

Insights: News Releases

## Kilpatrick Townsend Welcomes First Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer

October 2, 2018

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### *Yendelela Neely Holston Brings Remarkable Experience and a Career-Long Commitment to Diversity as She Returns to Firm in Dual Role*

ATLANTA (October 2) – Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton announced today that Yendelela Neely Holston has joined the firm as Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer and as Partner on the firm's nationally recognized Labor & Employment Team. Ms. Holston is coming to the firm from AT&T where she was Assistant Vice President-Senior Legal Counsel. Before joining AT&T, Ms. Holston was an Associate and then a Partner on Kilpatrick Townsend's Labor & Employment Team from 2006 through 2015.

"We are excited to welcome Yendelela back to the Firm," said J. Henry Walker IV. "Having previously worked with her for a decade, we know she is an extremely talented and skilled attorney with an unwavering commitment to making the legal profession more inclusive and diverse. Her successful and positive experience as an in-house counsel will help her bring valuable insight into client service and will be a great resource to the firm."

Mr. Walker continued, "As the Firm's Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Yendelela will help lead our efforts to become an even more diverse and inclusive law firm. I look forward to working closely with her and the Diversity and Inclusion Council as we continue to build on our diversity and inclusion success. We are very focused on creating an inclusive environment where the top level talent can develop and succeed."

Kilpatrick Townsend attorneys and professional staff are actively involved in developing and promoting diversity and inclusion across the firm resulting in powerful recognition. Kilpatrick Townsend has received a 100% score on the Corporate Equality Index and has been named Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality for the last three years, and is a four-time winner of the Women in Law Empowerment Forum, and was recently named among the top five firms in the *Law360* Glass Ceiling report for the percent of women equity partners among firms with 600 or more attorneys.

"I am honored to return to Kilpatrick Townsend – a firm that has a rich history of being on the forefront of diversity stretching back to its days of representing Martin Luther King, Sr. in the 1960s," said Yendelela Neely Holston. "I wanted to be a part of a firm that is actively engaged in supporting a diverse workforce and is serious about making it a part of its culture."

Ms. Holston added, "I look forward to utilizing the knowledge that I gained from an industry leader in diversity,

AT&T, where I was an active contributor to the legal departments efforts to increase diversity in the legal pipeline. I am also excited about rejoining the Labor & Employment Team to help serve its tremendous clients.”

At AT&T, Ms. Holston developed strategy and managed outside counsel in employment class and collective action litigation involving AT&T entities. She routinely assisted in mitigation of legal risk across the organization. Ms. Holston worked to increase diversity within AT&Ts legal department through coordination of its national summer program and creation of a two-day intensive law school readiness pipeline program. Ms. Holston was also a member of the companys diversity committee and co-chaired the Southeast Pro Bono Committee. In addition, she was an active mentor to young lawyers.

During Ms. Holstons first tenure at the firm, she worked on employment discrimination, occupational health and safety, and wage and hour cases. She also actively counseled clients with policies and initiatives related to diversity and inclusion including guidance on Title VII and 42 U.S.C. §1981. Ms. Holston was an active member of the diversity and pro bono committees at the firm and was recognized as a leader both as a lawyer and in the community.

Ms. Holston has been engaged in efforts to make the legal profession more inclusive and diverse for many years. A sampling of her firm-focused and community engagement is illustrated by her involvement in a number of community organizations and committees over the years, including:

- Georgia Access to Justice Committee
- Furman University Board of Trustees and Secretary
- Worksource Georgia Board of Directors, Former Vice-Chair
- Jumpstart: Atlanta Advisory Board Chair, National Board Member
- Families First Board of Directors
- Atlanta Legal Aid Society Board of Directors and Executive Committee
- Leadership Council on Legal Diversity Law School Mentorship Program
- Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton Diversity & Inclusion Council (LCLD Fellow)
- Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton Hiring Committee Member
- Impact United Methodist Church, Former Staff/Parish Relations Committee Chair
- Lead Atlanta Class
- Kilpatrick Stockton Pro Bono Committee
- Corporate Counsel Women of Color, Member

She has also received the following awards and honors:

- Community Champion, *Atlanta Business Chronicle* Corporate Counsel Awards (2018)
- Women Works Media Group Law & Justice Award (2017)
- AT&T Southeast Pro Bono Award (2017)
- *Atlanta Business Chronicle* 40 under 40 Award (2015)

- Anti-Defamation League Young Lawyer Award (2015)
- *Daily Report* On the Rise Class (2014)
- National Bar Association Trailblazers Under 40 Award (2014)
- Lawyers of Color Second Annual Hot List (2014)
- Georgia “Rising Star” Labor & Employment, *Super Lawyers* Magazine (2013)
- *Chambers USA* (2013-2015)
- Kilpatrick Townsend & Stocktons Managing Partner Pro Bono Award Recipient (2013)

Ms. Holston received her J.D. from Duke University School of Law. She received her undergraduate degree, *Magna Cum Laude*, from Furman University.

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## Related People

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