

The Presidents,  
Caymanian Bar Association and  
Cayman Islands Law Society  
Grand Cayman  
Cayman Islands

11 September 2015

Dear Sirs,

**RE: Statement of Goals of Cayman Islands Law Society, Caymanian Bar Association, Caymanian Law Firms and Legal Departments (including Government) for the Hiring, Retention and Promotion of Caymanians ("Statement of Goals") within the legal profession.**

I write in anticipation of the draft Legal Practitioners Bill being circulated for commentary.

Although I am certain that provisions protecting and promoting the interests of Caymanian attorneys will be prominent in the draft Bill, I am inviting the law societies and law firms in the Cayman Islands to re-affirm the use of their best efforts to demonstrate and ensure that the attitudes and practices within their firms promote the full representation and participation of Caymanians at all ranks of the profession. As such, I am formally presenting the attached Statement of Goals to the Cayman Islands Law Society and the Caymanian Bar Association and it is my hope that you will circulate same to your members, inviting their firms to become signatories to the stated goals should they also wish to re-affirm their commitment to setting standards, training Caymanians and providing opportunities for their career and personal advancement and ensuring that there is full participation opportunities for deserving Caymanians in the equity of major law firms. I am also forwarding the same to the Honorable Attorney General.

In light of the need to continue the efforts to achieve full participation and diversity in the profession, it is necessary to evidence a renewed commitment by the signatory law firms to promote the hiring, retention and promotion of Caymanian attorneys in the legal profession.

As leaders of the Cayman Islands Legal Community, the signatory law firms will have to agree to use their best efforts to employ the Best Practices (see below) adopted by the law associations and to aspire to the goals set forth therein to:

- (1) remove any barriers to full and equal participation of Caymanian attorneys in all levels of the work, responsibilities and rewards;
- (2) improve the rate of retention of Caymanian attorneys;
- (3) improve the rate at which the law firm promotes or invites Caymanian attorneys to non-equity and equity partner status, and to management and leadership positions;
- (4) fully adhere to the letter and intent of the Immigration Law (As Revised) of the Cayman Islands as it relates to hiring, training and advancement of Caymanians; and
- (5) conduct critical self audits and evaluations of whether the law firm is achieving these goals, and to provide measures of accountability in the process of implementing and aspiring to the Best Practices.

All signatories will have to agree to engage in critical self-evaluation to identify and correct any attitudinal barriers or organizational bias impeding Caymanian Attorneys' progress within their firms and to correct discrepancies found between the number of Caymanians who remain in the profession, who rise to senior leadership positions within law firms, and who achieve full participation in the profession.

To the extent that Caymanians encounter obstacles based on stereotypes and training/experience based considerations, continued efforts are essential to ensure the retention and promotion of Caymanians in the profession. In addition to this Call to Action, I call on both law societies to develop Best Practices for all Cayman Islands Law Firms for the Hiring, Retention and Promotion of Caymanians ("Best Practices") within 90 days.

In my humble opinion, the Legal Advisory Council, The Hon. Attorney General and The Hon. Chief Justice, in conjunction with the Immigration Department, politicians, partners (in both large and small law firms) and the Law School should sit as a group and address this issue once and for all and I call on them to produce a report on Caymanians in the legal profession and to develop standards and clearly defined pathways to equity partnership in Caymanian law firms from prior to entry into the law school, to the top positions in the law firms.

The report should address standards, training, promotion and adherence to ALL the laws in the Cayman Islands. All these parties must identify and answer the question of whether barriers to enter the equity partnership participation by Caymanians may or may not exist (on a statistical and actual basis) and advise what is lacking in the Caymanian attorneys education and training which stops them at salary partnership or associate in their careers, if there are in fact gaps. They should also, if necessary, raise the standard of entry into the profession.

I am asking all the parties to show in their report how many Caymanian partners there are in the major law firms (15 lawyers and higher) and how many of these partners were Caymanians when they entered the legal profession in the Cayman Islands. It is time that we kept and published statistics like the law societies in first world countries, at least on an annual basis.

Please also illustrate how the graduates from the Truman Bodden Law School have progressed in their legal careers to salary and equity partnerships, including the number of persons graduating from the Truman Bodden Law School who either completed their professional practices courses in Cayman, in the UK or some other place. Finally, the report should answer the question: "At what rate will Caymanians advance to equity status in Cayman Islands law firms?"

**My personal challenge to the legal profession is to double the number of Caymanian equity partners by 2020.**

**Extraordinary efforts are needed to solve this extraordinary issue and moral imperative and politicians and law firms can no longer hide their heads in the sand and pretend that this is not an issue both economically and socially for Caymanians and the Cayman Islands.**

**Faithfully,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Winston Connolly', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Winston Connolly  
Member of the Legislative Assembly  
Fifth Elected Member for George Town**

**cc The Honorable Attorney General**

## **Appendix One**

### **Statement of Goals**

We the undersigned pledge to use our best efforts to demonstrate and ensure that the attitudes and practices within our firms promote the full representation and participation of Caymanians at all ranks of the legal profession, namely to:

(1) remove any barriers to full and equal participation of Caymanian attorneys in all levels of the work, responsibilities and rewards;

(2) improve the rate of retention of Caymanian attorneys;

(3) improve the rate at which the law firm promotes or invites Caymanian attorneys to non-equity and equity partner status, and to management and leadership positions;

(4) fully adhere to the letter and intent of the Immigration Law (As Revised) of the Cayman Islands as it relates to hiring, training and advancement of Caymanians; and

(5) conduct critical self audits and evaluations of whether the law firm is achieving these goals, and to provide measures of accountability in the process of implementing and aspiring to the Best Practices.

**[Signature]**