



## GODFREY & KAHN

### Diversity comes full circle at Godfrey & Kahn

**A**t Godfrey & Kahn, it's the individuals at the firm who drive its diversity and inclusion efforts — both internal and external.

“Most lawyers have a really strong sense of wanting to contribute to the greater good,” said President and Managing Partner Nic Wahl. “I think we have fantastic people who see diversity as critical to our success and critical to the communities in which they live.”

Diverse people and opinions within the firm are critical because the firm's clients are diverse, he said.

“We try to be as open and as inclusive as possible,” Wahl said. “We have the reputation of a team-oriented, team-focused firm where we work together. I think our culture naturally is helpful for our diversity efforts.”

Externally, the firm's efforts have a razor-sharp focus on fostering — and retaining — diverse talent in the state.

The firm provides internships for di-

verse students at two Milwaukee-area schools: Carmen High School of Science and Technology and Cristo Rey Jesuit High School. The firm places four Cristo Rey students in areas such as marketing and accounting. The Carmen High School interns spend time in the firm's trust accounting department.

“It's been fun to watch those students come here during the school year, during the summer and then go on to full scholarships at some of the leading universities in the country,” said Wahl.

The firm's efforts also focus on encouraging diversity in the legal field. For more than a decade, the firm has provided full law school scholarships to diverse students through fellowships. The one at the University of Wisconsin Law School started in 2004; Marquette Law School's began in 2006.

The law schools and a committee of former fellowship recipients select students, both from Wisconsin and out of

state, to receive a three-year scholarship. After graduating and completing the firm's summer associate program, those students get an offer to join the firm — though they are not obligated to accept it.

Godfrey & Kahn has provided 26 fellowships to diverse law students so far, and some of them have moved on to other firms, opened their own firm or gone on to work as in-house counsel at companies such as Target Corp. and Ernst & Young. The firm's first fellow, Wade Harrison, is legal counsel for the University of Wisconsin System.

Others remain at the firm and find time to give back to their communities and participate in firm committees.

“Just to get those people the education, to give them those opportunities and to really drive diversity, whether they stay with Godfrey & Kahn or go to a different part of the country — those are all positives for us and they're all good results,” said Wahl.

—Erika Strebel

