Archer Announces New Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer

Press Releases

04.12.2021

April 12, 2021 – Archer is pleased to announce that Shelley R. Smith has been named the new Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, and will serve as Chair of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, effective immediately. Also a prominent member of the firm's commercial litigation and labor and employment groups, Shelley will focus on establishing and implementing policies, programs, and initiatives to promote and sustain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.

In this position, Shelley will report to the Office of the President and be instrumental in long-range DEI planning and implementation to cultivate a workplace where everyone feels valued and included. Shelley will work closely with Archer's senior leadership to focus on recruitment and retention, mentoring, professional development and advancement, education, client partnerships and community outreach.

"Our long-standing focus at Archer has been on recruiting, engaging and sustaining a truly inclusive community of diverse professionals at all levels of our firm," said Deborah A. Hays, Chair of Archer's Board of Director's. "Having worked closely with Shelley for many years, I recognize the depth of her experience with respect to DEI issues in the workplace and know that she is a passionate advocate who will partner with leaders across our firm to find new ways for us to learn from each other and create meaningful change that benefits not only our employees, but also our clients, business partners and the legal community generally."

Diversity and inclusion have been a cornerstone of Archer since the firm's founding and have never been more important. In 2020, Archer achieved Mansfield Certification, which measures whether law firms have affirmatively considered women, attorneys of color, LGBTQ+ attorneys, and attorneys with disabilities.

Archer president Christopher R. Gibson said, "In addition to being a catalyst for positive change and a passionate, demonstrated champion of diversity and inclusion, Shelley is a forward-thinking leader and is ideally suited to build upon our current achievements and work to make Archer a more inclusive place for all."

Shelley joined Archer following a distinguished career in public service for the City of Philadelphia, spending over two decades in the Law Department that culminated in eight years as City Solicitor during Michael Nutter's

mayoral tenure. As the head of the City's Law Department, with a total staff of approximately 325, Shelley's focus included the Law Department's diversity in its staff and its professional services contracts, about which she reported regularly to Philadelphia's City Council. She also initiated more stringent standards requiring legal services providers to assign primary responsibility for the City's legal work to diverse partners within their firms. In her role as City Solicitor, Shelley also was instrumental in establishing a scholarship with Temple University Law School through which summer interns gained unique perspective by splitting their summers between Archer and the City's Law Department.

"I know from my experience in a diverse public law office the invaluable contribution of diverse perspectives to everything we do as lawyers on behalf of our clients and within our firm," said Shelley. "Everyone's experience is different, and the greater the variety of experiences we can bring to assisting our clients and to managing our own operations, the better we will be able to serve those clients and each other. For these reasons, Archer has long demonstrated a commitment to increasing diversity within the firm and in the legal profession, and I am excited to work not only to maintain and increase our diversity, but also to reinforce the firm's commitment to leadership that will ensure that Archer consistently fosters a culture of belonging and inclusion across staff levels."

In her legal practice, Shelley defends local and federal governmental officials in constitutional tort claims, and she represents public and private entities in labor and employment matters. She counsels and conducts training for universities on Title IX sexual misconduct liability and investigations. She also serves as general counsel for various public agencies in the region. Shelley's legal practice will continue to focus on commercial litigation and labor and employment matters.

In addition to her legal practice, Shelley is a member of the Boards of Directors of the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania and the Women's Law Project, and member of the Board of Managers at Moore College of Art. She also is a former member of the Board of Directors of the Support Center for Child Advocates and of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Advisory Board of Pennsylvanians for Modern Courts. Shelley is a former Chair of the Commission on Judicial Selection and Retention in the Philadelphia Bar Association, on which she served for thirteen years, as well as the former Chair of the Board of Directors of the Legacy Youth Tennis and Education Center.

Shelley's vast experience as a legal practitioner and administrator, DEI advocate and public servant will be invaluable to advancing Archer's diverse and inclusive culture.

Archer's commitment to diversity is put into practice through a variety of initiatives, highlights of which include:

Archer's Women Lawyers Network: Archer's Women Lawyers Network provides mentoring and networking to the firm's women attorneys, with particular focus on professional and practice development, career advancement, and work/life balance.

Philadelphia Diversity Law Group (PDLG): Archer is a long-standing member of the PDLG. The PDLG creates programs to enhance recruitment and retention of lawyers of diverse backgrounds by law firms and corporate

law departments in Philadelphia region. Over the years, many first-year students have spent their summers working at Archer, been hired back for a second summer and received offers to join the firm.

Archer's Diversity Scholarship at Temple University Beasley School of Law: Archer awards an annual scholarship to a diverse second-year Temple University Law School student. This acclaimed program has provided over $100,000 in scholarships since 2011, and has led to the hiring of many summer associates as full-time Archer employees over the years.

Archer's Diversity Scholarship at Rutgers Law School: Since 1999, Archer has awarded a scholarship to diverse first-year law students at Rutgers Law School in Camden. To date, over 18 Rutgers Law students have received over $250,000 in grants, plus summer associate positions.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Workshops: In support of Archer's continuing commitment to improving its Diversity, Equity and Inclusion culture, the firm holds a series of trainings for all employees on topics such as Emotional Intelligence, Microaggressions, and Cross-Cultural Competency.

Archer & Greiner, P.C. is a full-service regional law firm with 180 lawyers and eight offices in Haddonfield, Hackensack, Princeton and Red Bank, New Jersey; Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; New York, New York; and Wilmington, Delaware. The firm has been serving Fortune 100 clients, small to medium-sized businesses, and individuals for over 90 years. Each office provides full-service litigation and transactional capabilities in nearly every area of law, including corporate, estate & trust, family & matrimonial, labor & employment, litigation, medical & personal injury and real estate services. For more information, visit archerlaw.com.

###

Related People

Shelley R. Smith

Partner

srsmith@archerlaw.com

215.246.3127

© 2024 Archer & Greiner, P.C. All rights reserved.