

For immediate release

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Law Firms Fail to Hire Minority Lawyers

The Austin Black Lawyers Association and the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin graded local law firms on their minority hiring practices and released the resulting report card at a news conference on Monday, June 26.

In 1993, several Austin law firms signed a Statement of Goals for Increasing Minority Hiring, Retention and Promotion. The ABLA and the HBAA have recently reviewed the number of minority attorneys at the largest 14 law firms in Austin. Of the 719 attorneys at those law firms, only 53 or 7% are African-American, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American. As a result, only 5 law firms received passing grades.

Those law firms receiving passing grades include: Bickerstaff, Heath, Smiley, Pollan, Kever & McDaniel; Brown McCarroll & Oaks Hartline; Clark, Thomas & Winters; Fulbright & Jaworski; and Vinson & Elkins.

Those law firms receiving failing grades include: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld; Baker Botts; Brobeck Phleger & Harrison; Graves Dougherty Hearon & Moody; Jackson Walker; Jenkins & Gilchrist; and Locke Liddell and Sapp.

As the only law firm to receive a grade of "A+", Bickerstaff, Heath, Smiley, Pollan, Kever & McDaniel was recognized for its commitment to hiring and promoting minority attorneys. The 39-member law firm currently has 6 minority attorneys, three of whom are partners.

The Austin Black Lawyers Association and the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin recognize their duty to the community and to law firms to help increase the number of minority attorneys at

Austin law firms. The ABLA and HBAA have offered to work with any law firm that wishes to use them as a resource for recruiting and retaining minority lawyers.

The report card on the hiring of minority lawyers by Austin law firms will be released on a yearly basis by the Austin Black Lawyers Association and the Hispanic Bar Association of Austin.

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