



*As part of Wheeler Trigg O'Donnell's (WTO's) membership in the Leadership Council for Legal Diversity, Co-Managing Partner Mike Williams developed and publicly committed to the following personal action plan to help WTO recruit, retain, and advance diverse attorneys.*

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## **I, Mike Williams, personally commit to the following:**

### **I. Personal Commitment**

- To strengthen WTO's efforts to recruit and, more importantly, retain diverse associates who want to become WTO partners;
- To be a tireless advocate for achieving greater diversity, equity, and inclusion in the legal profession and to underscore the urgency of that work to improving the quality of legal services;
- To deliver the highest caliber of legal services, including by staffing cases with attorneys who more closely reflect the cultures, values, and diversity of the clients and communities we serve;
- To practice active listening, training, mentorship, and sponsorship as critical means to that end;
- To do all I can to inspire WTO to translate "best intentions" into results;
- To meet with WTO's partners, employees, and clients to discuss the Firm's and my personal commitment to enhance the diversity, equity, and inclusiveness of the profession and to explore opportunities for WTO and its clients to partner together to advance the careers of diverse lawyers within and outside the Firm; and
- Meet at least once each year with WTO's diverse lawyers for updates about their experiences at our Firm.

### **II. Organizational Commitment**

- To use my leadership seat at WTO to put diversity recruiting and retention, inclusion, and equity plans into action;
- To work with the Recruiting and Retention Committee, Management Committee, and Executive Committee as active participants in assuring the successful execution of those plans and later iterations;
- To undertake a systematic effort to achieve ongoing improvement in WTO's hiring, training, mentorship, evaluation, and retention policies, practices, and procedures with a focus on eliminating the negative impacts of implicit bias, meaningfully increasing the diversity of WTO's employees and partners, and constructively engaging with all members of the Firm;
- To undertake a systematic effort to better understand and improve the experiences of our diverse lawyers;

- To implement firm-wide training that seeks to improve the experiences of diverse employees;
- To develop and implement partner legacy planning and client succession planning strategies that encourage identification of diverse lawyers to succeed senior partners to one or more client relationships at the time each partner retires or semi-retires;
- To reward partners who successfully develop and promote the professional development of diverse lawyers (including identifying diverse lawyers as either billing attorney or lead counsel for significant client matters), and to account for this and similar contributions to the Firm's DEI efforts through the partner compensation process; and
- To continue to refine, support, and participate in the Firm's sponsorship program, which facilitates relationship building and advocacy between partners of influence and our diverse talent.

### III. Metrics

- The Firm's employees—both non-attorneys and attorneys—have become meaningfully more diverse in number.
- The Firm's partnership has become meaningfully more diverse in number.
- The culture is perceived by diverse lawyers as one that supports their professional development, advancement, and belonging, not only allowing but encouraging them to become future leaders of the Firm.
- Diverse lawyers feel comfortable being their authentic selves in the workplace and take pride in being part of the Firm.
- Hold other leaders and partners accountable for embracing and advancing the goals that we have established.
- Audit and evaluate comparative compensation (base and bonus) at all levels.

**By publicly committing to these efforts, I expect to contribute to and be held accountable for meaningful, measurable change to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion at WTO and in the legal industry.**



**Michael T. Williams**