

Diversity News

Exploring Issues of Generational Diversity



Dr. Arin N. Reeves

MCCA[®] and Freddie Mac hosted MCCA's Mid-Atlantic Region Generational Diversity Dialogue on September 27, 2007, at Freddie Mac's corporate headquarters in Mclean, Va. Led by Dr. Arin N. Reeves of The Athens Group, the interactive dialogue and panel discussion, entitled *X and Y and Baby Boomers Too! The Ins and Outs of Generational Diversity in Law Firms and Legal Departments*, drew an enthusiastic and diverse audience of more than 100 people who participated in the dialogue and the following networking session.

In welcoming everyone to the dialogue, Robert E. Bostrom, Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary of Freddie Mac, discussed the increasing value of diversity to Freddie Mac, its legal department, and the overall legal profession, and he emphasized the growing importance of generational diversity in the larger dialogue on workplace diversity.

Dr. Reeves kicked off the dialogue with a presentation on exactly what and who the different generations consist, how they differ in work styles and perspectives, the interesting challenges that arise when they interact, and ways in which organizations can leverage the creativity and innovation that arises from generational diversity. Her presentation was followed by a panel discussion featuring: Charles W. Durant, Senior Counsel at Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC); Bancroft Gordon, Vice President, Corporate Secretary and Senior Counsel at Marriott International; Te-Mika Williams, Associate General Counsel at Fannie Mae; and Regina Brooks, a law student at Howard University School of Law. The panel of lawyers representing the various generations in the workplace today discussed a hypothetical situation involving the effectiveness of mentoring and communication strategies across generations, the generational differences in perceptions of and expectations from the workplace, and the ways in which generational differences intersect with race, ethnicity, and gender.

The presentation, panel discussion, and audience participation highlighted the reality that today's legal workplaces are struggling with integrating the new perspectives, ideas, and career strategies that Generation X and Generation Y are bringing into organizations. The dialogue also illustrated how candid conversations on generational differences can help people understand each other across the generational barriers and increase the ways in which legal workplaces truly reflect all of the values, points of view, and diversity.

“At Freddie Mac, diversity plays an important role in our business of making home possible. That's why we were so pleased to host this very successful event,” said Chante Bowser, Associate General Counsel, Freddie Mac. “Participants walked away with a greater understanding of generational diversity and how it influences communication styles, work/life balance, etc. Dr. Reeves and the panel did a wonderful job of illustrating the importance of recognizing and understanding generational differences and how that knowledge can serve as a bridge to open, honest and effective communication.”

For more information about upcoming Diversity Dialogues or other MCCA events, please visit www.mcca.com. **DB**

From the [November/December 2007 issue](#) of Diversity & The Bar[®]