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Groups release 'Call to Action' report this week

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According to the latest "Call to Action" report, the average percentage of female partners in Chicago law firms that submit their data to NALP has risen to 20.11 percent.

In 2007, the average percent of female partners — published by NALP — for Chicago law firms was 19.31 percent.

The latest report is based on numbers from more than 60 Chicago law firms or law offices for 2009.

It was released this week by the Chicago Bar Association Alliance for Women and the Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law Firms.

NALP, the National Association for Law Placement, does not distinguish between equity and non-equity partners, so the Call to Action report does not either.

The top five, Chicago firms with the highest percentage of female law partners in the new report are:

1. Troutman, Sanders LLP, 57.1 percent
2. Baker & Daniels LLP, 37.5 percent
3. Sonnenschein, Nath & Rosenthal LLP, 30.2 percent
4. Butler, Rubin, Saltarelli & Boyd, 30 percent
5. Jackson, Lewis LLP, 30 percent.

Rebecca L. Ross, managing partner of the Chicago office of Troutman, Sanders, said in a news release that "diversity is an integral part of our success."

She said the firm's female attorneys, "including many in significant leadership positions," have "enriched our firm and support for our diversity initiatives at all levels of the firm" and led more diverse people to join.

The original Call to Action issued by the Chicago Bar Association in 2004 asked law firms that signed it to agree to pursue a series of goals to increase the percentage of women in law firm positions and measured signatories' progress.

The methodology of the Call to Action report is new for the 2009 data, according to the groups that released it.

In the new system, the report will be based on data filed with NALP in the first



Ben Speckman

(From left to right) Margot E. Klein, of the U.S. District Court; E. Lynn Grayson, of Jenner & Block LLP and co-chair of the event; Leslie D. Minier, of Katten, Muchin, Rosenman LLP; and Linda Heacox, of the Chicago Bar Association, talk at The Coalition of Women's Initiatives in Law Firms and the Chicago Bar Association Alliance for Women event Tuesday, where the results of the "Call to Action on Women in Leadership in Law Firms" report for 2009 was released.

quarter of every year, in this case data from the first quarter of 2009.

With this, the two women's groups say they will annually measure and publish rankings on the following numbers for law firms or law offices here:

- Female partners
- Female associates
- Female "other lawyers."

This week's report says four Chicago law firms saw a gain of higher than 5 percent in female partners from 2008 to 2009. They are:

1. Sedgwick, Detert, Moran & Arnold LLP, 14.3 percent.
2. Fitch, Even, Tabin & Flannery, 10.7 percent.
3. Michael, Best & Friedrich LLP, 5.5 percent.
4. Littler, Mendelson P.C., 5.3 percent.

The top five Chicago firms with the highest numbers of female partners are:

1. Hinshaw & Culbertson LLP, 70

2. Kirkland & Ellis LLP, 66
3. McDermott, Will & Emery LLP, 52
4. Sidley, Austin LLP, 50
5. Katten, Muchin, Rosenman LLP, 42

Linda K. Myers, partner at Kirkland & Ellis, said in a news release that Kirkland's "ability to function at the very highest level of our profession is significantly enhanced by building a team of lawyers who bring us the benefit of diversity."

The study is intended to be an annual benchmark.

One of the originators of the Call to Action, Jane DiRenzo Pigott, managing director of the consulting firm R3 Group LLC, said in addition to growing numbers of partners in Chicago law firms, "it's especially encouraging to see the women associate numbers climbing because they are the future leadership in Chicago's law firms."

The top five Chicago law offices with the

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highest percentage of female associates are:

1. Proskauer, Rose LLP, 66.7 percent
2. Dykema, Gossett PLLC, 62 percent
3. Goldberg, Kohn Ltd., 61.1 percent
4. Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP, 60.9 percent
5. Quarles & Brady LLP, 60.9 percent.

The top five firms or offices that made the biggest gain in female associates are:

1. Barnes & Thornburg LLP, up 24.1 percent

2. Duane, Morris LLP, up 23.8 percent
3. Ungaretti & Harris LLP, up 13.5 percent
4. Greenberg, Traurig LLP, up 12.4 percent
5. Thompson, Coburn LLP, up 11.3 percent.

And the top five law firms here for total number of female associates are:

1. Sidley, Austin, 150
2. Mayer, Brown LLP, 147

3. Kirkland & Ellis, 138
4. Winston & Strawn LLP, 132
5. Jenner & Block LLP, 89

The statistics are generated pro bono by Deloitte Inc. The full report can be found at www.thewomenscoalition.com/news/call-to-action.

Pigott launched the original Call to Action along with E. Lynn Grayson of Jenner & Block. The two also worked on the 2009 study.