



Podcast Transcript

Black History Month: Celebrating Black Voices at BakerHostetler: Part 1

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Kattman: In recognition of Black History Month, we are spotlighting four associates from various practice groups through our new podcast series celebrating Black voices at BakerHostetler. This week will feature an associate from the business group and from the Digital Assets and Data Management Practice Group. As we learn more about these associates, we will also discuss top issues and changes in their respective areas of law and how they are making strides in their practices. I'm Amy Kattman and you're listening to BakerHosts. On today's episode of celebrating black Voices of BakerHostetler, our guests are Jessica Lowery and Apps Akpofure. Jessica is an associate in our Digital Assets and Data Management Practice Group and Apps is an associate in our Business Practice Group. Both are members of the BakerHostetler, Black Affinity Group. Welcome to the show, Jessica and Apps.

Lowery: Great to be here.

Akpofure: Thank you Amy. Pleasure to be with you today.

Kattman: BakerHostetler's theme this year for Black History Month centers around community upliftment. Jessica, could you tell us what does community mean to you and how has it helped you to develop as an attorney?

Lowery: Community makes me think of it takes a village. To me, communities have common groups of members who share values and interests, and people look to communities for support to be lifted up and enriched in their daily lives and lastly, it's, community provides a sense of security and safety with belonging and my community has definitely helped in my development as an attorney. As a law student, my community with some people that I could lean on in times of support and need, and even now as a practicing attorney, I look to them for advice as well as mentorship as I progress throughout my career.

Kattman: And Apps, what about you? Could you tell us what community means to you?

Akpofure: Thank you, Amy. Community means to me, we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. We are directly influenced and encouraged and supported by individuals, not just here at the firm but also external supporters. Community means to me those partners that have that have led the way created an environment for us to be here at the firm, but also clients who have poured into us over the years and supporting us throughout our career and throughout our development. So community, to me, is a support system for us to grow as individuals, but also as attorneys.

Kattman: Thanks. Apps, your experience is in real estate and we often hear that the development of workforce and low income housing is an important part of developing successful communities. Can you tell us about your experience in project implementation and financing and how you helped to create value for all stakeholders?

Akpofure: Yes, Amy. In the affordable housing space you get the chance to work with individuals of not just the one transaction but in multiple transactions throughout your career. So the ability to continue the relationship from transaction to transaction, we all have the common goal of constructing, rehabbing and developing affordable housing in our region. So, working with our clients, understanding that that is their sole goal, and making sure that we are addressing all the major issues that go along with the real estate transaction, but also making sure that we are building firm relationships with the related parties that support affordable housing in our region.

Kattman: Thanks, Apps. Jessica, as you can see, the cybersecurity and privacy legal industries are one of the largest ongoing growth markets with extensive opportunities for career growth and stability. However, there is a lack of diversity within the industry. Are there any initiatives or pipelines that you're involved with

to help raise awareness about the cyber security and privacy industry in your community and also to help recruit diverse talent?

Lowery: Thanks, Amy. Yes. I am a part of many initiatives and pipelines within this space. However, I'll highlight three today. One being the Minorities in Cyber Security. This initiative was developed out of a unique passion to help fill the gap that exists in the support and development of women and minority leaders in the cyber security field and there are programs that are specifically designed to assist individuals with corporate survival skills or what you may know as soft skills that they need to build their career within this industry. Secondly, I'm involved in Black Women Talk Tech and essentially it's a collective of black women tech founders or professionals who have a unique understanding of the challenges we face in this industry. But we also provide advantages such as partnering with creditors as well as influencers that support and encourage black women to build the next business and also how to become involved within the cyber security space. And lastly, I'm part of, I'm a member of the International Association of Privacy Professionals, Diversity and Privacy section. In this space, we foster inclusion and diversity in the privacy field globally and the privacy professionals, we gather and we plan programming as well as networking opportunities for section members to get access to these benefits and also to be able to share your ideas and experiences that you have as a diverse professional.

Kattman: That's great. Thanks, Jessica. I'd like to switch gears a little bit. Apps, let's start with you. Could you tell me what inspires you?

Akpofure: Thank you very much Amy for that question. What inspires me is my family members, in particular my mother. I am an immigrant from Nigeria by way of England. Being in the United States is, I've been here for nearly two decades and assimilating and being able to build the community that we discussed about earlier but also making sure that we live up to the thoughts, prayers and well wishes of those that are back home is important to me.

Kattman: Thanks, Apps. What about you, Jessica?

Lowery: Similar to Apps, my family is also my inspiration. They have been a pillar of strength for me and they also are my guide and give me the courage to battle and endure obstacles that I've overcome in my life. And no matter the circumstances, my family has been there for me and they surround me with the help that I need to continue in this profession.

Kattman: So, thank you. As one final question, I'd like to ask you what advice can you give to other up and coming lawyers? Jessica, let's begin with you.

Lowery: Thanks. There are three pieces of advice that I will give to up and coming lawyers. First is to own your career. Set achievable goals for yourself, network with lawyers and non-lawyers and build upon those experiences. Secondly, I would say to focus on gathering the necessary skills that you need to progress in your career and to create a holistic career for yourself. And lastly, I would say to

seek mentorship. Seek mentorship with the purpose of making the most out of it and recognizing the skills that you want to improve and where you would like your mentor to help you develop those. And find someone who has the ability to help.

Kattman: Sounds great. Apps, what about you? Any advice to share with up and coming lawyers?

Akpofure: Yes. Thank you, Amy. I would just say trust yourself. Self-belief. I think most attorneys once we arrive at a firm start to somewhat doubt ourselves a little bit, but I would encourage all attorneys to all younger associates to trust themselves and trust the ability that they've shown throughout their career so far to get them here. And lastly, just a statement that this too shall pass. Whether you're having a great day or a bad day, this too shall pass. Whether you're having a disagreement with your supervising attorney or partner that too will pass. And also lastly self-care. I think it's important for attorneys to take care of themselves, whether that's physical or mental and keep that a priority throughout your career.

Kattman: All great advice. Thank you for joining us today. Jessica and Apps.

Lowery: It was our pleasure.

Akpofure: Thank you very much, Amy.

Kattman: If you have any questions for Jessica or Apps, their contact information is in the show notes. If you enjoyed the podcast, please be sure to check out part two of our series celebrating black voices at BakerHostetler. As always, thanks for listening to BakerHosts.

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