



**From Imagery to Reality:
“The Birth of a Nation” to #BLM and Implications for DEI Efforts**
October 13, 2021
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM ET

“The Birth of a Nation” is best known as a controversial yet commercially successful early 20th Century film. A landmark in film history for introduction of new techniques and use of music, it is also remembered for its racist tropes and messaging. Desmond Ang, an assistant professor of public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School and an applied economist whose work focuses on the intersection of race, education, and government, has been researching the impact of the film and studying its contribution to the spread and perpetuation of white supremacist values and anti-Black bigotry. During this webinar, we will explore how a century-old racist film has influenced American thinking and attitudes about Blacks and other people of color and contributed to the legal profession’s ongoing challenges to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.

AGENDA

- 2:00 PM Welcome – Sandra Yamate, IILP CEO
Opening Remarks – Bruce Byrd, IILP Chairman
- 2:05 PM Presentation by Professor Desmond Ang, Harvard Kennedy School
- 2:35 PM Panel Discussion
- **Sharon Jones (Moderator)**, CEO, Jones Diversity
 - **Sharon Barner**, VP and Chief Administrative Officer, Cummins, Inc.
 - **Preston Hopson**, SVP, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Tetra Tech
 - **Alyson Palmer**, Corporate Counsel, Google
 - **Christopher P. Reynolds**, Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Resources, Toyota Motor North America
 - **Crystal T. Williams**, Assistant General Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary, Eli Lilly and Company
- 3:55 PM Closing Remarks - Bruce Byrd

Speakers



Desmond Ang, Ph.D

Assistant Professor of Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School

Desmond Ang is an applied economist and assistant professor at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He is particularly interested in the intersection of race, government and media. His research examines the social impacts of police violence, the effects of voter protections on turnout and polarization, and the role of media on racial prejudice. Desmond received his PhD in economics from University of California, San Diego and his B.A. from Dartmouth College.



Sharon Barner

Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer Cummins Inc.

Sharon Barner is an international business leader and lawyer with more than 30 years of experience assisting public and privately held technology, automotive and life sciences companies to protect their intellectual property and to grow their businesses worldwide. She has combined strategic knowledge and legal discipline with passion and recognized leadership, delivering successful results in complex, global business environments.

Currently, Sharon is VP, Chief Administrative Officer and Corporate Secretary for Cummins Inc., (NYSE:CMI), a fortune 200 global powertrain and power solutions leader, with over \$21B in sales and nearly 50% of its business outside the U.S. As CAO, Sharon is responsible for eight global functions including communications, marketing, government relations, compliance, facilities, security, corporate responsibility and Cummins' global shared services organization; managing a budget of approximately \$685M and more than 2000 employees.

In her previous role at Cummins as Vice-President, Chief Legal Officer (2012 – 2021), she was responsible for global legal matters, including support of strategic corporate initiatives, mergers and acquisitions, regulatory, compliance and other risk management activities. She managed a team of internal and external legal resources across eight countries. Under her guidance the team delivered multiple acquisitions including a \$1 billion acquisition in 2014 of 18 distributors, \$1.2 billion Eaton-Cummins Joint Venture in 2016 and \$250 million acquisition of publicly owned Canadian energy company in 2019. She also brings deep corporate governance experience through her work at Cummins and as a director on public and private boards including Howmet Aerospace (NYSE:HWM), Eskenazi Health Foundation, Association of Corporate Counsel (ACC), Leadership Council of Legal Diversity (LCLD) and Foundation of Advancement of Diversity in IP Law (FADIPL

Sharon has a successful track record of leadership having served as Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Deputy Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) where she was responsible for patent and trademark operations, managing a budget of over \$2 billion and 10,000 employees. Her work included developing a new hiring plan for the Patents Organization (hiring 2500 examiners in FY2011), rolling out a nationwide work force (opening offices in Detroit, Denver, San Francisco), devising a new Human Capital Plan for all USPTO business units, and driving creation of the “2010-2015 USPTO Strategic Plan”, which created a framework for addressing one of the USPTO’s most significant challenges—lowering patent pendency and improving patent quality. She was also responsible for articulating US domestic and foreign intellectual property policies and led over 14 foreign missions to meet with leaders in government, academia and industry to raise awareness about the impact of intellectual property on business and innovation.

Sharon also had a distinguished career in private legal practice at Foley & Lardner where, as member of Executive Management Committee, she helped develop growth strategies and lead day-to-day operations for the 1100 lawyer firm, served as Intellectual Property Department Chair managing operations and setting direction for 200 lawyers with P&L responsibility of \$250 million, expanding department revenue by 10% over 3 years; and spearheading the firm’s East Asia presence by establishing its first Asian offices, in Tokyo, Japan (2007) and Shanghai, China (2008).

Sharon’s business and personal travels have taken her to over 30 countries and she has met with government heads and policy-makers across the globe. She is a frequent speaker on intellectual property strategies and the importance of intellectual property to business value.

Ms. Barner received her bachelor’s degrees in political science and psychology from Syracuse University and her JD degree from The University of Michigan.



Preston Hopson

Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary, Tetra Tech

Preston Hopson is Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary at Tetra Tech, Inc. (NASDAQ: TTEK), a leading provider of consulting, engineering, and technical services with 21,000 employees around the world. He is member of the Executive Leadership Team and provides oversight for all human resources and legal matters, including corporate governance, litigation, compliance and regulatory and governmental affairs.

Prior to joining Tetra Tech, Preston served as Vice President, Assistant General Counsel at the engineering and infrastructure firm AECOM. He previously was a Senior Associate with O’Melveny & Myers, LLP as well as a Judicial Clerk on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Preston is an adjunct professor at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. He holds B.A. and J.D. degrees from Yale University.



Sharon E. Jones
CEO, Jones Diversity (Moderator)

Sharon is the President/CEO of Jones Diversity, Inc., a diversity and inclusion strategy consulting firm. Her firm's services include the hiring, development, and retention of diverse employees into leadership roles. A lawyer by training, clients appreciate her strategic thinking, candor, diversity and inclusion expertise and the depth and breadth of her executive experience which she brings to problem-solving roles. She is a thought leader whose decision-making is based on best practices, research and data. She has built high performing leadership teams and inspired cultural change initiatives in both for profit and not for profit organizations. She is a frequent speaker and educator on diversity, equity and inclusion topics and creating inclusive workplaces.

Sharon has practiced law and been a community leader over a 25-year career, including positions as a federal prosecutor, with major law firms and with Fortune 500 Corporations. She has been highly successful as a litigator, a counselor, an educator and a problem-solver regarding extremely complex and sensitive matters. She has served as the Chief Operating Officer for the Chicago Urban League, managing a \$10 million budget with over 70 employees.

Previously, she served as an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, based in Chicago, where she conducted federal grand jury investigations and trials in high profile white-collar criminal cases. In private law practice, she was a partner at Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert & Matz in Los Angeles. In addition to her litigation practice, she was responsible for all in-house continuing legal education, as well as being an adviser to clients on a variety of employment and workplace harassment issues. She was Of Counsel at Orrick Herrington & Sutcliffe in Los Angeles, where she created and implemented its litigation training as well as firm-wide orientation training and evaluation programs.

In the corporate sector, Sharon managed litigation matters worldwide for Abbott Laboratories, as well as advising senior management in matters of crisis management and in fashioning creative solutions to highly complex business issues. More recently, she was Senior Counsel at SBC Communications (now AT&T).

Sharon has served in leadership roles on numerous not for profit boards as well as a past President of the Harvard Law School Alumni Association (2010-2012) and was responsible for the launch of the HLSA Global Women's Alliance. She serves on the Board of Directors for the Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession, among others. Sharon has received numerous awards including the Chicago Bar Association's Breaking Barriers, Building

Bridges Award) and the Black Women Lawyer’s Visionary Award for Women Making History for Making a Difference. She is the author of “Mastering the Game: Career Strategies for Success” which provides the unwritten rules for career success for women and diverse professionals.

Sharon is a graduate of Harvard Law School and Harvard College.



Alyson Palmer
Corporate Counsel, Google LLC

Alyson is a Corporate Counsel on the Global Employment Legal team at Google LLC in San Francisco, CA. She supports Google’s Employee Engagement, Search, Ads, and Geo organizations, providing guidance on the full scope of legal issues that accompany the employment relationship. Alyson also provides counsel on Google’s global diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Prior to working at Google, Alyson was an Associate Attorney at Miller, Nash, Graham & Dunn LLP and Stoel Rives LLP in Seattle, WA, working on behalf of public and private employers in litigation before state and federal courts and providing guidance on a range of employment topics, including independent contractor status, minimum-wage compliance, covenants not to compete, employee terminations, and employment discrimination.

Alyson is a graduate of the University of Washington School of Law, where she was an Associate Editor-in-Chief of the International Law Journal and Alumni Coordinator for the Black Law Students Association. She received her Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from Seattle University, where she was a Sullivan Leadership Scholar and Founder and President of Seattle U.’s NAACP College Chapter.

Alyson previously worked in the White House Office of Management and Administration and the U.S. General Services Administration during the Obama Administration. She is a current member of the Board of Directors for YouthSpeaks, a Bay Area non-profit, and enjoys indoor cycling, crime podcasts, and watching TV cooking competitions



Christopher P. Reynolds
Chief Administrative Officer, Corporate Resources, Toyota Motor North America

As chief administrative officer, Corporate Resources for Toyota Motor North America, Chris Reynolds is responsible for the North American functions of Accounting & Finance, Human Resources, Government Affairs, Corporate Communications, Corporate Strategy, Social Innovation/Diversity & Inclusion, and Legal, among others.

At global parent company Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC), Reynolds functions as deputy chief officer, General Administration & Human Resources Group, and the deputy chief officer, Global Risk. In addition to his roles at TMNA and TMC, Reynolds was appointed as the 2021 Chair of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, the auto industry's D.C.-based trade organization.

Previously, Reynolds headed up North American Manufacturing operations and Corporate Shared Services for TMNA, served as chief diversity officer for TMNA, as well as general counsel and chief legal officer of TMNA, and group vice president, chief environmental officer and corporate secretary of Toyota Motor Sales, USA, Inc.



Crystal T. Williams

Assistant General Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary,
Eli Lilly and Co.

Crystal Williams is currently Assistant General Counsel and Assistant Corporate Secretary at Eli Lilly and Company and has been with Eli Lilly for nearly eight years. In this role, she manages two of the five committees of the Eli Lilly's Board of Directors and counsels the business and other support functions on disclosure requirements pursuant to the U.S. Securities Exchange Commission. Prior to this role, Crystal was the Global Brand Counsel in Eli Lilly's Bio-Medicines Business Unit, counseling the neuroscience and cardiovascular sales and marketing leadership responsible for establishing and carrying out U.S. and/or global brand and marketing strategies. Prior to working at Eli Lilly, Crystal worked at Barnes & Thornburg LLP in litigation, focusing on food and drug law and policy.

Crystal received her undergraduate degree from Indiana University and her law degree from Duke University School of Law. Throughout her career she has been actively involved in several civic and professional organizations, including has been a board member for Girl Scouts of Central Indiana, Heritage Place, and Indiana Fair Chance.

Additional Resource

Ang, Desmond. "The Birth of a Nation: Media and Racial Hate." HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP20-038, November 2020.

<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/publications/birth-nation-media-and-racial-hate>

Special Thanks

The program was made possible through the generous and visionary support of our sponsors, which share IILP's commitment to drive real DEI progress in the legal profession. We appreciate you!

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Institute for Inclusion in the Legal Profession

info@theiilp.com

<https://www.theiilp.com>

(312) 628-5885

