



## Declaration of Candidacy

Candidates for election as Second Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer, or Director Elected Nationally must complete this form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer at the principal headquarters of DRI by 5:00 PM (CDT) on July 1<sup>st</sup> of the year in which the election is held.

**National Director Requirements** - Directors Elected Nationally or by Region must be Individual Members of the Corporation admitted to the practice of law. Each such director must meet the following qualifications at the time of election: (a) The candidate shall have been a DRI member for a total of at least five (5) years, and (b) The candidate shall have been a member of at least one DRI substantive law committee for at least three (3) years, and (c) The candidate must have registered for and attended at least one (1) DRI Annual Meeting within the previous three (3) years, and, within the three (3) years prior to the final day of the Annual Meeting, the candidate must have 1) registered for and attended at least two (2) DRI seminars, or 2) registered for and attended one (1) DRI seminar and one (1) DRI Regional Meeting.

Please also see the DRI Board of Director and Officer Competencies, attached.

Position sought:

Second Vice President\*     Secretary- Treasurer     National Director

\*If you have declared your candidacy for Second Vice President and are not the successful candidate, will you consider the Secretary - Treasurer Officer position?

Yes     No

Name **Stacy Lynne Douglas, Esq.**

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Firm/Company **Everett Dorey LLP**

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How long have you been a member of DRI? **13 years**

Areas of practice: **Commercial Litigation, focused primarily on catastrophic injuries including transportation, retail & hospitality, product liability, and habitability with secondary practice in labor and employment.**

Please provide your employment history in chronological order beginning with the current position.

**Everett Dorey, LP Partner & Director of Diversity & Inclusion, May 2021 to Present**

**Collinson Law, Partner May 2016 to May 2021**

**Wood Smith Henning & Berman, Partner July 2002 to May 2016**

**Yoka & Smith, Associate July 1999 to July 2002**

**Bolden & Martin, Associate March 1999 to July 2002 (Firm Dissolved)**

**Graduated Law School (Catholic University of America) May 1998, Passed the Bar November 1998**

Please describe your previous involvement in DRI, including but not limited to, leadership positions held, projects contributed to, committee memberships, presentations given, and written materials authored. Special accomplishments should also be noted.

**When I first joined DRI, (2010) I joined all the committees relevant to my practice areas at that time as well as those committees which were of interest to me including Employment, Trial Tactics, Diversity & Inclusion and Women in the Law. However, my active DRI membership and involvement began approximately one year later (2011) when I was appointed Publications Chair for the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. I held this position for approximately four years. After this service, I took a break from being active to focus on having my two children. Upon my return, my leadership journey truly began. I am so appreciative of DRI for its support when I chose to focus on my family for a period of time. DRI did not allow that decision to interfere with my leadership journey upon my return to active membership, which is often unusual for mothers working outside the home.**

**Ultimately I landed within the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. I was a young attorney navigating a majority law firm environment and the Diversity & Inclusion Committee provided a close knit community of individuals with shared and common law firm experiences. It was a place of comfort and solace.**

I attribute much of the success I have had outside of DRI to the relationships built within the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. During my time with the committee, I held the following positions:

Diversity & Inclusion Committee Chair, 2021 – Present  
Diversity & Inclusion Committee Vice Chair, 2019 - 2021  
Program Chair, 2019 Diversity for Success Seminar  
*Recipient - Albert H. Parnell Outstanding Program Chair Award*  
Program Vice Chair 2018 Diversity for Success Seminar  
Publications Chair (2011 – 2014)

Outside of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee I have enjoyed being involved in the following DRI programs and events:

2022 Nominating Committee  
2021 DRI Annual Meeting Chair  
2020 DRI Annual Meeting Vice Chair  
To Protect & Service Task Force, Member

I have also had the privilege of speaking at DRI events, webinars and seminars on the following panels/topics:

- Strategies for Minority Attorneys in Majority Environments
- Is it Just Me? Strategies for Diverse Lawyers in Majority Environments
- Acknowledging Systemic Racism & How to Be an Ally
- Are we Faking Diversity?
- What Lies Beneath the Surface – How to Proactively Build Diversity & Inclusion within the Ranks of Your Organization?
- Promoting Diversity & Inclusion (DRI North Central Region Meeting)
- Cross-Examination of an Expert Witness (Litigation Skills Seminar)
- Batson & Bias – Problem Solved? (SLDO Regional Meeting)
- Invisible or Mixed Visible Diversity - Combating Bias
- Taking a Knee: A Fireside Chat (2021 Annual Meeting)
- Are we Taking a Step Backwards; Affirmative Action in Peril

**Following is a list of articles I have written and published in various DRI publications:**

- **Interview with the G.O.A.T's**
- **Unapologetic**
- **A Time of Reflection, Recognition & Responsibility**
- **It's Time to Commit: Are We Faking Diversity?**
- **Why DRI Members Should Attend the Annual Diversity Seminar**
- **Combating Disloyal Employees: Is the Computer Fraud Still a Viable Tool?**
- **Attrition Rate of Women of Color in the Legal Profession**
- **Diversity & Voir Dire - Why Attorneys Should Use Diversity to Relate to Jurors**
- **Proposition 8 and What it Means for Law Firms**
- **Diversity Retention. How Can Majority Firms Retain Women of Color?**
- **Two Recent California Supreme Court Decisions Favorable to Transportation Industry**
- **Sick & Tired.....and Proud, The Black Experience in America**
- **Proactive Diversity & Inclusion Must be Intentional**
- **Reflections of a Little Black Girl**
- **Back to Business, Why to Attend the 2021 Annual Meeting**

List any significant leadership commitment and involvement within the legal field other than DRI, including but not limited to other legal organizations.

**International Association of Defense Counsel, Diversity & Inclusion Committee Member**

**Speaker for IADC on the following panels:**

- **Diversity as Profit Drivers**
- **Becoming More than an Ally to the Black Community**
- **Jewish Allyship: How to get Involved, Stay Involved and Educate Others About Equality & Social Injustice.**
- **Social Justice on the Main Stage; Taking a Knee**
- **Mental Health, Wellness & Diverse Employees (July 2023)**

**Black Women Lawyers of Los Angeles, Inc., Secretary**

**Los Angeles County Bar Association, Trustee**

**Association of Southern California Defense Counsel, Member**

**Speaker for ASCDC on the following panel:**

- **The Impact of Implicit Bias in Employment Law**

**Riverside County Bar Association, Speaker**

- **Bias In Jury Selection**

**National Bar Association, Speaker**

- **Civil Lawsuits: Are They Disappearing or Continuing during COVID?**

Why do you wish to join the board of directors or become an officer and what skills, abilities and attributes identified in the Board of Director/Officer Competencies can you bring to the role?

**My primary purpose in seeking election to the DRI Board of Directors is to continue the collaboration with defense counsel across the Country for the purpose of ensuring DRI continues to be and remains for the indefinite future, the premier defense bar in the United States. All defense bars are facing challenges relative to membership and seminar attendance. I believe DRI is uniquely situated to be the leader of the defense bar in returning our associations to membership levels of the past, while also growing these organizations into the future, which often times involves uncomfortable change. I want to continue my service to DRI, because it is the organization that has contributed the most to my professional and personal development.**

**While DRI has demonstrated a commitment to Diversity and Inclusion, there is more work to do. I also want to be an integral part of the DRI story moving forward relative to it becoming the leader of non-affinity defense bars relative to pushing the needle towards true Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging. My own diverse background makes me uniquely situated to navigate both sides of this discussion in a way that is not polarizing. Of importance, as I am finalizing this submission, the United States Supreme Court issued its ruling banning affirmative action in college admissions. This ruling not only impacts colleges and universities, but potentially threatens all Diversity & Inclusion initiatives in the United States. It is imperative that DRI continue in its pursuit of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging and I want to serve as a National Director for DRI and be involved in that important work.**

**My diverse background has also taught me to navigate and adapt to different situations, which ultimately developed my conflict resolution skills. My mother is Irish while my father is Black. I grew up in a small town of 3000 people in Iowa, where we were the only Black family in that community. I also consider home, a small community in East Texas where we were one of many Black families. I had to learn to become comfortable being the only Black girl in school when in Iowa. I also had to learn to become comfortable being the Black girl from Iowa who talked different when staying in Texas. These experiences growing up have served me in so many facets of my life and make me uniquely qualified to serve as a National Director. From having an ability to relate to a diverse Board of Directors, to being able to appreciate, understand and resolve conflict between two opposing groups of people, my background, which was once something I was once ashamed of, has been the backbone of my ability to lead and garner the trust of people.**

**As it relates to the DRI Board of Director Core Competencies, as a Partner in both large and small firms, I have been involved in varying and differing styles of marketing and branding of those law firms ranging from large budgets to very small budgets. These experiences have not only given me the confidence over my 25 year career to promote myself (which admittedly took a long time to become comfortable with) but also provides valuable insight into both large scale and smaller scale ways DRI can promote itself amongst the legal community. There are many untapped attorneys and firms that DRI is not reaching and I would like to collaborate to develop a method where DRI can expand its membership and ultimately reach people who simply are not aware of the value of the organization. For example, I might not be submitting this declaration right now if a DRI brochure had not dropped on my desk at a specific moment and I decided to look at it. That particular brochure had some interesting programming that excited me, causing me to seek approval to attend my first DRI seminar. We cannot wait for others to accidentally happen upon DRI. We must strategically target prospective members and law firms.**

**As a leader in DRI during the transition from an Executive Director business model to a CEO business model, I had a small view of the challenges and resistance DRI faced when members comfortable doing things one way, were forced to adapt to another. There were changes I, myself, was resistant to. And while there is still so much to learn regarding how DRI as a business operates, what I did learn from my limited view, is that change is complicated, must be navigated delicately and that with time and patience, people adapt. Fear cannot be the reason to avoid change. And as long as communication is open and people are receptive to new ideas, change creates opportunities and prevents organizations from becoming stagnant. If elected as a National Director, I would want to learn more about DRI's business model and how we can grow and develop the organization so that it remains relevant in these**

ever-changing times, while maintaining its historic personality that has been a draw for so many.

As it relates to leadership, it is something I take very seriously. In order to garner support for new ideas and change, one has to be a leader. I am proud of how I was able to lead and influence the Diversity & Inclusion committee during the trying times of the pandemic, which due to the social injustice prevalent during that time, were especially challenging for our committee members. I am equally proud of my leadership coming out of the other side of the pandemic, where we created new pipelines and mentorship programs so people could reconnect again. Recognizing that we were not tapping into specific marginalized communities, we also created three subcommittees to ensure that the Diversity & Inclusion committee was truly diverse and inclusive. I believe that being a good leader involves being open, making comfortable spaces for others, being prepared to be unpopular when a tough decision needs to be made, while also ensuring people respect you enough to support you through both the popular and unpopular decisions. My leadership in the DRI Diversity & Inclusion Committee is the proudest and most meaningful work of my career.

Serving as DRI's Annual Meeting Chair, was undoubtedly a transformational experience for me in a different way. It tested my leadership abilities and gave me the confidence to move differently and more courageously within the Diversity & Inclusion Committee. The unique opportunity to lead a diverse group of people, from all over the country, with different practice areas, personalities and backgrounds was a game changer for me in my professional career. I see a positive difference in how I operate within the profession after serving as annual meeting chair. My leadership skills, communications skills and listening skills were all challenged and improved as a result of that experience. I am so grateful for the relationships I developed with the people on the 2021 annual meeting steering committee as they all played a role in my development during that time.

Next, I believe people's reputation is power. My reputation is very important to me as it ultimately impacts the ability to provide for my family. An odd proud moment occurred for me recently. A plaintiff's attorney who I had never worked with before was being difficult and we were in a conflict where neither of us were budging. Similar to what we often do in the local defense bar, he sent a mass email to the plaintiff's bar asking about me, hoping to find some dirt. To his credit, he admitted doing this and reported that the plaintiff's bar had nothing but positive things to say about me. I also recently tried a case against one of the best plaintiff's attorneys in Southern California. The jury ultimately agreed with our side, and rendered a favorable defense verdict. Despite this, I received an email from the plaintiff's attorney stating what a pleasure it was to work with me. These were both proud moments for me as

they demonstrated my ability to be in conflict with others, while also having their respect. I believe reputation is something we cannot be flippant about. I believe that being a zealous advocate for your client, for your firm, for DRI, and for yourself requires that you be able to move in circles, even when you have conflict in a professional and respectful manner. I believe zealous advocacy involves being able to fight the good fight in Court, shake hands after and possibly share a joke about how things went. Great lawyers are nothing without a positive reputation.

As it relates to conflict resolution, without naming the involved parties, I was contacted this past year to assist in resolving a conflict that existed between DRI members. As set forth above, I believe my diverse perspectives make me especially equipped to navigate disputes and conflicts between others. I was honored and humbled to have been asked for input and guidance, from people I had never worked with before.

Lastly, I would like to think that the programs and initiatives of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee demonstrate that I am a visionary. From the pipeline mentorship program, to the creation of three new much needed subcommittees, (disability, LGBTQ2+ and women of color) I am proud that the committee did the work under my leadership necessary to ensure that the important goals relative to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging remain a constant focus of DRI. I look forward to supporting the Diversity & Inclusion Committee next year as an immediate past chair.

What suggestions would you make to move the organization forward?

- 1. Focus on bridging the gap between young lawyers and more seasoned attorney members. We are at unusual times in the legal profession where we continue to have seasoned attorneys struggling with the changes to the practice of law, while young lawyers are easily embracing and navigating these changes. These young lawyers will be the future leaders of DRI and are a valuable resource at this time. However, we need to ensure that the young lawyers appreciate the foundation and history of the organization, so that the soul of DRI, so beloved by the senior membership is not lost as the organization progresses into modern times.**
- 2. Continue developing the in person seminars to increase attendance and interest. There is an untapped market of individual attorneys (and law firms) that DRI is not reaching. The development of targeted marketing and communications is essential to recruit these members to DRI.**



- 3. Tap into the law firm market and create interest in the organization. If you look at DRI historically, the supporters and sponsors typically are a few law firms who have been consistent over the years, with the remaining sponsors coming from law firms who are supporting leaders from their firms in the organization. We need to tap into law firms in a way that makes them interested in DRI because of what it offers law firms and their attorneys. Development of law firm memberships that make the attorney memberships a part of their benefits package to newly hired lawyers. Help law firms tap into our CLE webinar database for use in CLE presentations to their law firms, while providing a DRI panelist to answer questions live after. Thinking more outside the box relative to getting buy in from law firms. We need the buy in from law firms to ensure the support needed for the individual lawyer members as well as to support the future growth of DRI. Ultimately, law firms want value. We need to better demonstrate to law firms the value of DRI, and create value, where appropriate.**

Describe one transformational/defining experience in your professional life you have been involved with and what you learned from that experience.

**Most of my life, I have seen things through the lens of being Black. My parents, cousins, aunties all taught me early on in life the awareness I needed to have walking down the street relative to how people perceived me. It was made clear to me that despite having an Irish mother, when walking down the street, I would be seen as Black. I know my elders had reasons for teaching me this, many of which I am sure revolved around wanting to ensure I knew how to navigate life safely. What I did not realize, is that it limited my ability to relate to issues pertaining to women, despite the fact that I was a woman. In effect, I held my experiences relative to being Black before anything related to my gender. I never really felt or appreciated that my gender had any real impact on my life or opportunities.**

**As a young Black attorney in Los Angeles, prior to having my children, I was accessible for law firm social events, including parties, luncheons and the ever so regular Thursday happy hours. I really enjoyed these events, the associated lifestyle and happily attended. I thought I had hit the job lottery. As long as the billable hours were met, and the clients were happy, nobody noticed if I was in the office or opted to sleep in a day after staying too late at an office party. I was living the work hard play hard business model and thriving.**

**Once I had my first child, I was figuring out how to return to work and manage my child care. I hired a nanny for four full days a week and Friday mornings. I decided to work from home Fridays, churning out my work early in the day and enjoying time with my daughter in the afternoon. I was still meeting and exceeding my billable hours requirement, managing my cases with great**

results, but now instead of being at firm parties and functions, I was only able to attend on occasion and working regularly from home on Fridays. It was not uncommon for me to work from home on Fridays previously, it was just for different reasons, social in nature.

At one point, I was told that it had been noticed that I was not in the office on Fridays. It was suggested that I was no longer able to sustain a full time schedule and that I should consider working hourly instead of maintaining my salary. Within months of planning the birth of a child assuming I can afford it based on my salary, I am faced with that possibly being taken away.

I was shocked. I was panicked. I was humiliated. I was confused. I felt betrayed. For the first time in my life, I felt like.....a woman.....and I did not like the way it felt. It hit me like a ton of bricks that contrary to what I thought, I absolutely could not have it all.

And today what do I say about that experience? What a blessing. That experience opened my diversity lens. It woke me up and taught me that I was not as versed on these issues as I thought. I had real work to do if I was going to deserve respect in the Diversity & Inclusion space. I starting reading, studying and learning from those around me.

This experience empowered and motivated me in to becoming a true leader, a credible teacher of Diversity & Inclusion and a better mother, wife, daughter, friend and lawyer. It opened doors for me that I may never have had opened because I would have remained complacent. I managed to turn lemons into lemonade and moving forward in both my professional and personal life, I now try to view any and all challenges faced through the lens of, "how can this become a positive?"

Describe the greatest challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for DRI over the next five+ years.

We are still facing decreased membership and seminar attendance. The next 5 years will need to involve developing strategies and incentives to hopefully return our membership and seminars to pre-pandemic levels (or close to). Creative ways to provide access to law firm members to corporate counsel should be considered. If these opportunities can somehow be marketed into SLC seminars, that could generate incentives for law firms to support attendance of attorneys. For example, a corporate counsel round table with a cap on attendance, that occurs prior to the welcome reception, can create a buzz and interest, while also encouraging members to register earlier for seminars. For those that register and get to attend, it is an amazing opportunity. For those who do not make the cut, they are seeing that these corporate counsel will be in attendance at the seminar. Both law firms and

corporate counsel have been limiting their seminar participation and attendance. We must create programs and incentives that excites people and makes them not want to miss out.

As much as I am a staunch advocate of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, I think DRI must determine how to navigate its commitment to the cause, without saturation which could lead to alienation. I struggle saying this because saturation is likely what the Country as a whole desperately needs. However, I have had concerns for a while which I shared with my committee about people turning away from DRI because they see it as becoming "woke." Now, some of that is not controllable and we just have to accept that we may lose interest. There is, however, a balance that must be met for purpose of determining what DRI's ongoing commitment looks like, to ensure that it is something that is not perceived as threatening and instead as positive. This is difficult and sometimes feels like an impossible balance, but part of Diversity & Inclusion is recognizing everybody's perspective and determining how best to communicate to all these perspectives. DRI has a respectable history relative to its Diversity & Inclusion efforts, however, there is still a long way to go and a lot of work to be done. In order to make sure the intended impact is made, we must consider all avenues of communication and presentation to encourage people to become involved without them feeling like they are participating in a "woke" movement.

This is complicated and complex issue which will require insight from all sides of the Diversity aisle. For example, I sent a very simple email to all Diversity & Inclusion Committee members attaching the *Dobbs* decision shortly after it was issued and inviting people to read and share with their law firms. The premise of my email was simply that citizens, whether lawyers or not, are impacted by the Supreme Court and it was my belief that as citizens, they should read these opinions. I also mentioned that people were getting a lot of information (some inaccurate) from social medial and that these opinions are a better source of information. Nowhere in the email did I state my position relative to the *Dobbs* ruling. BECAUSE THAT WOULD BE EXCLUSIVE. Interestingly, I was very touched when I received an appreciative email from a former DRI leader who is very conservative in their political beliefs, and who does not believe in abortion. This person thanked me for sharing and stated that they appreciated my email. Conversely, I received a very unpleasant email from a member of DRI, whom I did not know. This person was highly offended by my email. My instinct was to react and give this person a piece of my mind. Instead I invited this person to have a conversation and assured them it was not my intent to offend. Unfortunately, I never heard back. I share this story simply so it is understood that Diversity & Inclusion must be handled delicately as it often is something feared by people and it can result is unnecessary polarization. My goal is for everyone to be included and for nobody to feel excluded.

DRI strives to be governed by a diverse board of directors—in terms of race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, location, and/or professional level, and other facts that enhance diversity and inclusion --- who can and will help advance DRI's goals through the power of collaboration. In what ways have you demonstrated a commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in your work, and how will your DE&I experience inform your contributions as a Board member?

**A lot of my work in Diversity & Inclusion is outlined above, as I am the Chair of the DRI Diversity & Inclusion Committee. As Chair of DRI's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, our role, in part, is to support the diversity initiative of DRI. In addition, I serve as the Director of Diversity & Inclusion for my firm. Below is additional information relative to my Diversity journey prior to DRI.**

**My passion for Diversity & Inclusion began when I was very young. My mother purchased a subscription to Ebony Jr. Magazine for when I was in 5<sup>th</sup> grade. I loved this magazine. It was something that I could relate to when growing up surrounded by an environment so different than I was. One of my first accomplishments was having a question I sent to the magazine (via first class mail) published. It was in that moment, I realized this space was a space I belonged in.**

**Once I graduated high school and moved to San Diego, I became involved in the Black Student Union at my alma mater, University of San Diego. I ultimately became President of the Black Student Union. A critical initiative I was involved in during the mid-90's at USD was creation of an organization called the United Front, which was composed of all the affinity organizations on campus. Although I have fond memories of USD, some of the challenges still faced today, we were addressing back in the 90's.**

**I transitioned from college to being a member of the Black Law Students Association in law school as well as a member of the Thurgood Marshall Inns of Court. Once I started practicing in Los Angeles, I became a board member of the Black Women Lawyer's Association of Los Angeles.**

**When asked how my Diversity & Inclusion experience will inform my contributions as a Board Member, my response is, "How Can it Not?" My day to day life is informed by my diverse status in the United States. From how I navigate work situations, parent my children, interact at my children's school, everything in my day to day life and how I handle it is informed by Diversity.**

**This reality is both unfortunate and empowering. It is unfortunate that diverse individuals are constantly having to make decisions on how to navigate life because of how they are perceived. However, it is empowering because we are now at a point where people are becoming more receptive to Diversity and Inclusion and we can openly share these perspectives and experiences. It is time to have the way over-due conversations and reach people from all walks of live.**

**As it relates to the Board, my Diversity background will allow me to utilize my diversity lens when the Board is discussing any issue and provide insight that people may not have. It will open the door to new perspectives, new ideas and ultimately new lenses for others.**

Is there anything else you would like to add that has not already been previously stated?

**Thank you for your consideration.**

**Stacy L. Douglas, Esq. She/Her/Hers**