

Alum Profile: Kimberly Brown Blacklow

In January 1998, when **Kimberly Brown Blacklow** arrived at Lawyers Alliance to begin her Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton externship, she was a fourth year associate who quickly learned how to apply her corporate legal skills to nonprofit matters as she expanded her knowledge of nonprofit law. Fast-forward to June 2011, Kim became the first former extern to join the Lawyers Alliance Board of Directors, bringing a unique perspective on the organization gleaned from working side-by-side with our staff attorneys and nonprofit clients.

During her externship, Kim assisted Asian Americans for Equality in the development of two loan funds: a Rehabilitation Loan Fund to provide loans of \$10,000 to \$100,000 for terms of up to 10 years to borrowers seeking to rehabilitate multi-family (5-20 units) buildings or mixed-use commercial properties, and a Small Business Loan Fund to provide loans from \$500 to \$75,000 for terms of three months to five years to make alternative working capital and fixed asset financing available to minority and women entrepreneurs. In collaboration with pro bono attorneys from Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP, Lawyers Alliance senior attorneys and Kim created documents establishing the loan funds and reviewed documents related to a line of credit from Chase Bank. This legal work opened new funding channels to help small businesses establish credit and create employment opportunities in economically distressed neighborhoods.

Kim continues to do pro bono work. Today, she leads a group of pro bono attorneys at Cleary advising Sauti Yetu Center for African Women, a nonprofit organization that links social justice activism with academic scholarship to promote and protect the rights of African women and girls, on the legal restrictions on lobbying activities by nonprofits.

Q – Kim, if you think back to 1998, what attracted you to the Cleary externship program at Lawyers Alliance?

I saw the externship program as an opportunity to work more independently and develop my skills as a “counselor” to clients. My experience at Lawyers Alliance exceeded my goals on all fronts – it was truly a pivotal experience in my professional development. The Lawyers Alliance legal staff provided invaluable support and mentorship to the externs, and I give credit to them in helping me become the lawyer I am today.

Q – How does that experience, coupled with your professional development in the intervening years, inform your perspective as a Lawyers Alliance Board member?

My externship at Lawyers Alliance, together with the economic and community development pro bono projects I have worked on over my career, have given me a deep appreciation for the tremendous value of the work Lawyers Alliance does in supporting nonprofits serving underserved communities throughout New York. I was honored to have been invited to join the Board and look forward to helping Lawyers Alliance further its mission.



Kimberly Brown Blacklow

About Kim

Employment includes:

- › Partner at Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP
- › Joined the firm in 1994 and became a partner in 2003
- › Practice focuses on real estate and other asset-based finance transactions, structured finance and capital markets transactions
- › Recognized by *The Legal 500 U.S.* for her real estate expertise

Current activities include:

- › 2011-present – Chair of Cleary’s New York Community Legal Assistance Committee
- › 2011-present – Board Member, Lawyers Alliance for New York
- › 2008-present – Board Member, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

Graduate of:

- › Columbia University School of Law – J.D.
- › Harvard-Radcliffe – B.A., *cum laude*

This article is one of a series of profiles of the people who have helped to build Lawyers Alliance for New York since 1969.



Connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities