 45 years, Foulston has hired, mentored, and promoted female attorneys and other staff members. Over the years, women have (and do) hold prominent and key leadership roles at the firm. Foulston female attorneys have had incredible legal careers, not only at the firm but outside the firm as well. For example, Gloria Farha Flentje, a former Foulston partner, served as the first female president of the Wichita Bar Association and the first general counsel of Spirit AeroSystems. Likewise, recently retired Justice Carol Beier, also a former Foulston partner, served on the Kansas Court of Appeals and later was appointed to the Kansas Supreme Court.

We have not yet achieved all of our goals. But at the same time, we acknowledge the important progress the firm has made. Continued improvement and advancement in the diversity and inclusion spheres necessitates consistent and persistent attention. Foulston regularly evaluates its efforts and performance through its Diversity & Inclusion Committee, which includes members of the Executive Committee, other attorneys, and staff. The D&I Committee

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meets, reviews, and recommends changes to the firm's structure and its practices to ensure that we continue to cultivate the values of diversity and inclusion in our firm. For example, recently the D&I Committee led the effort to update and revise the parental leave guidelines to ensure that our policies accommodate and support the needs of all attorneys and staff – male and female – as they make personal decisions regarding their families.

Foulston realizes that we cannot achieve our goals by just flipping a switch. We also realize that our actions must be consistent with our words. Real change requires time and both personal and financial commitments. A strong pipeline is necessary to succeed in recruiting and retaining additional diverse team members to our ranks. For example, Foulston actively seeks opportunities to develop the next generation of diverse attorneys in the communities where we practice and invests its time and financial resources in diversity and inclusion efforts.

We start early by participating in the Wichita Bar Association's "Grow Your Own Lawyer" program (high school freshmen, sophomores and juniors) and its Summer Intern program (high school juniors and seniors). These programs expose diverse students to the practice of law and show them the panoply of jobs that are available in the legal profession.

Further in the legal education pipeline, Foulston contributes to the Wichita Bar Association's LSAT Exam Scholarship program to make sure that diverse college students committed to returning to our communities after law school have an opportunity to prepare for the LSAT exam. Better LSAT scores mean that these students become eligible for more robust financial support. Additionally, Foulston contributes annually to the Washburn University School of Law Diversity Law Scholarship, the KU School of Law Diversity Scholarship, and the Foulston Siefkin Legal Writing Fund.

More directly, in the past several years, Foulston broadened the scope of its recruiting efforts to include schools outside the region and schools where diverse students are more likely to attend. We have recruited and hired attorneys from the Heartland and Sunbelt regional diversity job fairs, and we continue to consider and implement new ways of expanding the pool of students from which we recruit. We are seeing steady results in having more diverse attorneys participate in our summer program and ultimately, joining our firm.

## **Other Important Foulston Efforts Related to Diversity & Inclusion**

- Financially support and participate in the Annual Judges' Day Diversity Student Tour.
- Annually celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with firm diversity and inclusion-related presentation and firmwide acknowledgement.
- In order to enhance the understanding of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s mission (which we believe embodies the values of inclusion) our firm encourages its teams to engage in service to the community. Such community engagements have included:
  - Hosting free small-business training for minority business Chambers;
  - Organizing Habitat for Humanity home builds;
  - Distributing free books to League 42 (a nonprofit organization to introduce affordable baseball to kids who may not otherwise have the chance to participate in youth league sports);
  - Participation in Kansas Food Bank food package preparation for children in food-insecure homes.

## **Foulston D&I Committee**