



## Rhonda Talford Knight, PhD

Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer



Rhonda Talford Knight, PhD uses a business lens, grounded in diversity, inclusion, equity and advocacy to drive systemic change. A trailblazer in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion, she is a servant leader who utilizes leading practices and personal relationships to develop diverse teams.

Rhonda holds the distinction of being Bricker & Eckler LLP's first Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer. In this key leadership role, she works across the entire law firm – with other firm leaders, as well as operations team members and industry groups – to develop successful diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives as they relate to strategic planning, recruitment and retention goals, internal processes, and activities that strengthen the firm's culture of belonging.

In the time that Rhonda has been with Bricker & Eckler, the firm has achieved Mansfield 5.0 Certification Plus status, which requires a law firm to demonstrate a commitment to diversity in senior recruitment and leadership. In addition, Rhonda has led the firm's implementation of a comprehensive internal process for inclusive self-identification, guided policy updates to achieve a workplace where everyone belongs, and directed the firm's intentional use of diverse vendors. She also facilitates the firm's hosting of professional events focused on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Rhonda has also held a prominent role for more than two decades as the founder and CEO of The Knight Consulting Group, a leading diversity and inclusion resource to organizations of all sizes and industries. She has worked with several C-Suite and human resources clients, nonprofits and their boards, and institutions of higher learning, including the J.M. Smucker Company, Wendy's, Worthington Industries, American Electric Power, ALVIS, National Church Residences, Lutheran Social Services, the Ohio Corn and Wheat Farmers Association, Otterbein University, the University of Mount Union, and The Ohio State University.

A spokesperson for diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, Rhonda is frequently involved in planning and presenting at workshops, conferences and webinars, both nationally and internationally.

In 2023, she helped launch the Equity Collective, a collaboration led by Black philanthropists and allies in Columbus, Ohio, representing a partnership with Jewish Columbus, with a goal of deploying resources in areas with high strategic impact to enhance Black life.

Rhonda attended Otterbein University for her undergraduate studies and earned her MBA and PhD from The Ohio State University. She has been honored by the Forbes Coaches Council, has been featured in Who's Who in Black Columbus, and received The Ohio State University Fisher College of Business Black MBA Legends Award. Her past and current community and board involvement includes chairing the Leadership Committee of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, serving on the Otterbein University Alumni Council Committee, co-chairing the United Way's Key Club and serving on the Childhood League Center's Diversity Programming Board.

---

### CONTACT INFORMATION

614.227.4801  
rtalfordknight@bricker.com

### COLUMBUS OFFICE

Bricker & Eckler LLP  
100 South Third Street  
Columbus, OH 43215-4291

614.227.2300 main  
614.227.2390 fax

## Bar Admissions & Activities

- Central Ohio Diversity Consortium



# Rhonda Talford Knight, PhD

*Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer*

- Cultural Proficiency Network
- Diversity Best Practices
- Diversity in Organizations, Communities & Nations
- Equity Leaders, Great Lakes Equity Center
- MBAC Advisory Board
- Ohio Minority Business Peer Network

## Education

- The Ohio State University (Doctor of Philosophy in Social Studies and Global Education)
- The Ohio State University (Master of Education in Elementary Education)
- Otterbein University (Bachelor of Arts in Public Relations)

## Awards & Recognition

- Otterbein University: Alumni Pacesetter Award, 2019
- Forbes Coaches Council, 2019
- The Ohio State University, Fisher College of Business, Black MBA: Legends Award, 2019
- Who's Who in Black Columbus, 2012, 2018, 2019
- Otterbein Towers Featured Article, 2000, 2018
- Women Worth Watching, Diversity Journal, 2018
- African American Progressive Leadership Academy, 2016
- National Association for Multicultural Education Agency of the Year, 2014

## Presentations & Published Works

- Panelist, Diversity Best Practices: Chief Diversity Officer Roundtable, 2020
- Author, Starting a Deeper Conversation on Racial Identity and Racial Hierarchy, Towers Magazine, 2019
- Panelist, Multicultural Women's National Conference Executive Roundtable, 2018
- Moderator, Making HerStory featuring Lilly Ledbetter, Women's Fund Statehouse Day, 2018

## Professional & Community Activities

- Leadership Committee Chair, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., 2016, 2017



## Rhonda Talford Knight, PhD

*Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer*

- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Advocacy, Columbus School for Girls
- Membership & Business Development Committee Member, COMTO, Columbus Chapter
- Volunteer Consultant, Dress for Success
- Co-Leader, Troop 1471, Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland
- Audit Committee Member, Treasurer, Jack and Jill of America, Inc.
- Founding Member, Membership Committee Member, Patriots
- Cleveland, Ohio, Local Conference Chair, 2016
- Alumni Council Committee Member, Otterbein University
- Board Member, Diversity & Programming, The Childhood League Center
- Grant Reader, Gender by Us ad hoc Advisory, The Women's Fund of Central Ohio
- Campaign Cabinet Committee Member, Key Club Co-Chair, United Way
- Board Member, Crisis Team Lead Board Member, WITI, Columbus Network
- Treasurer, Crisis Team Coach, Women's Small Business Accelerator