

# McClure: Diversity Breeds Creativity

By Annie Kelley

THE LAW SETS MINIMUM STANDARDS when it comes to diversity and inclusion, but law firms and companies should work aggressively for diversity, which breeds greater creativity, innovation and effectiveness, UPS General Counsel Teri Plummer McClure told Bar Association members in her keynote remarks at the March 11 Quarterly Meeting and Luncheon.

McClure, senior vice president of legal, compliance, audit & public affairs and general counsel and corporate secretary at UPS, said transformative change goes beyond the letter of law. UPS has long valued the importance of embracing a diverse pool of candidates, ensuring minorities and women opportunities within the company, and creating opportunities long before its competitors, she explained.

With women and minorities serving at the highest levels of the organization, McClure is proud to be a part of UPS, which has been well ahead of the curve in promoting diversity. She is further proud of the generations of management providing leadership and motivating employees to treat everyone with dignity and respect. The company's diverse initiatives date back to the 1920s



Teri Plummer McClure

with the hiring of the first African-American workers and women. UPS has grown to become the leading employer of minority pilots. McClure herself joined the UPS legal department in 1995, and was promoted into various legal roles before being appointed general counsel and corporate secretary in 2006.

UPS has endorsed change to positively transform the company. The company was never satisfied with superficially embracing the law, but chose instead to go beyond the requirements of the law, and has exceeded its goals of hiring minorities. McClure explained that the abil-

ity to harness the very power of the law, and to tap into underutilized pool of human resources is what makes UPS a stronger, better equipped company. It is necessary for any firm or company to recognize the power of women and minorities, and the importance of diversity and inclusion.

The law certainly matters in decisions that businesses make. For all organizations, continued success depends on the ability to work collaboratively and use evolving law. This makes businesses better and improves the lives of both employees and the communities in which they serve.

McClure called for all organizations to go beyond the law and to do more than what is required, noting that the firms and companies involved in the Philadelphia Diversity Law Group push for real, substantive change. Such changes are rarely popular and are difficult, but are very important. There are challenges in recruiting, retaining, promoting and advancing a diverse group, but that is precisely what enhances any company and sets it apart as stellar, McClure said.

As there is still much work to be done, McClure said now is not the time for companies to lose focus and shy away from making a diversity commitment. Instead, now is the time to work aggressively for diversity and inclusion, and identify and eliminate barriers for minorities and women that thwart a full opportunity to perform and succeed. A great organization will transform its culture to seek value from diverse stakeholder in ways that enhance the company. McClure charged everyone to remain vigilant to protect the gains accomplished thus far, and to ensure proper focus for the future.

The Philadelphia Diversity Law Group shares McClure's sentiment, and ensures that with greater diversity comes greater creativity, innovation and effectiveness. McClure closed with a reminder that diversity not only strengthens businesses and professions, but transformative change goes beyond the letter of the law.

Annie Kelley ([anniemkelley@gmail.com](mailto:anniemkelley@gmail.com)) is a judicial clerk to Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas Judge Albert J. Snite Jr.

## Access to Justice

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improving access to justice; to plan and conduct a series of statewide public hearings to generate greater public awareness and understanding of the civil justice gap crisis; to identify various solutions to close the justice gap; and to explore whether Pennsylvania should implement an Access to Justice Commission.

"We are delighted that the Pennsylvania Bar Association and other key stakeholders will partner with us on this very important work, in order to explore strategies to improve access to justice, the issue of civil Gideon and the civil justice gap," said Wilkinson. "Chief Justice Castille has been very supportive of this vital work. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court is expected to play a key role in this project, including providing testimony during the statewide hearings that will be planned by the legislative branch."

"The ABA grant is an important first step in the collaboration of our Task Force with the Pennsylvania Bar Association and many others to launch a series of statewide hearings on the need for counsel for low-income individuals in

adversarial proceedings where fundamental needs, such as housing and a parent's access to children, are at stake," said Joseph A. Sullivan, co-chair of the Civil Gideon and Access to Justice Task Force. "The goals of the hearings, to be chaired by Sen. Stewart Greenleaf and the Senate Judiciary Committee, include learning much more about the difficulties many face in achieving access to justice, and hearing a broad range of perspectives on the consequences of the inability to retain counsel on families, such as loss of jobs, breakdown in family integrity and economic disruption. Our goals also include learning more about the broader impact of lack of counsel on communities and economies – both locally and statewide. We hope to educate the broadest possible audience about these issues, and the benefits of expanding access to justice to everyone in the community," he said.

"As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the *Gideon* decision, we are thrilled to have this support to move forward a statewide effort to build access to justice for all on the civil side," added Task Force Co-Chair Catherine C. Carr.

The formation of the statewide coalition will be completed in the coming weeks and a series of strategic meetings

will be held to explore how an Access to Justice Commission may improve access to justice.

Access to Justice Commissions are formal entities that bring together the highest level of the state's courts, organized bar and other stakeholders to support the expansion of access to civil justice for low-income and disadvantaged people. As of March 15, there were Access to Justice Commissions in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Most of the Commissions were created by those state's Supreme Court.

Access to Justice Commissions have been proven to have a major impact in

expanding support for self-represented litigants in the courts; increasing state-level funding for civil legal aid; developing new initiatives to increase pro bono services by attorneys; promoting collaboration and coordination among civil legal aid providers; building a commitment to pro bono and support for legal aid among law students and new lawyers; and increasing awareness among legislators and other key decision makers, the bar, the judiciary and the general public about the legal needs of low-income and disadvantaged people and the social and economic benefits of ensuring that they do not go unmet.

