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## Recruiting: An Insider's Perspective

**Over the past decade, a noticeable shift has occurred in law school recruiting trends.**

Jay Grushkin, partner in Milbank's Alternative Investments group, Senior Hiring Partner for the New York office and a member of the Diversity Committee, shared his perspective on these changes, citing the onset of technology as a root cause. Simply by surfing the web, students are able to gather more information about law firms than Jay could have imagined when he joined Milbank 30 years ago – firm

profitability, salary information, diversity statistics, etc. They have access to inside perspectives on the Firm by reading what current employees say in chat rooms and other online venues. In addition to what has always been important to students such as firm reputation and practice areas, recruits are now increasingly concerned with firm culture, collegiality, pro bono opportunities, work/life balance and the ability to work internationally.

These days, when students walk into interviews, many are armed with an arsenal of information and are prepared to ask the tough questions. This trend makes the need to help distinguish the firm all the more important.

Jay is up for the challenge and recognizes this shift in student demands as something that will work in Milbank's favor. "Milbank does cutting-edge, specialized and highly global work — exactly what recruits expect today. Our culture also makes us unique. Even as we have grown, we have maintained a culture where everyone knows each other. I'm a home-grown Milbanker who started as a summer associate and have worked in our New York, Washington, Tokyo and Hong Kong offices. I've gotten to see Milbank through different lenses, and I enjoy sharing my perspective with students who want to know what it's really like to work here".

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### Milbank ranks

# 16<sup>th</sup> The American Lawyer Diversity Scorecard 2012

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## Connect+>>with LaMano

LaMano, meaning "the hand" in Spanish, is a Milbank affinity group formed in 2006, with the goal of supporting the recruitment, retention and professional development of Latino/a associates at the Firm. LaMano members identify with various countries and regions, and represent multiple Milbank practices and offices. Aimed at raising awareness of Latino culture within Milbank, LaMano members host cultural events at the Firm, and create a vibrant networking forum. Members also participate in community outreach programs and outside events hosted by bar associations.

LaMano recently formed a Latin America Practice subcommittee to create a forum for attorneys interested in Milbank's Latin America practice. This spring, the LatAm subcommittee was busy hosting partners Andrew Jánosky, Marcelo Mottes and Carolina Walther-Meade for a discussion on current trends in Latin America. The partners each began the session with stories of their career trajectories and how they became involved in Latin American deals. They went on to discuss the regional nuances between Latin American countries and offered

insight on future growth opportunities.

Over the past decade, Milbank's presence in Latin America has grown considerably, especially with the opening of the São Paulo office in 2010. Milbank has gained a reputation across the region for high quality work and its deep understanding of the region.

The partners described the area as "an ever-changing mix." Political systems in Latin America are varied and can shift rapidly. The partners commented

Earlier this year, Milbank's Diversity Committee introduced a new program in the LA office that explored how cultural values associated with Asian Pacific Islander (API) communities can support the development of leadership skills.

The program, presented by an executive consulting team from a non-profit organization called Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics (LEAP), was brought to Milbank after Global Project Finance partner Karen Wong attended one of their workshops and found it complemented her own experiences at the Firm. API associates were invited to a morning program called "The 21st Century Leader," which was followed by a presentation for partners, of counsel and senior associates on how to support leadership development. Karen and Melainie Mansfield, a partner in the Global Corporate group and member of the Diversity Committee, helped lead the programs by taking the broad advice offered by LEAP and translating it to life at Milbank. They provided specific examples taken from their own experiences at the Firm. Associates who attended "The 21st Century Leader" have since echoed Karen's positive feedback on the program.

During the associate program, the presenters acknowledged that cultural norms can vary widely within the API community among different generations and even within families. They kicked off the workshop by asking associates to identify some common values, and then opened up a discussion about how these values can affect day-to-day behavior in subtle ways, and how that behavior may be perceived by others. The workshop ended with a brainstorming session about ways to develop leadership skills that leverage these values, including:

- using cultural connections to sow the seeds of future client relationships
- developing leadership skills by mentoring or doing pro bono work
- finding assignments and activities that let you stretch beyond your comfort zone
- being purposeful and coming up with a plan to develop leadership skills

## The Name Change Project: An Innovative Pro Bono Project Resonates with Milbankers

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community has faced a slow—and oftentimes bumpy—path towards achieving legal equality. For transgender individuals, this path is made that much more difficult by the challenges involved in legally changing their names to match their gender identity. For many transgender people, changing their name sends an important message to the world about who they are. This message is validated and made official with a court's approval. To ensure those seeking to change their name have adequate legal representation, the Transgender Legal Defense and Education Fund (TLDEF), a nonprofit organization focused primarily on impact litigation around the country, launched the **Name Change Project**.

The Name Change Project brings new hope for those interested in expressing their chosen identity by changing their names. Michael Silverman of the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund explains their mission saying, "Many of our clients routinely experience discrimination and harassment as a result of having a name that doesn't match who they are and their appearance. Many report being refused jobs when

employers discover that they are transgender because of the perceived mismatch between their names and their gender presentations. Many report harassment and discrimination when trying to access health care or government services for the same reason. Procuring identification with a new legal name is a new lease on life for many of them."

Thus far, thirteen Milbank attorneys have joined forces with TLDEF in support of the Name Change Project. Since the partnership began, **our lawyers have helped 23 individuals successfully change their names**. Silverman is grateful for Milbank's participation saying, "TLDEF simply would be unable to meet the community's need for help without Milbank's assistance. Our partnership with Milbank allows us to leverage our very limited resources to provide a service to community members that we just would not otherwise be able to provide."

If you're interested in learning more about the Name Change Project, or how you can get involved, please contact Tony Cassino.

# Milbankers Assist High School Moot Court Team's Rise to Victory



A group of Milbank associates joined forces with the Fort Hamilton High School Moot Court Team, **helping them capture the top spot in the 2011 New York City Moot Court Competition.**

This was not an easy feat as these seven Fort Hamilton high school students defeated 47 other area high school teams with their concise and convincing arguments.

**Partner John Franchini and associates LaTonya Brooks, Nick Venditto, Melissa Galicia, Meghan Gabriel and Kevin Lee** all contributed to the success of this team, lending them encouragement and hours of their time.

The Fort Hamilton team worked with Milbankers for four months, meeting twice a week to prepare for the competition. Together, they discussed various Supreme Court cases and strategized the most effective ways to make an argument. Milbankers simulated the competition environment by acting as judges and asking tough questions. This helped the students think on their feet and grow in their confidence and abilities. As one Milbanker remembers, a buzzer was used to help a team member stop saying the word “um” in the middle of her arguments, which was something the competition judges later noticed and praised her for.

Students Alyssa Burgos, Carrie Wen and Khadijeh Hamad performed research in

preparation for the case. On December 19, 2011 at the Manhattan Federal Court, Amy El Sayed, Ledia Duro, Viola Peno and Stelios Kakleas successfully argued the case involving special needs students and the Americans with Disabilities Act, securing them the honor of best high school moot court team in New York City. This was the first time the school won the competition, and was especially gratifying after a tough loss in the final round of last year's competition.

LaTonya Brooks, who has worked with Fort Hamilton's moot court team for four years now, explains her interest in the program saying, “It has been a great experience because it allowed me to give back and help future lawyers. We really have an amazing group of kids. They are smart, dedicated and hard workers.”

Randy Kaminsky, Fort Hamilton High School's Law Coordinator also remarked, “The kids gain so much from working with the lawyers. In addition to preparing for the competitions, they learn about the legal system, legal careers and professionalism. It helps give them positive role models and the opportunity to see how their hard work now will pay off later.”

The students all excel academically, and are members of the National Honor Society. The three seniors will all be attending college in the Fall. Stelios Kakleas has accepted a scholarship to Binghamton, Alyssa Burgos is going to the University of Connecticut and Amy El Sayed will be attending Cornell.

## Connec+>>with LaMano

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that there are many opportunities for expansion in the region, particularly for corporate and capital markets work. The partners forecasted that São Paulo will continue to expand beyond capital markets work and described Peru as an economically stable market with potential.

Andrew focused his talk on infrastructure development. “In these countries, we're changing the way people live,” he commented. “The El Cajon Hydro project provided electricity to a whole section of Mexico.” He also spoke about individuals who have benefitted as a result of the work Milbank has done.

The partners all agreed that in the Latin American region, there is no “cookie cutter” deal. Whether it's building power plants, wind farms, electric plants or telecommunications facilities, many of the deals in this region are first-of-their-kind. Latin American deals also tend to be global, with financing coming in from all over the world.

As for the future, the partners all agreed the region is resource-rich and will continue to grow rapidly, with different local focal points based on the country and political system. If you would like to get involved in LaMano's LatAm subcommittee, please contact Roland Estevez.



# From Peace Corps to Law School



Milbank associate Richard Mo had many of the attributes of a Peace Corps volunteer before he even knew what the Peace Corps was: independence, a love of travel, adventurous eating habits, and an affinity for volunteering.

After learning more about the Peace Corps and speaking with former Peace Corps volunteers, including two of his college professors at Penn, Richard joined the Peace Corps and was on a plane to Paraguay just one week after graduation.

Upon arriving in Paraguay, Richard began three months of intensive language, cultural and technical training to learn how to accomplish the day-to-day tasks of living in Paraguay and working as a Rural Economic Development volunteer. He settled 35 km east of Asunción, Paraguay's capital, and began mapping out a plan for the remaining two years of his service. Working with an agricultural cooperative of strawberry farmers that acted as a community bank, Richard focused on improving the cooperative's core banking operations, and introduced the concept of crop rotation.

The site was rural. Dirt roads became impassible after each rain. Electricity was spotty, making it difficult to keep even a cell phone charged. On top of this, all communication with the local population relied on his ability to learn Guarani, a local language. While Richard could practice his Spanish when communicating with people in urban centers, rural populations often only spoke their local language. Not to be deterred, Richard began to

build a life for himself in rural Paraguay.

**What does a career in the law and the Peace Corps have in common?** Richard found the connection soon after he returned from Paraguay.

"I had not planned on law school before I joined the Peace Corps. I realized during my time in Paraguay just how much I had taken for granted growing up in the U.S. Paraguay was ruled by a military dictatorship until 1989, so Paraguay has had little modern experience with democracy and the rule of law. While I was in South America, I also saw how far Paraguay's neighbors (Chile and Brazil, for example) had progressed since their transition from military government to democracy, and the impact the rule of law, reduction of corruption and promotion of investment-friendly policies had on their own economic development."

Now as a practicing attorney in Milbank's Global Securities group, Richard sees the value of his Peace Corps experience in a new light. He estimates that nearly 60% of his work has been Latin American deals involving companies in Mexico, Argentina, Peru, Costa Rica and Brazil. Most recently, Richard is representing a Peruvian issuer in a bond issuance. All calls and emails with the company are in Spanish.

Aside from the obvious benefit of honing his foreign language skills, the Peace Corps also demonstrated for him the importance of building relationships in order to be effective. In Paraguay, trust and personal relationships are a necessary precondition for any productive work. Similarly at Milbank, Richard sees developing relationships with clients and other attorneys as paramount.

He explains, "I think that my Peace Corps

experience has allowed me to be more attuned to the other side's position and thinking. Just as my community and I shared a common goal but they had their own specific concerns, I also find myself at Milbank often considering the other side's position and anticipating what their concerns are." An understanding of such cultural nuances can be crucial for developing client relationships.



Richard is involved in Milbank's Latin America Practice Subcommittee of the LaMano affinity group and the Asian Pacific Islander Network (APIN) affinity group, both of which provide opportunities for associates to better understand those regions and their legal and regulatory landscapes. The affinity groups also serve as a forum for attorneys to discuss shared experiences, enhance cultural awareness, develop leadership skills and meet people in different class years and practice groups.

# Singapore

## MILBANK ASSOCIATE KEVIN LEE'S EXPERIENCE



**Kevin Lee is an associate in Milbank's Global Corporate Group in NY. For four months, Kevin worked in Milbank's Singapore office, where he represented corporations involved in the energy sector, as well as private equity firms. We recently spoke to Kevin about this experience and invite you to read what he had to say.**

**Q** What sort of work were you doing there? Was it similar to what you do in NYC?

**A** There was overlap, but **the great thing about SG is that you get to expand out of your comfort zone and work on transactions that you would not normally work on in the NY office.** Thanks to the smaller size of the SG office, I had the opportunity to work on the corporate *and* finance aspects of an M&A deal, and learned to draft credit agreements.

**Q** How would you describe the SG office?

**A** People certainly work hard in SG, but at the same time, it has a pretty relaxed atmosphere. Most people dress business casual and things typically seem a bit less formal.

**Q** Did you notice any major cultural differences? Did this impact your work?

**A** No. Most people speak English and all signs are in English. The language barrier is probably the most jarring thing when going to foreign countries, so it was nice that everyone spoke English. It's a pretty cosmopolitan city. It didn't require a huge adjustment.

**Q** How has your time abroad influenced you as a lawyer? Do you see it as an asset for your career?

**A** Most definitely an asset for anyone's career, I would think — and it certainly was for mine. Aside from the work experience mentioned above (e.g., getting experience and training in fields that are related to but not necessarily an everyday part of the M&A practice), it is interesting to see certain cultural differences first-hand, whether it is in negotiations or in documents. For instance, most purchase agreements in SG have pretty substantial arbitration clauses because it seems that most parties tend to arbitrate rather than litigate. Also, working with international colleagues is always a rewarding and educational (and fun) experience. **These experiences provide a new prism through which to view your work and how it is done,** which I feel allows a person to cherry-pick good aspects from different work cultures to create a hybrid style that suits them.

## Summer Associate in Singapore

Summer Associate Meredith Bragg recently returned from her own four weeks working in Milbank's Singapore office and similarly expressed satisfaction with the experience both professionally and personally. Milbank's smaller, 15-person office felt comfortable to Meredith, who remembers the glass walls and doors, and an informal culture that invites open conversations among attorneys at all levels. The partners and associates she worked with came from a diversity of nationalities — Australia, Canada, Singapore, and New Zealand, to name a few. "I was doing real work from the get go," Meredith remarked, including a mix of securities, project finance and corporate assignments. A typical day might include reviewing an opinion letter, drafting a shareholder agreement or sitting in on external calls.

Outside of the office, Meredith enjoyed the multicultural mix of Malay, Indian and Chinese food. She found the city to be well-planned and clean, and "designed for expats." It's easy to step off the plane and jump straight into a new experience working in Milbank's Singapore office, an excellent opportunity for anyone interested in a unique and rewarding challenge.





# What Does A Litigator Really Do?

Errol Taylor, litigation partner and chair of Milbank's Diversity Committee, joined three other litigators for a panel presentation to law school bound interns titled "What Does a Litigator Really Do?" The students were all part of the Sponsors for Educational

Opportunity (SEO) Corporate Law Program, which introduces some of the brightest, college graduates of color who have been admitted to law school, to top law firms through an annual summer internship program. Errol joined David Brown of Paul Weiss, Samidh Guha of Akin Gump and Heather Celeste Mitchell of Sullivan & Cromwell to share personal stories about their individual pathways to success, their day-to-day activities as litigators, and general tips and encouragement for aspiring lawyers.

"I look at this group with great hope of increasing minority representation at the partnership level," Errol said to the group. He went on to say, "supporting the growth and development of Milbank's Diversity program is my passion." Milbank plans to continue its decade-old partnership with the SEO Corporate Law Program as one of its many efforts to foster the development of diversity and inclusion at Milbank and in the legal profession at large.

## What does a litigator really do?

- ▶ Each new case is like a new job. You'll be working with new people on new issues.
- ▶ The work often involves extensive factual analysis and racing against the clock.
- ▶ You may play a different role on any given day — reporter, investigator, even banker.
- ▶ At a more senior level, additional time is spent counseling clients and managing client relationships.

## Recruiting: An Insider's Perspective

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When Jay first got involved in recruiting for Milbank over ten years ago, he saw it as one of the most important administrative jobs within the Firm and one that leaves a lasting imprint on the Firm. "After all," he said, **"I am helping to build the pipeline and ensure we continue to recruit the best talent to Milbank."**

Jay says that diversity is another hot button issue with recruits. With women making up 51% of graduating law students, and the world becoming increasingly global, **our strong diversity program and network of affinity groups** provide another example of Milbank's dedication to promoting an inclusive culture. Jay comments, "Like diversity programs should, our programs continue to evolve to respond to the needs of our attorneys and recruits. The Firm is serious about attracting and retaining the best lawyers, so it's exciting to work on both these committees."

## Diversity Committee Members

Errol Taylor (*Chair*)

David Cohen

Drew Fine

Jay Grushkin

Melainie Mansfield

Catherine Marsh

Arnie Peinado

Beth Pérez

David Stoll

David Wolfson

Christine Wagner

Salila Yohn



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