

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Affinity Group

Holland & Knight's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) Affinity Group promotes equal opportunity and professional development for the firm's GLBT lawyers. Through its various programs and activities, and through its representation on the firm's Diversity Council, the Group works with firm management to ensure that Holland & Knight remains a leader among law firms in the implementation of GLBT inclusive policies. These efforts have been recognized publicly through a number of awards and citations, including a perfect score of 100 on the Human Rights Campaign's 2008 Corporate Equality Index.

A Firm History of Support

Originally called the GLBT Workgroup, the Affinity Group came together as a "grass-roots" organization in 1998. It was one of the firm's first affinity group initiatives. It now serves as a model for the firm's other Affinity Groups.

In 1995, even before the Workgroup formed, Holland & Knight amended its anti-discrimination policy specifically to include sexual orientation. This led naturally to a decision to offer same-sex domestic partner health care benefits. As a result, the American Civil Liberties Union of Miami awarded Holland & Knight the *Maurice Rosen Act of Courage Award* in recognition of our firm being the first business in Florida – and the first law firm in the southern United States – to introduce domestic partnership insurance benefits for same sex couples.

Holland & Knight continues to go above and beyond what the law requires. Our Equal Employment Opportunity statement

and policy specifically prohibits discrimination based on gender identity or expression, as well as sexual orientation. Our health benefits include mental health coverage for transgender employees. We've amended our 401k plan to permit rollover to a non-spousal designee. We have extended our COBRA benefits to include domestic partners.

In addition to the commitment we have to our GLBT employees, Holland & Knight believes in supporting outside organizations that are dedicated to advancing the rights of, and increasing the opportunities available to, GLBT individuals. Among the groups that we support with funding, counsel and in-kind donations, we are proud to count the following:

- Federation of Gay Games
- Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network ("GLSEN")
- Lesbian and Gay Law Association
- Lesbian and Gay Legal Foundation of Greater New York ("LeGaL")
- Boston Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders ("GLAD")
- Immigration Equality

Pro Bono

Through our longstanding relationship with Immigration Equality, Holland & Knight undertakes *pro bono* representation of GLBT individuals seeking asylum in the United States because they suffer abuse and persecution in their native countries. For this work, the firm received the *Harmony Award* from the Gay Men's Chorus of Washington, D.C., and a *Safe Haven Award* from Immigration Equality.

Recruiting

Holland & Knight is committed to recruiting diverse employees at all levels of the firm. Our efforts to recruit gay and

lesbian attorneys include our annual participation in the Lesbian and Gay Law Foundation's Lavender Law Career Fair, and LeGaL's annual law student recruitment fair. Our GLBT attorneys also speak regularly at law schools about being "out" in the workplace and during the recruitment process.

Purposeful Participation

Our attorneys hold leadership positions in many GLBT organizations, including both GLAD and GLSEN. In addition, Holland & Knight hosts many events throughout the year designed to educate about diversity and to celebrate our differences. Recent GLBT-related events include:

- Annual "Casual Day for a Cause" to raise money for various GLBT organizations, including recently the Matthew Shepard Foundation
- Sponsorship of "Tamara's Crossing," a play about the plight of a transgendered asylee
- Gay Games Reception honoring clients and sponsors of the event
- R Family Vacations Summer Cruise lecture on GLBT Estate Planning
- Annual Gay Pride Month events, including recently "Transgender Awareness," a presentation featuring Joanne Herman, a transgender individual.
- Annual sponsorship of the GLSEN "Respect Awards"
- Sponsorship of the GLAD Spirit of Justice Awards
- Sponsorship of "Pride In Our Work," a Boston-based group of openly GLBT professionals
- Sponsorship of LeGaL awards dinner.
- Sponsorship of the "Harmony Awards"
- Sponsorship of the Service Members Legal Defense Network annual dinner

