

A Change is Gonna Come

“... It’s been a long time coming,
but I know a change is gonna come,
oh yes it will.” Sam Cooke (1931-1964)

As leaders of legal workplaces and organizations who want to be successful, we cannot ignore that change is here. For some of us the change has been here for years and for others it is truly on the way. It is no longer a nice proposition to say that “yes, we probably should make a results driven commitment to diversity and inclusion, but we really don’t see a need or that we are not ready.” Sam Cooke sang about change coming in the future. Well, the future is now and change has arrived. That is why it’s critical to have a solid understanding of Diversity in the 21st Century and Inclusion in the year 2016 and beyond.

The world in which we live and the leadership responsibilities each of us have in legal management is in a time of change. This is why ALA is working to make sure everyone understands why diversity and inclusion is important and how each of us can do a better job bringing diversity and inclusion to our lives and to the workplace. The statistic that by the year 2032 Caucasians will be a minority race in the United States – and some predict there will not be a clear racial majority – should propel all of us to understand why businesses of all types must pursue diverse talent and achieve real inclusion. Success beyond today and into the future demands it.

Who better to encourage change in our respective law firms and legal departments than members of ALA? For each of us to play this critical role we must know the many dimensions of diversity beyond what we learned twenty years ago, and understand why Andrés Tapia coined the phrase “Diversity is the mix and Inclusion is making the mix work,” and Vernā Myers has developed the notion that “Diversity is being invited to the party; Inclusion is being asked to dance.” It is not enough nor a guarantee of success simply reaching the goal of diversity as defined by the EEOC. While that is part of the equation, Inclusion is the key to long-term success.

The ALA’s Committee on Diversity & Inclusion is here to help each of you. We have developed tools and resources from a Tool Kit, Mentoring Guide, Tip Sheets, Speaker Lists, Podcasts, to Scorecards. The two Scorecards (ALA’s Scorecard on Diversity & Inclusion – A Roadmap to Change for ALA Chapters and the same for Law Office Administrators) provide true step-by-step roadmaps with resources of how to be a change agent and leader in Diversity & Inclusion. We are here as your partners in making sure that our Chapters and member Firms and Legal Departments thrive into the future. Go to www.alanet.org/diversity/ and the above-listed resources and many more are there at your fingertips.

It was my pleasure to present to the Gateway Chapter of the Association of Legal Administrators. I found everyone to be engaged and appreciative of the 60 Tips presentation and the many resources the ALA Committee on Diversity & Inclusion have developed. The leadership challenges faced by each of us are real and not easily met, but together we can meet those challenges! In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you want to see in the World." ALA is here to assist.

Shari Tivy