

## MEMORANDUM

To: National LGBT Bar Association's Best LGBT Lawyers Under 40  
Selection Committee

From: Zakiyyah Salim-Williams

Date: June 2, 2013

Re: Nomination Materials in Support of Doug Champion

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It is with great pride that I nominate Doug Champion, a senior real estate associate in the Los Angeles office of Gibson Dunn, for the National LGBT Bar Association's Best LGBT Lawyers under 40 Award. Doug is one of the Firm's go-to associates in the real estate and land use and development practice groups. He represents real estate developers, lenders and borrowers in a broad range of matters, including the negotiation and processing of land use approvals; the purchase, sale and leasing of commercial, mixed-use and multi-family assets; REO portfolio management and disposition; and the origination and restructuring of mortgage debt.

In addition to his billable work, Doug uses his real estate expertise to assist organizations such as Clinica Oscar A. Romero, Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and New Heights Charter School in negotiating major lease amendments. He is a superior negotiator, highly skilled lawyer and determined dealmaker. His real estate expertise and skillset has led to him being recognized as a Rising Star by *Law and Politics* magazine, and he is also the recipient of Gibson Dunn's Frank Wheat Award for *Pro Bono* Deal Team of the Year. Prior to joining the Firm, Doug was a management consultant with the Dallas office of McKinsey & Company, focusing on the retail and consumer packaged goods sectors.

In addition to his legal work, Doug spends a considerable amount of time working to increase diversity, particularly LGBT diversity, at Gibson Dunn and in the legal field generally. His commitment stems from his desire to help LGBT lawyers achieve success without significant barriers and to foster diversity and inclusion in the legal profession as a whole. As one of the most senior LGBT associates at the Firm, Doug serves as a mentor, advisor and friend to nearly all of our LGBT associates across the Firm. He has single-handedly recruited and helped to retain over half of our LGBT associates at the Firm. Given the Firm's lack of LGBT partners on the West Coast, Doug has also worked diligently to build allies and bridges with his colleagues, both partners and associates, to encourage them to actively embrace his goal to increase LGBT diversity at the Firm.

In addition to working with the LGBT associates and LGBT issues at the Firm, Doug seeks out LGBT law students, not only to recruit to Gibson Dunn, but to act as a mentor to help those students achieve whatever is their ultimate career goal. Doug has mentored young LGBT lawyers who have ultimately found positions with public interest organizations, law firms or corporations. In the Los Angeles office of Gibson Dunn, Doug also takes it upon himself to meet, or at least reach out to, each LGBT recruit that is considering the Firm.

Doug has also been involved in Gibson Dunn's continued fight for LGBT marriage equality. Doug served as counsel for amicus Out & Equal Workplace Advocates and Levi Strauss & Company, a coalition of companies committed to LGBT marriage equality, when the California Supreme Court was considering the *In Re Marriage* Cases prior to the passage of Proposition 8. When Gibson Dunn decided to file a federal constitutional challenge to Proposition 8, Doug was one of a key group of lawyers that was consulted about the case.

Doug's commitment to diversity extends beyond increasing LGBT diversity. As Co-Chair of the Los Angeles office diversity committee, Doug works with his committee to ensure that Gibson Dunn remains a leader in the area of diversity. The success of the committee in recruiting, retention and community involvement is a model for the entire Firm to follow. In addition, he is involved in community pipeline programs, mentorship programs, and educational outreach, at the local and national level.

He is also equally committed to helping youth, particularly LGBT youth, from disadvantaged backgrounds. Growing up with very little money in Texas, and reared in a conservative, religious household by his grandmother, Doug will tell you that escaping poverty was more of a focus than escaping the closet. Now that much of his hard work has paid off, Doug remains steadfast in his support of organizations that work to create opportunities for and provide resources to kids who grew up like him in their youth worrying about their future, and whether they would ever be free to be themselves.

Doug is particularly interested in helping homeless LGBT youth and got involved with the Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Center and LifeWorks Mentoring (now a program of the Center) to serve this vulnerable population. Doug supports the organization with his own funds but also has enlisted the Firm to serve as a sponsor. He also actively participates and attends events of local and national organizations providing services to the LGBT population.

Doug has a deep sense of responsibility to lift up those who follow him and this is evident in the time he spends mentoring young lawyers. He is a natural teacher. He is also one of the most highly sought after senior associates – by partners and junior associates – primarily because of his ability to create a team that not only does a good job, but gels into a cohesive unit, allowing every member to shine and the team to thrive.

Doug believes that asking a team to reach higher and push harder involves much more than simple exhortation. He takes pride in making sure he is working together with his teams, putting in the hours and effort necessary to do the best job possible. In every aspect of his life, both work and personal, Doug strives to be a leader, and succeeds. As a partner to his husband of 10 years, exemplary attorney and role model, Doug believes that giving his best will always drive others to emulate his actions, and succeed in their own right.

In sum, I am nominating Doug because he is one of the most dedicated, hard-working, skilled, professional, intelligent and pleasant lawyers at the Firm. He is very deserving of this prestigious honor.