Lowndes

Engagement & Inclusion

For more information:

Rachel D. Gebaide

Co-Chair, E&I Committee

John D. Ruffier

Co-Chair, E&I Committee

Since its founding more than 50 years ago, Lowndes has grown alongside Central Florida, adapting to meet the needs of our clients, our team, and our community. A key part of that growth is the work of the Engagement & Inclusion Committee.

The Committee leads initiatives that foster a culture of trust, inclusion, and opportunity. Through open dialogue, education, and community outreach, it helps create a workplace where people feel supported and empowered to contribute.

In collaboration with firm leadership, the Committee promotes equity, engagement, and continuous learning, ensuring that diverse perspectives are valued and reflected in how we serve our clients and our community.

Recruitment

We are committed to attracting and developing talented attorneys through purposeful recruiting and early-career opportunities.

- Our team participates in job fairs and outreach events, including the Southeast Minority Job Fair (SEMJF).
- We maintain relationships with law schools across the region, such as Florida A&M University College of Law.
- The 1L Opportunity Scholar program offers first-year law students the opportunity to join our summer associate class, with a pathway to continued engagement and potential long-term employment.

Women's Initiative

The Lowndes Women's Initiative supports the professional growth of women attorneys through quarterly programs focused on leadership, mentorship, and connection.

- Women attorneys at the firm serve in key leadership roles, including on the executive and compensation committees, and lead several practice groups and firm initiatives.
- The Women's Initiative provides a platform for women attorneys to build relationships, share experiences, and contribute to the firm's success and broader community.

Professional Development & Cultural Programming

We offer firmwide programming that promotes learning, reflection, and connection across teams.

- Throughout the year, we host events and celebrations that recognize cultural heritage months and other observances, open to all attorneys and staff.
- We invite Central Florida business leaders and clients to share their experiences and perspectives during these programs, fostering meaningful conversations and shared learning.

In the Community

Our team actively supports community organizations through pro bono work and partnerships.

Pro Bono Legal Services:

- Our attorneys serve as guardians ad litem for vulnerable minors, with two shareholders honored multiple times for their dedication.
- We participate in a pretrial diversion program for youths arrested for non-violent misdemeanors and represent indigent individuals who need to obtain a divorce.
- We assist Habitat for Humanity of Greater Orlando, Inc. with clearing land titles for homes.

Community Leadership:

- We actively support Lift Orlando, a nonprofit cofounded by our Chairman William T. Dymond, Jr., that works toward revitalization of Orlando's historic West Lakes communities.
- Shareholder John Ruffier has served national boards for the Human Rights Campaign and Human Rights Campaign Foundation, rising to chair of the HRC Board of Directors.

Arts & Culture

- Our Orlando office showcases local art curated in collaboration with the Downtown Arts District, highlighting artists whose works reflect their unique perspectives.
- We sponsored "Rising Up Parramore," a mural project celebrating the history of the Parramore community and honoring those who served to this underserved community during segregation.