

CRAIN'S

NEW YORK BUSINESS

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NOTABLE DIVERSE LEADERS IN LAW

In the 19th century the first fissures emerged in the old-guard conventions of the New York legal industry.

Katherine Stoneman and George Boyer Vashon broke barriers when they became the first woman and the first Black person, respectively, to be admitted to the New York bar. Since then, the state's legal industry has diversified year after year, growing to look more and more like the city it serves.

It is only fitting that a city with such a fabulously diverse population—58.7% people of color, 6.9% people with disabilities, 5.1% members of the LGBTQ community and millions of immigrants—should be represented by talented lawyers of equal variety. Indeed, the heterogeneity of New York's legal industry goes a long way toward ensuring that residents of all stripes can find legal advocates and defenders sensitive to their unique backgrounds and needs.

With this in mind, Crain's New York Business selected 80 Notable Diverse Leaders in Law. These individuals excel in their practice at New York's leading law firms across a range of specialties. They stand out for their counseling and the nature of their pro bono work. They likewise demonstrate a commitment to

community service, philanthropy, professional mentorship, and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. As diverse professionals in a traditionally conservative industry, they are forging a path for others—women, minorities and members of other underrepresented groups—to travel.

To qualify for the list, the honorees had to be nominated by their colleagues and based in New York City or nearby counties. They had to self-identify as representing diversity in the workplace—including women, people with disabilities, African Americans, Latinos, Asians and other underrepresented groups.

The nominees had to be serving in a senior role at a law firm with a staff of at least 10 individuals. Each was required to be a practicing attorney at a law firm with at least 10 years of experience. In addition, the nominees had to be role models or mentors or promoters of inclusive practices in the workplace. They had to have had an impact on the types of cases they handled, their clients and their pro bono work. The nominees had to be involved in either community or philanthropic activities and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

MUHAMMAD U. FARIDI

Partner

Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler

Muhammad Faridi is a litigator of complex commercial matters involving torts and breaches of contracts. As a partner at Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler, he has represented commercial real estate, software, pharmaceutical and nonprofit organizations. Faridi, who has also represented death-row inmates, refugees and runaway homeless children, focuses his pro bono work on assisting underrepresented communities in New York and the nation. He is co-chair of Patterson Attorneys of Color, a firm resource group that helps attorneys of color grow and develop their skills. Faridi is on the board of directors of the TEAK Fellowship and of the National Center for Law and Economic Justice.

