



DEI Events & Podcasts

At Burr & Forman, we seek to educate ourselves and the public about the history of diverse communities as well as ongoing challenges and solutions related to DEI. Below are links to some of our recent DEI programs and podcasts.

2023 Native American Heritage Month – November 1 – November 30 - During Burr & Forman’s 2023 Native American Heritage Month program, we featured Jonny Lipford, an award-winning musician specializing in the Native American flute. As a skilled flutist with over two decades of experience, Jonny curated a program for Burr that included musical performances and information about the historical evolution of the Native flute’s sound, physical composition, and cultural significance. This program underscored the resilience of Native Americans and the ongoing quest to preserve Native American culture.

2023 Hispanic Heritage Month - September 15 - October 15 - Burr & Forman observed Hispanic Heritage Month by engaging in firm-wide educational activities. In a series of interactive events, members of the firm learned about inventors and thought leaders from Latin America, the indigenous roots of Latin American culture, and the diversity of Latin American music.

2023 PRIDE Month Workshop - June 9, 2023 - In celebration of PRIDE Month, Burr and Forman hosted a Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE) 101 workshop facilitated by Asta Kills of Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation. The event gave a high-level review of terminology, concepts, and best practices to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for the firm’s clients, attorneys, and staff.

2023 AAPI Heritage Month - May 3, 2023 - In honor of AAPI Heritage Month, Burr and Forman hosted a Mindfulness At Work workshop led by Rudhir Krishtel of Krishtel Coaching. Mindfulness is a practice originating in cultural traditions throughout Asia, including yoga and meditation. During the 90-minute workshop, participants explored how to practice mindfulness at work, participated in several guided exercises, and learned how mindfulness aids success in the workplace.

2023 Women's History Month Burr SHEros - March 31, 2023 - As part of our Women's History Month celebration, we recognized Partner, Cheri Turnage Gatlin, Activist and Educator, Pearlie Harris, and Chief Marketing Officer, Kathryn Whitaker, for their leadership, mentorship, and service to the community.

2023 Black History Month Concert - February 13, 2023 - Burr & Forman celebrated Black History Month with an exceptional performance by the award-winning Pine Forge Academy Choir. With a focus on negro spirituals, the concert highlighted the black experience from the 17th century to modern day.

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2023 Martin Luther King Jr. Conscious Connect - January 13, 2023 - During Burr & Forman's 2023 Martin Luther King Jr. Conscious Connect, we featured a conversation with the internationally acclaimed photographic artist Sheila Pree Bright. Sheila's body of work gives a voice to the unheard and reminds us of Dr. King's vision, ultimately inspiring us to move that vision forward into contemporary times.

Indigenous Peoples' Day – November 10, 2022 - Burr & Forman invited Luana M. Graves Sellars, founder of the nonprofit Lowcountry Gullah Foundation, to share the historical contributions of the Gullah people to the United States' economic growth, technological developments, and language. As a subject matter expert on Gullah Geechee culture, community activist, and cultural influencer, Luana showcased why Gullah customs and traditions are American indigenous culture during the hour-long webinar for Burr & Forman's clients and staff.

Hispanic Heritage Month – September 15 – October 15, 2022 - Burr & Forman celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month by honoring the rich cultural legacy of the Hispanic community. Please click on this link to listen to the recording: Part I: Three Burr & Forman employees, Gonzalo Gándara, Ereina Guzmán, and Sara Solano, discuss their varied cultural backgrounds, family traditions, and what they would like others to understand about Hispanic heritage. Part II (starting at minute 28:09): *An English Speaker's Guide to Proper Spanish Pronunciation* is a light-hearted attempt to address just a few of the more common challenges faced by native English speakers when speaking Spanish.

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month – May 16, 2022 - During an hour-long program, small groups of 6-8 people completed virtual games and engaged in discussions regarding waves of immigration to the US, economic contributions, and geographic concentrations of different AAPI groups in America.

2022 Day of Remembrance - April 2022 - Through the months of April and May 2022, Burr & Forman hosted Day of Remembrance activities in multiple offices. These activities encouraged reflection of past injustices and reminded all of the need for continued social justice advocacy. In the words of Winston Churchill, "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." This video includes a call to action by the firm's Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer and a slide show of the historic sites and museums visited by members of different offices.

2022 Women's History Month – March 23, 2022 - Burr & Forman invited sociologist Marianne Cooper, Ph.D., to share her data-driven, scientific expertise on gender inequality, women in leadership and trends regarding women in the workplace. Dr. Cooper is a senior research scholar at Stanford University's VMware Women's Leadership Innovation Lab and an ongoing contributor to McKinsey's annual report, Women in the Workplace. In this eye-opening clip from the program, Dr. Cooper discusses studies on the pervasiveness of bias and the misconception of objective evaluations.

2022 Black History Month Webinar (2-2-2022) – Burr & Forman hosted "On the Forefront of Integration: A Conversation with Ralph Stokes." Mr. Stokes, author of "One of the First: Lessons I Learned While Overcoming the Challenges of Integration," described his experience of living through the integration of his Alabama high school, the University of Alabama's football team under the legendary Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, corporate America, and the world of golf.

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International Persons with Disabilities Day (12-3-2021) – Burr & Forman welcomed Lex Gillette, five-time Paralympic medalist and world champion long-jumper. Lex lost his sight as a child, but with the help of mentors has gone on to achieve what many would have thought impossible. In sharing his incredibly moving story, Lex bore testimony to the power of equity and inclusion.

Veterans Day (11-11-2021) – Burr & Forman’s Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Tamika Walters, spoke with Tammy Mathison, a Legal Practice Assistant, about her experience serving in the Marines during the 1980’s.

Hispanic Heritage Month (10-7-2021) – Burr & Forman hosted a virtual presentation on the Inca Empire, by the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Learning the history and achievements of the Incas underscored the diversity of Hispanic identity and the richness of influences that have helped to shape Hispanic culture.

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month (5-20-2021) – As part of Burr & Forman’s celebration of Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the Japan America Society of Alabama treated us to a presentation on traditional Japanese tea ceremonies and the related cultural values underlying the experience.

Key Takeaways from 2021 Women in Leadership Webinar (3-31-2021) – In honor of Women’s History Month, Burr & Forman hosted a virtual program on the topic of Women in Leadership. Burr & Forman’s Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Tamika Walters, moderated a diverse panel of female CEOs and General Counsel, including: Lindsey Miller, CEO and founder of Battle Republic, Staci Pierce, CEO and former GC of Action, Tara Plimpton, GC of Regions Bank, Teresa B. Wilson, City Manager of Columbia South Carolina. Panelists shared their inspiring paths to leadership, including obstacles they overcame, their strategies for success, and insights on how to make the path to leadership more equitable for all.

Women’s History—Ancient Women Lawyer-Scribes (3-26-2021) – Who were the first women lawyers? Based on what we now know from archaeology and ancient artifacts, the answer may surprise you. This podcast examines the role of women as “lawyer-scribes” in ancient Mesopotamia, Canaan and Egypt—sometimes referred to as “the cradle of civilization.” Research on legal contracts and proceedings, as well as religious texts and images from these cultures, provide clues on women’s roles in the law in ancient history. What can the experiences of these women teach us about the need for gender equity, diversity, and inclusion today? This podcast is hosted by Burr’s Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Tamika Walters, and Partner Ed Snow from the firm’s Atlanta office.

Black History—Augusta Baker: Twentieth Century Librarian, Author and Champion of Inclusive Literature (2-24-2021) – What do Sesame Street, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Mary Poppins all have in common? They are all a part of Augusta Baker’s inspiring story. Learn about this trailblazing, glass-ceiling-breaking champion of inclusive children’s literature. Rather than accepting the negative and limiting depictions of African Americans that predominated children’s literature in the 1930s, Augusta dedicated 40+ years of her life to changing the narrative. Hear all about her story from Partner Pam Baker in this touching episode of the Burr & Forman podcast series. The podcast is hosted by Burr’s Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Tamika Walters, from the firm’s Atlanta office, and Burr Partner Pam Baker from the firm’s Columbia office.

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What was Black History Like Before the Slave Trade? (2-22-2021) – During this program, Professor Samuel Livingston, Director of the African American Studies Program at Morehouse College, joined Burr’s Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer, Tamika Walters, in a discussion on the history of West African civilizations during the centuries leading up to the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The webinar highlights the medieval empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay, using ancient historical accounts and modern archeological findings. This program challenges the notion of Africa having no history and sheds light on the importance of West Africa in international trade, manufacturing, and scholarship during the Middle Ages.

Black History—The Shaw Center – Protecting Black Property Ownership (2-17-2021)– In this special episode of the Burr & Forman podcast honoring Black History Month 2021, we are joined by Burr Partner, Adam Artigliere, to talk about the George and Roszena Shaw Center for Housing and Economic Growth. Adam Artigliere sheds light on a Clemson, SC-based non-profit that is fighting for economic growth and housing equity, and the role our firm has played in the effort. In his remarks, Adam discusses the historical role of real estate in wealth creation in the United States, discriminatory policies and practices that generally barred African Americans from experiencing this wealth, and modern attempts to provide legal and financial assistance to African Americans who are seeking to protect and benefit from their real estate holdings. The podcast is hosted by Adam Artigliere, a partner in the firm’s Greenville, SC office.

Women’s Podcast Series—Episode 3 “A New Reality: Surviving and Thriving While Working Remotely” (10-26-2020) – In episode 3 of the Women’s Podcast Series, Burr partner Ginger Busby is joined by special guest Teresa Hairston, the Diversity and Inclusion Engagement Leader at Mercedes-Benz USA, to discuss the new reality of working remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. The women talk about how to survive working remotely both mentally and physically, and the best practices for a productive remote working environment. This episode is hosted by Ginger Busby from the firm’s Birmingham, AL office.