Recognizing 5 Outstanding Leaders in

EDUCATION

EDUCATION &

DIVERSITY &

GREATER

EQUALITY
Diverse by Design

From the start, we have believed that diverse viewpoints produce smarter ideas for our clients. That is why we have made diversity, equity, and inclusion integral to our legal services and civic investments. It is also the right thing to do. Because a more just world happens only by design.

Greenberg Traurig’s (GT) diversity initiatives focus on fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment by promoting and supporting an unbiased culture that respects and values the unique perspectives of each individual regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religious affiliation, or disability. GT is committed to supporting initiatives and instituting policies aimed at furthering diversity, equity, and inclusion within the profession and across the global community.

We support the work of several organizations, including the below, among others:

- Human Rights Campaign (HRC)
- Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA)
- LGBTQ+ Bar Association
- Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA)
- National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL)
- National Bar Association (NBA)
- National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)
- OUT Leadership
- South Asian Bar Association of North America (SABANA)

WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS
Juan Carlos Polanco, Esq., MBA, CEO

SPECIAL GUEST REMARKS
Congressman Jamie Raskin

ALUMNI & STUDENT TESTIMONIALS
Brandy Smith, Board Member & Fedel Estefanos, Current Law Student

CLEO CONNECTION
Robert Falk, Board Member

PRESENTATION OF 2022 INDIVIDUAL EDGE AWARD
EDUCATION AWARD (Posthumous)
Presenter – Lynda Cevallos, Esq. CLEO Staff
HONOREE: José Bahamonde-González

DIVERSITY AWARD
Presenter – Amanda Butler-Jones, Akin Gump HONOREE: Laurie Robinson-Haden

GREATER EQUALITY AWARD
Presenter – Elizabeth A. Campbell, Board Chair HONOREE: Jean Lee

OCCASION REMARKS
Vickee Jordan Adams

PRESENTATION OF CLEO EDGE Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. Heritage Awards
& AWARD RECIPIENT REMARKS
Presenter – Juan Carlos Polanco HONOREE: Hon. Letitia James

Presenter – Juan Carlos Polanco HONOREE: Sherrilyn Ifill

FINAL THOUGHTS
Samantha Ahuja, Greenberg Traurig Advisory Council Member
2022 Reception Committee Chair

#CLEOEDGEAWARDS
Greetings.

Welcome and thank you for joining us as we present our 2022 CLEO EDGE Awards!

After the last two years of virtual-only events, we are proud to deliver a traditional in-person reception this year in Washington, D.C., generously hosted by Greenberg Traurig, LLP – a law firm committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Thank you, GT!

In addition, we have created a virtual environment so that our CLEO friends and supporters who are not able to join us in person can still celebrate the achievements of the outstanding individuals we are honoring.

The CLEO EDGE Honors Reception & Awards Program is our flagship fundraising event and we thank all of this year’s generous sponsors and donors! If you appreciate the benefits of diversity in the legal profession and want to help us advance our Mission “to inspire, motivate, and prepare students from underrepresented communities to succeed in law school and beyond,” then please donate to CLEO either by scanning the QR Code below or via our website, www.cleoinc.org/donate.

Finally, whether you are with us in person or virtually, we truly hope you enjoy our program this evening as we celebrate Education, Diversity, and Greater Equality in the legal profession!

Welcome again and congratulations once more to each of this year’s deserving honorees!

Sincerely,

Elizabeth A. Campbell, Chair
CLEO, Inc. Board of Directors

#CLEOEDGEAWARDS
Lawyers impact every aspect of American life. More than 50 years ago, CLEO’s founders recognized the importance of producing a legal profession that mirrors the mosaic of this great nation. Building on the pillars of Education, Diversity, and Greater Equality, they worked together to develop the foundation for a program that would weather many storms over the next half century. The CLEO EDGE Awards honors those individuals, law schools, and organizations that have helped to sustain and expand CLEO’s mission through their collective passions toward balancing the scales of justice for all Americans.

**EDUCATION** – Nelson Mandela said that, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” The Education category winner recognizes and exemplifies this awareness.

**DIVERSITY** – R. Roosevelt Thomas, Jr. captured the essence of our commitment to a more diverse legal profession in his book, “Building a House for Diversity.” The book begins with a fable about a giraffe, who living in a house designed to meet the needs of his tall, slender frame, invites an elephant in for a visit. The elephant unintentionally demolishes the walls and foundation of the giraffe’s beautiful home and the fable concludes with the realization that a giraffe house could never accommodate an elephant. In this spirit, CLEO’s Diversity honorees understand the importance of “building a house” for diversity and respecting the differences that make each of us who we are.

**GREATER EQUALITY** – It encompasses a human tapestry; a panorama that includes race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, and sexual orientation, in addition to individual choices and preferences. Over the last five decades, the legal profession has played a major role in weaving components, e.g. Civil Rights Act, Equal Pay Act, Women’s Movement, Gay Rights Movement, Americans with Disabilities Act, Immigration Movement, towards Greater Equality in America. The Greater Equality honorees are indeed egalitarians who share CLEO’s commitment to the equality of all people and have helped advance our society.
José Bahamonde-González was born in Cuba, on January 26, 1960. After his first career as an auditor, he pursued a second career in the law.

After graduating from Syracuse University College of Law in 1992, he turned to law school administration. Initially, working at the Georgetown University Law Center, he later served as an Assistant Dean at the University of Miami School of Law. For the last 20+ years, he worked at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law as Associate Dean for Administrative Affairs and Student Services and as Associate Dean for Professional Education.

In 2019, José embarked on a third career path – becoming the Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Professional Development Officer at Miles & Stockbridge in Baltimore. In 2021, he joined Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton’s Washington, D.C. office as Senior Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Manager.

José always dedicated himself to be the best, most committed and dedicated leader and mentor. He worked with students, lawyers, professors, and administrators to increase opportunities, open doors, and build strong and lasting pipelines to improve diversity in the legal profession. During his career, he received numerous, well-deserved recognitions for his efforts. Despite all he accomplished, without a doubt, his greatest achievements were the relationships he developed and nourished, the love he gave, and the joy he inspired in others.
Laurie Robinson-Haden is the President and CEO of Corporate Counsel Women of Color (CCWC), which she created in 2004 to advance women of color attorneys and foster diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession. In addition to her impactful work at CCWC, which now includes helping women of color entrepreneurs scale their for-profit businesses, Laurie served for nearly two decades in multiple leadership roles at CBS Corporation including Senior Vice President and Assistant General Counsel.

Laurie has been recognized by Lawyer of Color as one of the “Top Ten Black Lawyers of the Decade” and by Savoy magazine as one of the country’s “Most Influential Black Lawyers.” Recently, she was honored with the Humanitarian Award by the New York City Bar Association and the United Nations.

Laurie has certificates in entertainment media management from New York University and in diversity and inclusion from Yale School of Management and Cornell University. She served on the board of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund for seven years and serves on the board of visitors of Indiana University School of Law Bloomington and North Carolina Central University Law School, where she serves as chair of the board. Laurie received her Bachelor of Arts from North Carolina Central University (magna cum laude) and her Juris Doctor from Indiana University School of Law Bloomington.
Jean Lee
President and Chief Executive Officer of the Minority Corporate Counsel Association

Jean Lee is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA), the preeminent advisor on diversity, equity, and inclusion to c-suites across corporate America. As an immigrant woman of color with a background in social work and corporate law, the professional has always been personal for Ms. Lee.

A fierce advocate for her individual and institutional clients, she now champions systems-level change to create greater opportunities for those who, like her, are building careers in defiance of the status quo.

Ms. Lee brings an intersectional focus to her leadership of MCCA, where she has established a researched-based management consulting practice to help organizations develop sustainable diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategies; identified and promoted more than a dozen high potential talent for executive level positions in the c-suite; benchmarked the first-ever inclusion survey, which has been used as a framework for creating an inclusive culture; and established the first-ever comprehensive law firm diversity scorecard card measuring quantitative and qualitative data. She leverages her years of experience as a clinical social worker addressing some of the most complicated societal issues and as a litigator to serve as a solutions-oriented advisor focused on impact. As a result, MCCA is moving from being a thoughtful convener of people and ideas to a thought-leader and advisor on DEI issues in the workplace.

Ms. Lee is a sought-after conference speaker and a frequent commentator on diversity in the workplace and beyond. She has been recognized by numerous leading organizations as a change agent. The Council of Urban Professionals named her a 2014 Catalyst: Change Agent, and in 2015, she was recognized as a Trailblazer by the Korean American Lawyers Association of Greater New York.

Ms. Lee holds a B.A. in Politics and Psychology and a M.S.W. in Social Work from New York University. She received her J.D. from Rutgers University School of Law, where she was a Senior Editor of the Rutgers Law Record. She began her legal career at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey after clerking for the Honorable John J. Hughes, United States Magistrate Judge (retired), in the District of New Jersey. Prior to law school, Ms. Lee was a social worker for the Legal Aid Society in New York.
This special award honors a person who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in Education, Diversity, and Greater Equality in the legal profession and society. After Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. received the inaugural CLEO EDGE Heritage Award during the organization’s 50th anniversary in 2018, the award was renamed the CLEO EDGE Vernon E. Jordan, Jr. Heritage Award to honor a man whose life-long commitment to protecting human rights and social justice strongly mirrors CLEO’s mission.

When Jordan matriculated at Howard University School of Law in 1957-1960, less than 1% of lawyers in the United States were African American (0.75% according to U.S. Census data). And the scarcity of Native American and Latino lawyers was even more startling. As a practicing civil rights attorney in Atlanta, Georgia, he was one of only 393 African-American lawyers in 10 Southern states. Trained to make a difference in American life, Jordan became a trailblazer in the civil rights movement, joining the NAACP as a Field Director early in his career, working to end discrimination, increase voter registration, and change laws to support legislation beneficial to the advancement of equality for all Americans. In 1969, he became the first black Fellow of the Institute of Politics at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He later served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Urban League, Inc. and the Executive Director of the United Negro College Fund, Inc. Throughout his lifetime, Jordan broke down numerous barriers, including becoming the first African American to sit on a Fortune 500 company board. After spending much of his life in the civil rights movement, Jordan became a partner at Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP, an international law firm and served both Presidents Clinton and Obama in various capacities. He served as a Senior Executive Partner with Akin Gump and a Senior Managing Director of Lazard Frères & Co. LLC in New York.

Jordan (1935-2021) was a graduate of DePauw University and Howard University School of Law, and the author of Vernon Can Read! A Memoir and Make It Plain, Standing Up and Speaking Out
Sherrilyn Ifill is a civil rights lawyer and scholar. She most recently stepped down after 10 years in leadership as the President and Director-Counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), the nation’s premier civil rights law organization fighting for racial justice and equality. She currently serves as a Senior Fellow at the Ford Foundation.

Ifill began her career as a Fellow at the American Civil Liberties Union, before joining the staff of the LDF as an Assistant Counsel in 1988, where she litigated voting rights cases throughout the south, including the landmark case Houston Lawyers Assoc v. Texas, in which the Supreme Court held that judicial elections are covered by the provisions of the Voting Rights Act. In 1993 Ifill left LDF to join the faculty at University of Maryland School of Law in Baltimore. Over twenty years, Ifill taught civil procedure and constitutional law to thousands of law students, and pioneered a series of law clinics, including an environmental justice practice offering, a reparations theory and practice clinic, and one of the earliest law clinics in the country focused on challenging legal barriers to the reentry of ex-offenders. Ifill is also a prolific scholar who has published academic articles in leading law journals, and op-eds and commentaries in leading newspapers. Her 2008 book “On the Courthouse Lawn: Confronting the Legacy of Lynching in the 21st Century” was highly acclaimed, and is credited with laying the foundation for contemporary conversations about lynching and reconciliation. A 10th anniversary edition of the book was recently released with a Foreword by Bryan Stevenson, the acclaimed lawyer and founder of the national lynching memorial in Montgomery, AL. She is currently writing a book to be published by Penguin Press in 2023 entitled “Is This America?”

Ifill appears regularly on national news programs, and her singular voice and analysis is frequently at the forefront during our nation’s most challenging racial crises. Ifill’s counsel is widely sought out by political leaders, community groups, and civil rights colleagues for her broad and deep strategic vision.

Ifill graduated from Vassar College with a B.A. in English and earned her J.D. from New York University School of Law. She is the recipient of numerous honorary doctorates and was named by TIME Magazine as one of the 100 Most Influential People in the world in 2021. Ifill was appointed by President Biden to serve on the President’s Commission on the Supreme Court in 2021. She is a recipient of the Radcliffe Medal and the American Bar Association’s Thurgood Marshall Award. Next year Ifill will receive the Brandeis Medal.

Congratulations

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In 2013, Ms. James was elected Public Advocate for the City of New York and became the first woman of color to hold citywide office. As Public Advocate, Ms. James served as a watchdog over New York City government agencies and as an advocate for the City’s most vulnerable communities.

Her office handled over 32,000 constituent complaints and passed more legislation than all previous Public Advocates combined, including a groundbreaking law that banned questions about salary history from the employment process to address the pervasive gender wage gap. Ms. James successfully took on the gun industry by pushing New York City's largest pension fund to divest from gun and ammunition retailers. She fought in court on behalf of children and families on issues including children in foster care, children with disabilities, and tenant protection.

Prior to serving as Public Advocate, Tish James represented the 35th Council District in Brooklyn in the New York City Council for ten years. As a Council Member, she passed the Safe Housing Act, legislation that forced landlords to improve living conditions for tenants in New York City’s worst buildings. She helped uncover the corruption behind the Office of Payroll Administration’s City Time contract, a scheme that cost New York City over $600 million. She also pushed through a revolutionary recycling package that included expanding plastic recycling, a new clothing and textile recycling program, and increased access to recycling in public spaces.

Before her election to the City Council, Tish James served as head of the Brooklyn Regional Office of the New York State Attorney General’s Office. She resolved hundreds of consumer complaints and investigated predatory lenders who preyed on first-time homebuyers. She assisted the Civil Rights Bureau in its investigation of the NYPD’s stop-and-frisk policy and cracked down on firms engaged in deceptive business practices including violations of human rights, environmental laws, and scams targeting immigrants.

Tish James began her career as a public defender at the Legal Aid Society. A proud Brooklynite, she is a graduate of Lehman College and Howard University School of Law.
PROGRAMS & SERVICES

The CLEO Pre-Law Summer Institute (PLSI) Since 1968, the pre-eminent residential and online program designed to prepare participants to be more competitive law school students in the following fall.

1L Prep-Attitude is Essential (AIE) An intensive online, weekend pre-law seminar designed to introduce and prepare participants already accepted into law school for the rigors of law school.

Achieving Success in the Application Process (ASAP) An intensive weekend pre-law event to help participants develop the tools they need to understand the law school application process and become competitive law school applicants.

CLEO College Scholars Program One-day structured programs for participants to learn about the law school admission process and be exposed to topics such as mock admissions (Road to Law School), improve analytical and logical reasoning abilities (Sophomore Super Saturdays), or discover various LSAT preparation strategies and take a practice LSAT (Juniors Jumpstart the LSAT).

CLEO Law School Application Services (CLAS) Services offered by CLEO professionals to help pre-law students with their law school application packet including application, personal statement, and résumé review.

CLEO Legally Inspired Cohort (CLIC) An innovative program to identify, recruit, and train law school applicants who possess the academic and leadership skills to attend one of three partner schools in a supportive team of five after attending the Pre-Law Summer Institute.

CLEO Legally Inspired College Kohort of Students (CLICKS) A multi-state program funded by the U.S. Department of Justice-Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention that empowers underserved high school students through structured mentorship with exposure to law and sports professions.

NCBE/CLEO Bar Preparation This collaboration with the National Conference of Bar Examiners assists CLEO 1Ls, 2Ls, and 3Ls across the country to prepare for and conquer the bar exam.

For more information, please visit: cleoinc.org/pre-law-programs

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To inspire, motivate, and prepare students from underrepresented communities to succeed in law school and beyond.

VISION
That the United States legal profession is truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive and that it effectively balances the scales of liberty and social justice for all.

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