

## **PRESS RELEASE**

August 23, 2018

**For Immediate Release**

AnnMarie Thomas  
Director of Membership and Communications  
816-474-4322  
athomas@kcmba.org

### **Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association Celebrates Diversity & Inclusion**

On August 15, 2018, the Kansas City legal community joined together to celebrate diversity and inclusion through an Inaugural Unity Event Reception. More than 100 people gathered at Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association's (KCMBA) headquarters to attend the event, hosted by KCMBA's Diversity Section and five area diverse bar associations: Asian American Bar Association of Kansas City, Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City, Hispanic Bar Association of Greater Kansas City, Jackson County Bar Association, and Kansas City Lesbian, Gay and Allied Lawyers. The Presenting Sponsor was Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P., along with Sponsors Kutak Rock LLP, Lathrop Gage LLP, and Polsinelli, and Contributor Association for Women Lawyers of Greater Kansas City.

Beginning in 2016, KCMBA's Diversity Section, in conjunction with Kansas City's diverse bar associations, created the Annual Sly James Diversity and Inclusion Award to recognize a member of the Kansas City area legal community for their contributions to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. Kansas City Mayor Sly James presented City Councilwoman and Director of Pro Bono Services at Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P. Jolie Justus with the Sly James Diversity and Inclusion Award and recognized previous recipients, Judge Alok Ahuja from the Missouri Court of Appeals, Western District and Dana Tippin Cutler of James W. Tippin & Assoc.

Mayor Sly James recognized his colleague Jolie Justus sharing his admiration for her and some of the reasons she was selected to receive the award. He applauded her achievements and capacity to continually persevere and advance community betterment.

Also in attendance were previous award recipients, Judge Alok Ahuja, the first South Asian judge appointed in the state of Missouri and an active participant and promoter of the advancement of minority members in the legal profession and Dana Tippin Cutler, the first woman of color to serve as president of The Missouri Bar and the founder of its Leadership Academy. Their contributions as leaders in the legal profession will continue to inspire for years to come.

KCMBA Executive Director Vickie Mauck said, "This is an amazing time for the legal community. There is a great deal of focus on creating and supporting diverse and inclusive environments. Celebrations like this, that bring people together, are crucial to keeping the conversation alive and promoting initiatives that benefit the legal community as a whole."

-----

Kansas City Metropolitan Bar Association serves approximately 5,000 members in the nine-county Kansas City metro area: Johnson and Wyandotte counties in Kansas and Cass, Clay, Jackson, Johnson, Lafayette, Platte and Ray counties in Missouri. The mission of this Association is to serve our members and our community by promoting justice, professional excellence and respect for the law.

---

---

