



NEWS RELEASE

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Lewis Rice Member Ronald A. Norwood Serves on Missouri Bar's Special Committee on Lawyers of Color to Establish Diversity, Inclusion Programs

In an effort designed to increase the retention of diverse lawyers and promote greater participation in leadership roles within [The Missouri Bar](#), [Lewis Rice](#) member and Chairman of the firm's [Diversity & Inclusion Committee Ronald A. Norwood](#) was selected to serve on The Missouri Bar Special Committee on Lawyers of Color. The work of this Special Committee and active participation by Norwood has resulted in six new initiatives being presented to and unanimously approved by the Board of Governors of The Missouri Bar. Based on national best practices in the legal profession, the Board-approved recommendations include:

- Creation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Pledge Program for law firms and legal employers
- Establishing state-wide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Awards for individuals and large legal employers, and, once established, expand to mid-sized, solo and small firms
- Creating a Statewide Judicial Clerkship Program, in coordination with existing clerkship programs, for law students and lawyers who are in their first four years of practice
- Establishing the first ever in the nation Midwest Bar Diversity Collaborative ("MBDC") (that so far includes bar organizations in Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Iowa and Wisconsin) to exchange ideas and information regarding program development and efforts, successes and challenges in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in their respective bar associations
- Developing and implementing The Missouri Bar Life Path to Success Program to increase the pipeline of potential lawyers of color in the state as well as encourage representations of lawyers of color to communities throughout the state
- Creating The Missouri Bar Law Student Mentorship Pilot Program, which will pair law students of color with Missouri lawyers for the purpose of providing meaningful one-on-one mentoring to maximize students' potential

“I am inspired by the passion these special committee members brought to their charge,” said John Gunn, 2020-21 Missouri Bar President. “We will begin implementing these programs in short order, laying a deeper foundation for diversity and inclusion efforts in our bar.”

Formed in 2020, the Special Committee on Lawyers of Color was created to research and propose concrete solutions to the challenges of diversity, equity and inclusion in the legal profession in Missouri.

“It has indeed been an honor and a privilege to work with this Special Committee to develop tangible solutions to increase the retention, promotion, and advancement of lawyers of color within the state bar,” Norwood said. “Lewis Rice and I look forward to helping launch these important initiatives and to continuing efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the legal profession, both state-wide and nationally.”

Norwood represents national and regional banks, mortgage companies and other financial institutions in commercial and tort litigation matters. He also represents health insurers, health maintenance organizations and health care providers in health care litigation disputes and provides counsel to manufacturers in product liability litigation, consumer fraud claims, and disputes arising under the Uniform Commercial Code. Additionally, Ron has represented governmental, quasi-governmental entities and municipalities in an assortment of litigation matters, has defended various entities in class action lawsuits, and has represented clients in federal investigative and federal criminal matters.

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About Lewis Rice

Throughout the Firm's history, Lewis Rice attorneys have made excellence the foundation of their practice. Founded in 1909, more than a century of service gives the Firm the experience, resources and tools to serve their clients' dynamic needs. A diverse team of more than 160 attorneys provides counsel and solutions for the challenges facing local, regional and national businesses, as well as individuals and families. Lewis Rice maintains offices in downtown St. Louis, suburban Town & Country, Washington and Jefferson City, Missouri and Edwardsville, Illinois. The Firm also has offices in downtown Kansas City, Missouri and suburban Overland Park, Kansas.