



Education: JD, Georgetown University Law Center; BS, College of the Holy Cross

Company Name: Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP

Industry: Law

Company CEO: Jim Lehman

Company Headquarters Location: Columbia, South Carolina

Number of Employees: 1,540 firm-wide

Your Location (if different from above): Baltimore, Maryland

Words you live by: Every day alive is a gift and a blessing. If you don't ask, the answer is already no.

Who is your personal hero? My mother, the strongest person I have ever met in my life.

What book are you reading? *Fraternity* by Diane Brady

What was your first job: Newspaper boy

Favorite charity: The Homeless Persons Representation Project

Interests: Time with friends and family, travel, and golf

Family: Married, with two daughters, ages 21 and 18

We Are an Asset Law Firms Need

What ignites my professional passion is a strong desire to see more Black lawyers become successful at law firms within the United States. I have always noticed that there are few Black lawyers in what are considered the premier U.S. law firms. Every year for the last 20 years, I have looked at the rankings of the top law firms to see how many of the lawyers in these firms were Black and, more specifically, how many were Black partners. The percentages are so low it defies logic. Despite the fact that Black lawyers make up 10–15 percent of all lawyers, Black partners only make up around one percent of partners. I always believed that if more Black lawyers got opportunities to work at these large law firms, the firms would realize

how talented Black lawyers are, and how effective they can be in generating more business and in turning around excellent work product.

From the time I began working at large law firms in 2009, I have pushed hard to ensure the success of Black lawyers and to help elevate them to the position of partner within these firms. There is no reason not to give Black lawyers the opportunities and support they deserve to make partner.

In the age of George Floyd, many colleagues and lawyers from other firms have asked me what can be done to improve the plight of Black Americans, with all the racism and division that exists in this country. My response is always the same: Start with the people around you who are

Black and treat them in the same manner as you treat those whose skin is another color. That means, in law firms where you have Black lawyers, properly train associates and then give them the opportunities given to other lawyers to establish business contacts so they may elevate to partner.

Lately, I have seen a greater commitment from law firms to provide opportunities to Black lawyers in an effort to make the Black lawyers in their firms more successful. Let's hope these efforts continue and are sustained by these firms. Simply put, law firms will be better off with the perspectives of Black lawyers in business and law, as well as in social matters. We are an asset that all law firms need.