



CCWC MEMBER FEATURE From the Early Days to Present

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“**Resilience and tenacity
are critical characteristics
of success**”

Q: What job and title did you have when you first joined Corporate Counsel Women of Color?

A: CCWC launched its first Career Strategies Conference in 2004, and I have been attending that program since 2004 or 2005, shortly after I made partner at Alston & Bird LLP.

Q: What job and title do you have today?

A: I am currently a partner with Alston & Bird and chair of our Class Action & Multidistrict Litigation Team. I am also a past co-chair of the firm's Diversity & Inclusion Steering Committee.

Q: What road did you take to get to your current job?

A: After law school, I clerked for the Honorable Emmet G. Sullivan in Washington, D.C. and joined Alston & Bird as an associate in 1994. Fortunately, I genuinely love the practice of law – developing legal strategy, crafting innovative arguments, and working with different clients and industries. Not every day was rosy, but I decided early on to pick my battles, actively seek out opportunities, and take risks. A mentor told me: no one is going to hire you if they don't know who you are. I credentialed myself by publishing and speaking on topics related to my practice area, and I participated in many different bar organizations and events. I invested in my relationships with those I met by supporting them both personally and professionally and demonstrating that I was worthy of their trust. Nurturing those relationships was a priority because I knew that being committed to their success would pay dividends in the future. Luckily, I work with people who truly cared enough to help me succeed, serving not just as mentors but as sponsors and advocates; and their support, combined with my deep faith and work ethic, propelled me to where I am today.

Q: As you look back over your career, what career strategies would you give to the women of color attorneys in the Corporate Counsel Women of Color network?

A: I tell all lawyers of color, male and female, that resilience and tenacity are critical characteristics of success. Beginning in the early stages of a career, women of color attorneys should cultivate and nurture a wide range of relationships with individuals who are committed to investing in your success and willing to serve as a sponsor, not just a mentor, in helping you achieve success. I always recommend that women of color attorneys be willing to take risks, ask for stretch assignments, always be prepared, be open to learning new skills, and find ways to work around the unwritten rules of the game. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, women of color attorneys should actively support each other – within law firms, across law firms, and between inside and outside counsel. Be willing to serve as a stakeholder in each other's careers and actively invest in each other's success. Success is not possible without the support of others. And once you've achieved success, be sure you find a way to help further the careers of others.

Q: Is there any one takeaway that has stayed with you from the CCWC early days of the networking receptions and/or our annual conference?

A: The ability to tap into a deep network of incredible advisors and honest sounding boards and the energy I gain from fellowship with other women of color attorneys who share similar experiences have stayed with me and keep me coming back to the sisterhood of CCWC year after year.