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Categories:

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging

What We're Proud of This Pride Month

Pride Month at Frost Brown Todd (FBT) is special for many reasons. It gives us occasion to reflect on and celebrate, in a purposeful way, the contributions of pioneers in the LGBTQ+ community, their courage and persistence in the fight for equal rights, and to reaffirm our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion within our own FBT community. We recognize, however, that Pride — and all it stands for, all it demands of us in the present day — extends well beyond the month of June. It's something to foreground and work towards 365 days a year. As evidenced below, our FBT team continues to advocate for and take action to promote LGBTQ+ equality.

Protections for Gender-Expansive Team Members

In April, the firm took a major step in support of LGBTQ+ inclusion with the formal adoption of our **Transgender Policy**. This policy sets forth guidelines to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our transgender and gender-expansive team members, specifically as it relates to personal privacy, preferred names/pronouns, restroom accessibility, transitioning on the job, gender-affirming care, and addressing potential discrimination or harassment directed at LGBTQ+ colleagues.

In conjunction with the rollout of our Transgender Policy, FBT hosted Dru Levasseur of the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association for a **training session on LGBTQ+ inclusion and allyship.** A leader in the LGBTQ+ equality movement for more than 25 years, Levasseur attended the first transgender policy meeting at the White House in 2011 and served as counsel in several impact litigation cases and on amicus briefs in federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

During the training session, Levasseur discussed some of the barriers to equality that the transgender community continues to face, from workplace discrimination to difficulty accessing gender-affirming treatments. He also outlined some practical tools to be

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better allies and to advance a culture of affirmation, respect and belonging at FBT. We're proud to say this training session drew a record turnout, exceeding the capacity limit for the Zoom meeting.

Pride Across Our Footprint

FBT has held more than 50 firm-wide DEI workshops to date, and every year we host an outside speaker to present on a topic that dovetails with Pride Month. This year's **Pride-themed workshop**, "A Journey of Discovery," will be held on June 29 and feature Emmy-award-winning reporter Megan Mitchell, who will discuss her work covering teen mental health issues and gender-expansive traditions in Native American culture, as well as her personal journey to authenticity.

FBT also celebrated Pride by participating in local events. Our Cincinnati, Columbus, Indianapolis, Louisville, and Nashville offices each had **marching contingents this year in their respective city's Pride parades**. Cincinnati Member Ryan Goellner, one of the organizers of his office's marching contingent, described why FBT's participation in local Pride celebrations is important to our FBT community: "If you want to talk about taking values of diversity and inclusion out into the community, nowhere is that more visible than a group of FBT attorneys, colleagues, friends and allies marching together with a big banner down the streets of two of Ohio's biggest cities, advocating for LGBTQ+ inclusion."

The firm sent a team of FBT volunteers to help with Lexington's Pride Parade and Festival, and several of our other offices hosted their own **Pride activities and celebrations throughout the month of June**, including lunches and Pride-themed competitions.

Pride in Partnering with the Community

FBT's Pittsburgh attorneys continue to do pro bono work through the **Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund's Name Change Project**. The Name Change Project began in 2007 to address discrimination faced by transgender individuals due to a perceived disconnect between their birth names and their appearance. Since its inception, over 2,700 people have sought

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assistance from the project, and at any given time there are hundreds of clients working with attorneys. In March, FBT attorneys helped their first pro bono client officially and legally change her name to match her gender identity, and they are currently working with other clients to do the same.

Our attorneys will once again participate in this year's Lavender Law Conference & Career Fair put on by the National LGBTQ+ Bar Association. The conference was launched in 1988, and as the largest LGBTQ+ legal conference in the country, it serves as a "family reunion" for many of our LGBTQ+ attorneys, legal professionals, and allies. The conference also offers our attorneys and business professionals the chance to attend cutting-edge programming on the latest developments in the LGBTQ+ legal sphere.

We're also proud to report that FBT earned a perfect score for the eighth consecutive year on the Human Rights Campaign's (HRC) Corporate Equality Index (CEI) and the distinction of being a **"Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality**." Our firm has been a long-time supporter of the HRC, and this year we sponsored and participated in **HRC dinners in Cincinnati and Columbus**.

"Our dedication to diversity, equity and inclusion continues to grow and evolve. The HRC standards provide us guidance in our quest to be as inclusive and equitable as possible," said FBT Chief Diversity Officer Chris Johnson. "The HRC is in a class of its own having conducted the CEI for 20 years. They understand how the needs of employees and clients have changed over the years. We consider ourselves fortunate to earn eight consecutive perfect rankings."

Looking Ahead and Ready to Amplify

In sharing these **highlights from 2021-2022**, we want to add one caveat: We know we have more work to do, collectively and individually, to advance our inclusive culture. This includes the ways we advance diversity inside our firm while promoting equity of opportunity for all who are a part of our larger team.

We must continue to ensure the whole of FBT feels connected to and an important part of our journey forward. And, as we refocus

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and redouble our efforts under the leadership of new FBT Chief Diversity Officer Chris Johnson, we will lean into our responsibility to communicate progress relative to our ongoing actions and commitments.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Frost Brown Todd

Learn More

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