

Theresa Conduah in Law360: 'Breaking IP Barriers With Haynes and Boone's Theresa Conduah'

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Haynes Boone Partner [Theresa Conduah](#) talked with *Law360* as part of its series of interviews with lawyers who want to make intellectual property (IP) a more inclusive area of law.

Below is an excerpt of the interview:

After nearly a decade working in-house, Haynes Boone Partner Theresa Conduah returned to private practice in November with an ambitious goal in mind: empowering other Black attorneys to find success at law firms.

Conduah, who has worked in-house at United Airlines, Toyota Motor North America and cannabis company Dosist, said attorneys of color tend to migrate toward companies in the hopes of finding career success that feels out of reach at firms. She came to Haynes Boone in November, aiming to push back on that assumption. Before going in-house, she worked at Alston & Bird LLP and what's now Milbank LLP.

The Fordham Law School grad, who also has a Master of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University, talked with *Law360* about how firms can be better at holding onto attorneys of color.

Do you have any overarching thoughts about diversity and IP?

For me as a woman, and a woman of color especially, early on in my career I didn't see a lot of people who looked like me, so it was difficult to envision what my path would be. Prior to going to law school, I worked for a clinical research organization, working in biotech and pharmaceutical trials and publishing reports. When I went to law school, I thought I'd probably focus on that area until a professor suggested that I pursue IP.

I think that's where having the representation matters. When you see other people and see where their path went, you can envision yourself there.

Did you see any difference in how this was handled in-house versus private practice?

It's similar across the field with the exception that, because there's not a lot of people of color in leadership positions at firms, there's been a migration toward in-house. The belief is that in-house might provide more opportunities, which it certainly did, but I think at the end of the day, the same issues and biases are in place in terms of some of the misperceptions about who can actually practice IP.

Can you talk more about the migration in-house?

For Black attorneys and attorneys of colors, there's a misperception that going in-house is a better

path for your career since you don't see many people of color at the leadership level at firms. One of the reasons why I wanted to come back to private practice is to help drive that change, to let folks know that there are opportunities to stay and grow into leadership levels at law firms if that's what you prefer. Essentially, to give people a true choice as opposed to having them think that the only way to advance in your career is to go in-house.