



Disrupting the STATUS QUO

By Catherine McGregor

Carlos Brown on using his influence to change cultures and increase diversity.

FOR CARLOS BROWN, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GENERAL COUNSEL AND CHIEF COMPLIANCE OFFICER AT DOMINION ENERGY, the reasons for becoming a lawyer were rooted in the need to do the right thing. This impulse has informed his whole career, especially his focus on accountability for DEI, as exemplified by his innovative initiative for hiring and building relationships with diverse outside counsel. Brown and his team have committed to at least 30% of legal outside spend being with diverse firms or diverse matter-responsible attorneys at majority firms and vendors. It's this commitment to changing the dynamics in terms of how success is defined and who benefits from Dominion's legal spend that Brown feels will be central to driving change in the broader legal profession and righting some of the inequality that has defined law – and society – for so many years.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Adam Harrell, Jr., Brian Jackson, Joe Reid, Carlos Brown (sitting), Jimmy Robinson, Jr., Rudene Mercer Haynes, Jontille Ray / CREDIT Jay McClinton

Carlos Brown grew up in the Long Ridge community of Chesapeake, Virginia (also known as Cuffeeytown), a historically free Black community where his family had lived on the same land for over 200 years. As a child, he was cared for by his great grandmother while his mother was at work, and he would watch and listen to her and friends. Their conversations often turned to current and historical injustices, such as the loss of land to sharecropping and segregationist tactics. Another influence was the TV, which was frequently tuned to *Perry Mason*, the show about a crusading criminal defense lawyer who represented innocent defendants and ensured justice was

done. Both had a profound effect on the young Carlos.

“I remember sensing angst and helplessness on the part of my great grandmother. As she and her friends talked about these stories, I resolved to myself that, when I became an adult, I wanted to be their voice and a champion for people like them.” These histories, spoken and shared, were testimony to a lack of access to the full rights of American citizenship that is still felt by the Black community to the present day. Brown’s early desire to champion fairness and justice was to become a defining factor in the creation of the Dominion Energy Legal Diversity Goal Plan.



I wanted to be a voice for people who felt like they had no voice.” —*Carlos Brown*

A CULTURE OF BELONGING

Ownership and belonging are central to the Legal Diversity Goal Plan. The culture that Brown has created in the legal team is predicated on the idea of belonging – of being able to show up as the best version of yourself and so reach your full potential.

It’s this personal, human aspect that cuts through the empty clichés too often spouted about culture and inclusion. For Brown, it’s about making inclusion a real lived experience, which is something that all organizations need to aim for: “When we say we want to be an inclusive and diverse company: are we doing everything that we can do to make that a reality or is it just rhetoric? I want us to have that integrity – that, if we say that we’re committed to diversity and inclusion, then we need to look like the communities that we serve. There’s no excuse for failing at that.”

In his own team, Brown’s emphasis has been firmly on people and their development. But a legal team’s culture has to reflect the company in which it operates, and Brown feels that a challenge for many law departments – and the law firms they work with – is not seeing themselves as part of the broader corporate enterprise. As a company, Dominion Energy has always prided itself on talent development. Brown has spent half of his career at Dominion outside of the legal department, working in the business. He wanted to bring that wider experience to the legal team, in making its culture more people focused.

“We spend a lot of time on succession planning and talent development. We implemented a talent review process where, twice a year, we talk about everybody in the department, from entry level to the vice presidents. We assess them not necessarily on their performance, but rather on how they are developing. We want to know: Are they thriving? How are we doing in helping them to thrive?”

For Brown, this approach speaks to the heart of the culture of the organization. Leaders must understand that an engaged and thriving culture has to be about the success and development of the team, not just its leader. While this idea has driven the internal culture in his legal team, it has also informed the creation of the Legal Di-

versity Goal Plan. The aim of this program is to effect real change by giving more opportunities to diverse talent.

THE STATUS QUO: LOTS OF TALK BUT LITTLE ACCOUNTABILITY

Carlos Brown has heard many companies make statements about diversifying their supplier base and many general counsel talk about diversifying their external lawyers and firms. But invariably, at the end of the year, most legal departments don’t meet the goals they set for themselves. When this occurs, what do they do? In Brown’s experience, they often identify a handful of immaterial matters they can send to diverse firms to check that particular box and so declare success. However, these tend to be solo transactions, not part of long-term substantive relationships with diverse counsel.

From Brown’s perspective, the underlying issue is a lack of accountability about legal diversity among lawyers charged with allocating work to external counsel. “The challenge is: How do we require accountability from our internal team to build deep and substantive relationships with diverse counsel?”

MAKING THE CONNECTION

Despite the program’s rigor, Carlos Brown is keen to emphasize that it comes from a starting point of assuming good intentions and of fostering collaboration between the legal team at Dominion and outside counsel, whether they are diverse-owned firms or larger law firms with whom Dominion is looking to foster relationships with more of their diverse attorneys.

With the internal team, the first step was making sure that they had the resources available to be able to find diverse lawyers and law firms. The team created a database and made sure that they had access to the resources of groups like NAMWOLF (National Association of Minority and Women Owned Law Firms) and MCCA (Minority Corporate Counsel Association).

A recurring theme in Brown’s approach is the importance of human connection. At regular intervals throughout the year, events are scheduled where diverse firms and lawyers can interact with the legal team, either at

The Dominion Legal Diversity Plan: Sharing the Wealth Systematically

BIHC showcases some of the Black talent that is benefitting directly from the Dominion Legal Diversity Goal Plan.

THE DOMINION LEGAL DIVERSITY GOAL PLAN is based upon giving consistent and meaningful work to diverse lawyers in large firms and to diverse-owned law firms. This has grown via the whole Dominion legal team building relationships with diverse talent. These lawyers are at the forefront of many of Dominion's matters and Carlos Brown and his team ensure that their worth is recognized and rewarded.



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FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Tierra Everett; Rich Wetzel; Gina Burgin; Carlos Brown; Sharon Burr and Troy Jackson / CREDIT Jay McClinton

Dominion’s offices or at the suppliers’ own premises. For Brown, the latter option is preferable as it helps to reshape the mindset of his team.

“I find it fascinating that, in many cases, majority communities are very happy to invite minorities to their majority space, to somewhere they continue to be treated as a minority. But it’s a very different dynamic when you’re in the majority if you have to immerse yourself in the space of a diverse population and walk into their office. That experience can really illustrate for my team the capabilities of a diverse firm and the unique talents and relationships that they can bring to bear. Going into a space which was not familiar was essentially ripping the blinders off some of our colleagues who may not have ever had an experience of working or being in a space that was not designed for them. What we found was that in those circumstances, we’ve had unique connections develop. Our lawyers are developing sincere relationships with the professionals they meet at these events because they connected on a human level.”

What’s key, though, says Brown, is that the relationships created via his program are substantial and that they result in repeat matters. Despite the outreach and effort of initiatives like events and meetings, says Brown, feedback from diverse firms was essentially, “We can’t be expected to drop everything, including work for other clients, for one-off emergency assignments if they aren’t going to result in a substantive relationship.” Brown emphasizes: “It’s crucial that general counsel realize that a relationship has two parties and that they have to see the perspective of the firms they are working with. Any diverse supplier program is pointless if it’s merely paying lip service to building meaningful working relationships.”

“Part of the philosophy behind our system is that it encourages developing deeper, repeatable relationships. For our lawyers to reach their points goal, they have to find somebody that they trust and that they’re going to be willing to give significant work to over and over again.”

This human connection fosters relationships which drive more work to diverse attorneys. But to make a differ-

ence, such a change has to be truly cultural, not just about a few committed individuals. As described in the boxout, each individual team member is also responsible for the whole team's success. "Bonuses are tied to the success of this initiative and if one team member is not pulling their weight then, potentially, everyone in the legal team will lose a portion of their bonus. This drives collaboration towards the greater goal – a key aspect of cultural change. We now have internal colleagues cross-referring diverse attorneys to other internal colleagues."

GETTING THE BUY-IN

While other general counsel may talk about creating a similar change to that being championed by Dominion Energy, not many have actually taken the practical steps that Carlos Brown and his team have. One of the key lessons that Brown shares with other general counsel and chief legal officers is that, as leaders, they have to take full responsibility for DEI in legal. Whilst Dominion's focus on DEI means that Brown has been supported by his CEO, he also did not feel he had to ask for permission at every step. That dynamic was central in driving meaningful change.

"Dominion Energy's former CEO Tom Farrell made a statement that the company needed to do better in DEI and said that he felt not advancing more in this area would be failure on our part," explains Brown. Farrell challenged his leadership to commit to improving diversity both within their ranks and also with suppliers. "I took him at his word," laughs Brown. "I trust people, they tell me something and I believe it! So, I developed the program and I talked to him about it once and he said, 'Great, we need to be doing more,' and we never talked about it again except when I gave him an annual progress update." This attitude is shared by current CEO, Bob Blue. "In fact, Bob has challenged us to do even more!"

For Brown, the key to the program's success was not waiting to be asked to make a change but simply doing it, then being able to demonstrate to leadership the better outcomes that have been achieved as a result. It's something he feels other general counsel need to become more courageous about in their own leadership.

COURAGEOUS LEGAL LEADERSHIP

Given the effectiveness of Brown's program, why have more legal leaders not adopted something similar? Brown

The Dominion Energy Legal Diversity Goal Plan:

Building Internal Accountability for Hiring Diverse External Counsel.

Carlos Brown has no interest in assigning immaterial matters to diverse counsel to just check a box. He wants to build substantive long-term relationships with diverse external counsel. In his view, the way to implement this change is by making his internal staff accountable for engaging diverse external firms.

To drive accountability, Brown:

- Created clear goals and measures. A diversity initiative point system assigns points to internal groups for awarding matters to diverse or veteran-owned firms or when hiring minority lead attorneys in non-minority owned firms. Sustained behavioral change is driven by increasing this goal year on year.
- Clearly communicated these goals and measures. Brown has made sure that all legal groups and attorneys at Dominion Energy are fully aware of this program. He has made clear to his team, "You have an obligation to source and identify diverse counsel. You are accountable internally to meet the goal." He has also empowered his lawyers to switch outside counsel if existing firms are not meeting Dominion Energy's goals. When asked how many of Dominion's lawyers participate in the legal diversity program, Brown responded, "They all do."
- Aligned incentives with achievement of the goals. Bonuses in the legal team are tied to achieving the diversity goals. The diversity program goal is a departmental goal; if the department falls short, everyone loses out. This gets everyone's attention and aligns the whole team around achieving the goal. Says Brown, "If you have an opportunity to contribute [to achieving the goal] and you don't do it, there's a risk that you cause the entire department to lose out on a portion of their bonus." ■

Personal Perspectives



Rudene Haynes

Finance Partner

Hunton Andrews Kurth

RUDENE MERCER HAYNES, is a finance partner at Hunton Andrews Kurth. She believes that the Dominion Energy Legal Diversity Goal Plan – and GC Carlos Brown’s focus in ensuring it is applied in a meaningful way – is creating a tangible change for Black lawyers in big law firms.

As client relationship partner (or coordinating attorney, in Hunton’s terminology), Haynes is the first point of contact for Dominion work and responsible for generating new relationships between the firm and Dominion: “I coordinate other practices to present Carlos and his team with a diverse staff in order to see if there are other areas that we could assist in.”

Having such a key role with a major client has had a significant impact on Haynes’ own career and standing within the firm: “Without the introduction of this diversity plan, it would not have been as easy a journey for me in terms of progress at the firm. I do not know if I would be in this role, front and center, without Carlos’s insistence that the diversity plan is the blueprint for engagement.”

What also struck Haynes is Brown’s commitment to ensuring that the opportunities afforded to minority lawyers on his matters are real and not just performative diversity. She recalls that, when she was offered the coordinating attorney role, Brown wanted assurance that this was not merely a title and that she would receive origination credit for their matters.

Her role has enabled Haynes to build deeper relation-

ships across the Dominion legal team – a key metric in the diversity plan – and to introduce more minority lawyers across Hunton to the company. The heft of the Dominion Legal Diversity Plan has seen Hunton become more focused on DEI as a business advantage: “The firm sees that this makes business sense. It can’t just be a tick-box exercise anymore. I have partners in other practices who come to me frequently wanting to brainstorm about how to do a better job of sourcing diverse candidates. That’s something that, five years ago, would not have happened.”

Additionally, in her roles as one of the Firmwide Hiring Partners, a member of the Executive Committee and co-chair of the Goals and Metrics Subcommittee of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, Haynes can work to effect change at a firm-wide level.

The Dominion Legal Diversity Plan has also led to collaboration with Dominion in ensuring there is more diverse talent in the pipeline. “Several years ago, I asked Carlos and his team to partner with us in our 1L diverse clerkship program, where diverse 1Ls would spend up to four weeks with Dominion Energy, and the rest of the time during the summer program with us. This allowed us to incentivize incredibly talented diverse students to join our firm because they had an opportunity to have both in-house and outside counsel experience. We’ve had some real success stories and it means that Hunton and Dominion can work together to create a more inclusive legal profession.” ■



Jimmy Robinson

Managing Shareholder

Ogletree

JIMMY ROBINSON, Managing Shareholder at Ogletree in Richmond, now leads a large proportion of Dominion’s labor and employment matters. Robinson knew Carlos Brown from the Virginia State Bar Association but also knew that, historically, Dominion had used other firms for their labor and employment needs. When Brown transitioned into the general counsel role, Robinson had a conversation with him in passing to reinforce that he had a lot of material on key labor and employment topics if Brown needed it. “A week before Labor Day, Carlos called me, asking for my thoughts on an issue. Then he said, ‘Hey, do you think you can put a team together even though it’s Labor Day week?’ We did, and that was the start of our relationship.”

Robinson says that what makes Brown stand out is his absolute belief in Black excellence – with no caveats.

“It doesn’t matter what the caliber of your degrees, experience or reputation; as a Black lawyer, there’s always the question of ‘Where is the white guy? Who is supervising this?’ In my team, we’re excellent at what we do, we just needed the opportunity to provide our perspective and proposals. Carlos gave us that opportunity. We showcased our talent, the resources and the deep bench that we can bring to bear. We are now a trusted partner with Dominion. They call on us and work with us hand in glove every day.”

Robinson says that it’s not only Brown’s beliefs that make him unique, but his willingness to face the consequences of putting them into action. “There are other in-house counsel who are attempting to replicate what he’s done, but he is a trailblazer.” What sets Brown apart is the realization that change, no matter how positive,

will not always be comfortable. “Frederick Douglass said, ‘If there is no struggle, there is no progress.’ Carlos is not afraid to take risks to achieve something important like greater vendor diversity.” Brown understands his methods may create a backlash, explains Robinson, “But as long as he’s armed with the idea that we’re making progress, he’s comfortable with that.”

Brown has also ensured his team have exposure to a diversity of talent, which is vital. Says Robinson, “We have to show people who look and think differently, and how we can bring all of that energy together to capture what’s best for a company like Dominion. Carlos exposing his team to this wealth of talent has been a blessing for them. It brings down barriers, because at the end of the day, we’re all working toward the same goals.”

Brown isn’t giving out favors; he’s opening the door for opportunity. It is strong performances from Black lawyers that keep his team coming back to people like Jimmy Robinson. However, says Robinson, real change has to be about more than just work. “For general counsel to champion African American lawyers to get origination credit is so important.” Brown’s attitude – and that of some of Robinson’s other general counsel clients of color who go the extra mile to ensure that their Black lawyers get recognition for what they do – is game changing. “To know that we are providing great work for our clients, that they will consistently send us work because they believe in us, and can rely upon us – we can take that to the bank. It’s life changing. It gives us that ability that a lot of other attorneys have had for a very long time, because they have folks who feel comfortable with them automatically.” ■



We will never be different unless we choose to do things differently. And to measure them, like any other metric in corporate America. We set goals and we hold people accountable for them...” —*Carlos Brown*

sees it as a lack of commitment, a matter of other priorities or a fear of upsetting what might be seen as a comfortable status quo.

“They don’t want to invest the time, or they’re not willing to go elbows deep into driving this change, because they may feel there are other things that are more important, or they may feel that there’s risk. If they have great relationships with their incumbent firms and they’re taking care of them, then why frustrate that by adding this additional accountability? Relationships and friendships may have developed between clients and their lawyers and it’s hard to take work away from your friends.”

What is imperative, says Brown, is looking at the bigger picture, particularly in terms of the legacy that will persist if legal leaders do not make substantial changes in how they allocate work: “Racism has persisted in America for some 450 years because changing it is hard, because it requires people to make difficult decisions. It requires that the majority give up their own interests to improve racial dynamics, and to champion equity and inclusion. It requires those who are of privileged status to give up some of that advantage. Fundamentally, that is where some of our colleagues are challenged: Am I going to take something away from one colleague to transfer to another? So, because I don’t want to do it, I create rationalizations, be it skill, capacity, talent, or questioning whether a pipeline exists.”

To be a really great law department that utilizes true diversity of thought and experience, and that really moves the needle on DEI, says Brown, you cannot be afraid to be different and innovative. “We will never be different unless we choose to do things differently. And to measure them, like any other metric in corporate America. We set goals and we hold people accountable for them. If you fail, then there is a consequence. If you’re successful, there’s a reward. That’s how we’ve created this program.”

THIS CANNOT TAKE FOREVER

For programs like the Legal Diversity Goal Plan to

thrive, majority firms need to ensure there is a pipeline of diverse talent and that this talent has a pathway to success. A key part of achieving this, feels Brown, is the need to redefine the concept of talent in the legal profession – where what counts as ‘talent’ is too often simply a reflection of personal preference.

“The vast majority of lawyers did not go to the top 15 law schools, or to an Am Law 100 law firm. We have confused talent with personal preference, then we rationalize that.”

Brown believes that what makes for a successful lawyer is more about attitude and broader skills than particular academic experiences: “I look for talented, motivated people. I can take a lawyer who was a great personal injury lawyer, but who worked really hard and built the practice, and that lawyer can become a great regulatory or corporate lawyer because it’s about their attitude. It’s their commitment to the practice and to client service that ultimately will drive their performance, not their generic legal skill set. We have this culture that defines success in a particular way, but the truth is when you look behind the veil, the lawyers that are doing the work, who are winning and are most successful for us, are not necessarily the ones that conform to this myth of what talent is.”

To ensure that diverse talent is developed in majority firms, clients have to not only insist these lawyers get work but interrogate the metrics behind that.

For Brown, the metrics are: “Who is on all my matters; who are you hiring; who are you promoting; who is getting credit for matters?” But there also needs to be a personal commitment to the success of individual diverse talent. Brown will identify three to five people from his law firms that he can mentor, monitor and sponsor.

What drives him in this is the same desire to right inequality that he imbibed as a child at the feet of his great grandmother. “There has to be some degree of resolve on the part of general counsel who truly are committed to this to say, this change will not take forever.” ■

Lessons Learned

Carlos Brown offers several lessons from his own experience implementing the Legal Diversity Goal Plan at Dominion Energy to inspire other general counsel colleagues:

- **GCs must own diversity for the legal department.** Developing and implementing Dominion’s Legal Diversity Goal Plan came about because Brown drove it. He was emphatic in stating, “As GC, I have accountability for the goal. My bonus is at risk as well. I ultimately have responsibility for which outside firms get engaged and get work.” He developed the point system, communicated it, and closely measured the results. If not for his efforts, it would not have happened. This is a lesson that GCs must take the lead in driving change.
- **GCs need to be disruptors.** Brown sees many general counsel who are hesitant to disrupt the existing system. His response is, “If you follow the same rules, you’ll get the same results. You have to disrupt the system and not be bound by the old rulebook.”
- **GCs need to institutionalize their DEI program and make it part of the culture.** By using a point system where token one-off matters would not satisfy the DEI goal, the Dominion program encourages lawyers to identify diverse attorneys that could develop substantive relationships with for repeat business. For example, Dominion has moved entire practice areas such as real estate and labor and employment to Black lead attorneys. Brown has encouraged both formal and informal relationship-building activities to develop bonds between diverse attorneys and his lawyers. He makes it clear both through his tracking and through informal engagement with his team that strong performance on the DEI goal will be considered when evaluating candidates for promotions and incentive pay.
- **Companies need programs like Dominion’s to move the needle.** Dominion’s Legal Diversity Goal Plan forces law firms to be more conscious and intentional regarding who they hire and assign matters to. This plan allows private practice partners to be more aggressive within their own firms by asking for and looking at demographic information. It is programs such as this that drive systemic change.
- **Legal departments need to put pressure on majority-owned firms.** Historically, majority-owned firms might bring a Black lawyer to a meeting, but that lawyer wouldn’t get credit for the billing and wouldn’t necessarily do the work. Dominion Energy’s plan closely tracks exactly what work is sent to minority lawyers at majority-owned firms. As Brown says, “We are going to look at majority firms and assess the opportunity to identify diverse talent in these firms. This program is going to be our lever to drive it. The point system puts accountability on my internal staff.”
- **CEO support.** It is essential for a GC to have the strong support of their CEO and the entire executive team. At Dominion Energy, Brown has built that support over time. He was given the latitude to figure out how to create a best-in-class legal department to serve the company’s needs. He has kept his leadership informed on the department’s diversity initiatives. As a result, he is not concerned that a firm will go around him to the CEO to override a decision.
- **Legal departments want long-term partnerships with external firms.** Brown wants his team to develop ongoing relationships with firms that share Dominion Energy’s values. He wants to see these external firms hire young Black and other diverse attorneys, train, develop, and promote them. ■

It Takes an Ally



Most major changes for greater inclusivity have needed the participation of the majority to succeed, from women’s suffrage to civil rights and marriage equality. That’s also true with changes in the legal profession. Here two white allies speak about working for change as part of the Dominion Legal Diversity Program.

Joe Reid

Partner
McGuireWoods

ENERGY AND REGULATORY SPECIALIST JOE REID, is a leading trial lawyer and a partner at McGuireWoods, one of Dominion’s key outside law firms. He shares his thoughts on why the Dominion Legal Diversity Plan is so significant and why he is working as an ally to drive it forward.

“It’s the right thing to do and it really is in alignment with the shared core values of our respective organizations. The leadership of Dominion, including Carlos [Dominion General Counsel Carlos Brown], is fundamentally committed to these principles and the leadership of our law firm is likewise committed.”

One major area of discussion for Reid and Brown was that, for the plan to result in real progress, it needed to be more than just an exercise in numbers. Says Reid, “This is about creating pipelines and opportunities. It absolutely has to be a long-term plan, not short term, because it takes a lot of work and a lot of time to be successful in creating more DEI.”

Change can be hard, and Reid agrees that there is an element of urgency and disruption required. “I think that leaders always need to be thinking about how to enable the success of others. We’re a much stronger organization when we have capable players on the team who do excellent work and whose diversity mirrors not

only our clients but the world around us.”

It might seem counterintuitive, but for Reid a key sign of success is when he himself is not the first port of call for clients, despite his extensive experience. “When a client is asking a younger lawyer – and, in this context, diverse lawyer – for advice. They’re providing sound advice, and gaining the client’s confidence. As a leader, you should just sit back and embrace that and be very proud.”

McGuireWoods has done lots of litigation work over the years for Dominion, and Reid has seen his team thrive in court. “As a trial lawyer, it’s just a great moment when I watch a diverse lawyer on our team – a lawyer who we have helped develop – being the First Chair and giving an opening statement or cross-examining a witness.”

It’s a continual message at McGuireWoods, says Reid, that more diverse teams are better teams. It’s one echoed in the firm’s relationship with Dominion. “With respect to Dominion, Carlos has made it very clear that that the partners who are aligned with them and who achieve along these lines are going to be the ones that are rewarded. They are the ones who will create enduring relationships and become long-term success stories with them as clients.” ■



Ryan Boggs

Director of Ethics and Compliance

Dominion Energy

RYAN BOGGS IS DIRECTOR OF ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE AT DOMINION ENERGY, and has been one of the ambassadors for the Dominion Legal Diversity Plan.

By his own admission, Boggs was not convinced initially by the plan, mainly because, like many inside counsel, he had a full workload. “At first I didn’t see the benefits of it, I was thinking that’s going to slow me down when I’ve got this backlog of work; to take the time to bring on a new attorney or even a new firm was just very cumbersome.”

Once Carlos Brown became general counsel, the focus on diversity accelerated. At the same time Brown promoted Boggs into a leadership role. Boggs was now a leader reporting to a Black general counsel. Around the same time the team had some diversity training. What resonated with Boggs, as white man, during the bias training where the group was shown videos of interactions, was how often he did not spot the moments of bias.

“I started to think maybe there’s something going on, am I unconsciously hindering the development of minorities, either within our company or through our outside counsel relationships?”

Around this time Brown assigned Boggs to work on diversity initiatives and for Boggs, “It just kind of all came together!” It was also one of the first times, as an

in-house lawyer, he was not working on a legal matter but on an initiative that had a broader purpose.

For Boggs the program’s success is centred around giving opportunities and creating collaboration. One example Boggs feels is particularly noteworthy is the strategic partnerships between big firms and smaller diverse owned firms. This creates further opportunities for diverse lawyers. Some diverse owned firms can be much smaller and that can limit which matters the Dominion legal team felt that they could send them, says Boggs. “But what we’ve done on a few of our big projects, is we’ve gone to our large firms who understand our diversity initiatives, and we’ve told them that we want them to partner with a small firm. If the large firm might staff up with seven or eight attorneys, we will ask them to take two or three from a diverse owned law firm and work collaboratively. For the large firm, they maintain the relationship with Dominion and continue to get to work on a big project. It gives the small firm an opportunity to work on a larger project that they could not have handled by themselves.” It’s the responsibility of a Dominion in-house lawyer to manage, “To make sure that it’s balanced and to make sure that the smaller firm is getting substantive work, not just getting the leftovers.” Since the collaborations there have been several combined projects that have worked well for both the firms involved and Dominion, states Boggs. ■