



## ALFA International's DE&I Scholarship Renamed in Laurel McGiffert's Honor

ALFA International (ALFAI) is proud to announce that it has renamed its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) Scholarship to the Laurel McGiffert Memorial DE&I Scholarship. This Scholarship is a tribute to Laurel McGiffert, who was the first African American woman to not only become a partner with Plunkett Cooney, ALFAI's member firm in Detroit, Michigan, but also serve as the first African American woman on the firm's Board of Directors and the firm's first director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I) before her passing in January 2024.

Laurel was a trailblazer and a true champion of DE&I, and her contributions to ALFAI, particularly as a member of the DE&I Committee, have been invaluable. She played a crucial role in shaping the agendas and providing thought leadership for ALFAI's DE&I Forum, which comprises representatives from ALFAI member firms actively involved in advancing DE&I efforts within their own firms.

The Scholarship was initially established in 2018 by Gary Bague, formerly ALFAI's Chair of the Board of Directors. The Scholarship is open to persons of all races, genders, sexual orientations and those with disabilities, whom their firm nominates to attend one of ALFAI's Practice Group (PG) Seminars. The Scholarship aims to introduce the chosen candidates to the ALFAI network as a first step in building a fully engaged relationship between the candidate and the PG awarding the Scholarship.

Each firm that nominates a candidate commits to support that candidate's future ALFAI endeavors, ensuring that the applicant becomes an active member of the PG and is involved in meaningful roles within the PG moving forward. Since its inception, 41 diverse attorneys have received this Scholarship, and of those recipients, four are currently recognized as ALFAI Contact Partners and four serve in ALFAI leadership roles.

Antwan Phillips, Chair of the DE&I Committee and a 2018 Scholarship recipient said, "Laurel was a kind and wonderful friend and colleague whom we will greatly miss. She understood the importance of diversity and was a powerful voice for equity in our profession. I admired her commitment and energy to these issues. We happily bestow this honor on Laurel to recognize her efforts as a tireless supporter of diversity, equity and inclusion."

Jessica Zaroski Bauer, ALFAI's CEO, concurred, "Laurel McGiffert's legacy will live on through this Scholarship. We hope it will continue to inspire more individuals within ALFAI to remain committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives that foster a more inclusive legal profession."