

# DEInsider

a diversity, equity, and inclusion periodical from Nukk-Freeman & Cerra, P.C.



## *How The "DEInsider" Came To Be*

BY KRIS RYAN

When Katherin Nukk-Freeman and Suzanne Cerra co-founded NFC in 2006, they envisioned a workplace that was not your typical law firm. Prioritizing work-life balance, and a supportive and team-oriented culture that rewards employees beyond the billable hour, it was – and is – important to Katherin and Suzanne that their colleagues feel valued, fulfilled and energized both inside and outside of work.

After the murder of George Floyd, many at NFC recognized the need to do more to ensure their co-workers were heard and supported. While diversity, equity and inclusion have always held a position of prominence at the firm, NFC leadership took affirmative action to weave those goals more clearly and visibly into the fabric of the firm. They dedicated time, talent, and resources and decided it was time to “formalize” their efforts.

It started with the creation of the DEI Council, a cross-sectional team of NFC employees from all facets of the firm dedicated to identifying opportunities to advance these important goals. Taking a holistic approach, the DEI Council formed separate subcommittees to analyze and further the firm’s DEI efforts in employee hiring, retention, training, education, performance, advancement, firm culture, vendor engagement and group affiliations, social responsibility, and community outreach. Among other things, the DEI Council held intentional listening groups and mandatory training. It established metrics and objectives and outlined the steps to achieve them. It focused philanthropic efforts to educate, inspire and assist organizations that need their voices amplified to effectuate real change. The DEI Council meets regularly as a group, and within the subcommittees, to ensure all are responsible and stay on task.

In addition to progressing the firms’ DEI goals, these changes quietly empowered employees to bring their authentic selves to work. Employees voluntarily authored firm communications to dispel myths and stereotypes on topics important to them, and to educate their colleagues on observances and traditions of personal significance.

The DEI Council adopted a formal charter to ensure accountability, created a DEI Mission Statement that reflected NFC’s goal of action not words, and unrolled a vibrant branding of NFC’s collective and interconnected commitment to DEI.



diversity | equity | inclusion  
NUKK-FREEMAN & CERRA, P.C.

A DEI newsletter has long been on the DEI Council’s “wish list”. The intent was to provide a means for the DEI Council to house and communicate important internal and external dates, events and initiatives, while highlighting NFC’s involvement and achievements in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion. The DEI Council accurately anticipated that a newsletter would create a platform for employees to share issues important to them in the DEI space.

Against that backdrop, we proudly welcome you to the inaugural issue of DEInsider – NFC’s very own newsletter dedicated to all things DEI! We are pleased to introduce you to the full spectrum that is NFC, and invite you to hear, listen to, and enjoy NFC’s unique voices. We also welcome you to add your own.

# Conscious Conversations

TRANSFORMING NATURAL DIVERSITY TENSION INTO PRODUCTIVE WORK SITUATIONS

BY CHRISTINA CASSIDY

The Firm Integration Committee (Punam, Nivi, Iman and Christina) of the DEI Counsel will be hosting 4 DEI events in 2023, with a target of one event per quarter. During our 2022 DEI Retreat the Counsel committed to bringing more DEI opportunities to everyone at the firm. We have designated 4 Pillars of events and each event will represent one of the following categories - Discussion Group, Education, Social & Service.

Our first 2023 DEI event will be a virtual seminar on **March 9th at 1:00 pm EST/10:00 am PST** and will reflect our DEI Discussion Group pillar. This 90-minute learning session will be hosted by Darrell Butler and is entitled **Conscious Conversations**. The workshop begins with a work-related scenario used to walk through key learning points and apply effective tools to transform natural diversity tension into productive work situations. Darrell Butler was a speaker at our 2022 DEI Retreat and will be a great way to launch the events we have planned for the year.

Looking ahead, this summer we plan to host an employment law “hackathon” for small minority – owned businesses and will need volunteers to assist in hosting, presenting, and preparing materials for participants. Please reach out if you would like to help.



## Conscious Conversations Session Outline

- Scenario introduction
- Understanding & managing diversity tension
- Understanding & managing implicit bias
- Understanding requirements
- Getting to mutual agreements

# SPOTLIGHT:

BY CORASI CAICEDO



**Description:** NPR's Alt Latino is a podcast that celebrates the global Latine community through music. Each episode focuses on a living legend or a rising star to discuss Latine culture, heritage, and the shared borders of our experiences.

In this episode, hosts Felix Contreras and Anamaria Sayre sit down with singer/songwriter Ileana Cabra Joglar, known by her nickname iLe (a/k/a PG-13). iLe has been in the spotlight since her youth, performing as part of the rap group “Calle 13” alongside her two brothers, Rene Perez Joglar (a/k/a Residente) and Eduardo Cabra (a/k/a Visitante). iLe discusses her childhood and growing up in a family where music was a form of expression, joy, and above all, survival. The conversation revolves around the various musical influences in iLe's music, most significantly the Puerto Rican independence movement. iLe discusses what it means for Puerto Rico to be a colony and shares how colonial status negatively affects Puerto Rico's cultural pride, while also inspiring decades of resistance in the form of music.

**Link:** [iLe: “How the rhythms and resilience of Puerto Rico shape her music”](#)

**NPR:** Alt Latino

**Artist:** iLe “How the rhythms and resilience of Puerto Rico shape her music”

**Type:** Podcast

**Genre:** Music Analysis

*“I want my country to be free,”  
said Ileana Cabra Joglar, better known as iLe.*

# Some Surprising Facts About Saint Patrick's Day

BY KRIS RYAN

March 17th, Saint Patrick's Day, is a familiar date to many. It is not surprising to see people, whether of Irish heritage or not, wearing green, sporting shamrocks and participating in festivities commemorating the patron saint of Ireland. Here are some interesting facts that may surprise you about Saint Patrick's Day:

**1.** Saint Patrick was not Irish and his name was not Patrick. Maewyn Succat was born in Roman Britain in the late 4th century. At the age of 16, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders, taken to pagan Ireland, and sold as a slave. While in captivity, he became a devout Christian. After six years, he escaped and returned to Britain, but later returned to Ireland as a Christian missionary. He took the name Patricius. In Old Irish, this name translates to Patraic, which is Patrick in English.

**2.** March 17, the date of Saint Patrick's death, commemorates the arrival of Christianity in Ireland. By the time of his death in 461, Saint Patrick had established many monasteries, churches, and schools. Ireland came to celebrate this day with religious services and feasts. In the early 20th century, Irish law declared Saint Patrick's Day a religious observance for the entire country, which meant public houses were closed. March 17 is a public holiday in Ireland today.

**3.** Emigrants turned Saint Patrick's Day into a largely secular holiday celebrating all things Irish. Beginning in 1845, a potato blight caused widespread starvation and disease throughout Ireland resulting in roughly 1 million deaths. Referred to as the Irish Potato Famine, the epidemic forced another 2 million Irish - approximately a quarter of the population - to flee the country with most coming to the United States. Irish refugees were considered disease-ridden and unskilled. "No Irish need apply", or an equivalent sentiment, has been identified in many job advertisements from that period.

**4.** The Saint Patrick's Day Parade in New York City is the largest parade in the world. According to its website, the first parade, held in 1762, was comprised of a group of homesick Irish expats and military who served with the British Army in the American colonies. At the time, wearing green was a sign of Irish pride that was banned in Ireland. Participants in the first parade enjoyed the freedom to speak Irish, wear green and sing Irish songs meaningful to the Irish immigrants. During the Irish Rebellion of 1798, an uprising against British rule in Ireland, Irish soldiers wore full green uniforms on March 17 to make a political statement.

**5.** The Irish village of Dripsey hosts the world's shortest Saint Patrick's Day parade. It spans the 100-yard distance between the village's two pubs.

**6.** The shamrock, the national flower of Ireland, is a three-leaf clover considered to be a sacred plant symbolizing the arrival of spring. According to legend, Saint Patrick used the shamrock to teach the Irish about the Holy Trinity. By the 17th century, the shamrock had become a symbol of Irish nationalism. The odds of finding a four-leaf clover, said to symbolize hope, faith, love, and luck, are about one in 10,000.

**7.** The tradition of wearing green and shamrocks began as early as the 17th century. According to legend, wearing green makes a person invisible to leprechauns, fairy creatures that will pinch you if they see you.

**8.** Beer is one of the most widely consumed beverages on Saint Patrick's Day. Well, maybe that fact is not too surprising.



## Happy Saint Patrick's Day!



## DEI Calendar

### JANUARY

#### SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH

- 2  
New Year's Day
- 6  
Three Kings Day
- 11  
NFC DEI Council Meeting
- 16  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 18  
Culture Club Core Day
- 19  
Karaoke Night (NJ)
- 22  
Chinese New Year officially begins

### FEBRUARY

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

- 8  
NFC DEI Council Meeting
- 8  
Wine Down Wednesday
- 15  
State of the Union
- 20  
President's Day
- 23  
Culture Club Core Day (all)

### MARCH

#### IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH and WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

- 6  
Purim
- 8  
NFC DEI Council Meeting
- 8  
International Women's Day
- 9  
DEI Event - "Conscious Conversations"
- 15  
Culture Club Core Day (all)
- 17  
St. Patrick's Day
- 21  
Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday)
- 22  
International Earth Day
- 31  
Cesar Chavez Day



# THE DEI"Q" CORNER...

## RECOGNIZING THIS QUARTER'S MONTH-LONG OBSERVANCES

BY CHRIS SISCO

*Each issue, we will spotlight notable month-long observances, used by various governments, groups and organizations to raise awareness of an issue, commemorate a group/event or simply celebrate something related to important DEI topics. We encourage you to share and get the conversation going in order to help drive education and awareness.*

### JANUARY – NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION MONTH

January is dedicated to raising awareness about different forms of human trafficking. Every year since 2010, the United States has dedicated a month to raise awareness about this topic and to help educate the public about how to identify and prevent this crime domestically and internationally. The United States' commitment to combating human trafficking dates back more than 20 years when the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 came to fruition. Like the U.S., many countries have adopted anti-trafficking laws. Today, there are 178 parties to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons. But despite the nearly worldwide adoption, traffickers continue to exploit people all over the world. Every Presidential proclamation for January ends with a call to action for all Americans to be vigilant in the role they can play in battling all forms of human trafficking.



Here is a list of resources about human trafficking:

- [Understanding Human Trafficking](#)
- [20 Ways You Can Help Fight Human Trafficking](#)
- [The U.S. Government's Response to Combating Human Trafficking](#)
- [Human Trafficking Hotlines](#)
- [U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking Annual Report](#)

**Theme: #WearBlueDay** – each year on January 11th people around the world are encouraged to wear blue clothing



### FEBRUARY – BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Critics have long argued that Black history should be taught and celebrated year-round, not just during one month each year. It was Carter G. Woodson, the "father of Black history," who first set out in 1926 to designate a time to promote and educate people about Black history and culture.

Woodson envisioned a week-long celebration to encourage the coordinated teaching of Black history in public schools. He designated the second week of February as Negro History Week and galvanized fellow historians through the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, which he founded in 1915.

By the late 1960s, Negro History Week had evolved into what is now known as Black History Month. Fifty years after the first celebrations, President Gerald R. Ford officially recognized Black History Month during the country's 1976 bicentennial. Ford called upon Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of Black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history,"

Forty years after Ford formally recognized Black History Month, it was Barack Obama, the nation's first Black president, who delivered a message of his own from the White House, a place built by slaves.



"Black History Month shouldn't be treated as though it is somehow separate from our collective American history or somehow just boiled down to a compilation of greatest hits from the March on Washington or from some of our sports heroes," Obama said. "It's about the lived, shared experience of all African Americans, high and low, famous and obscure, and how those experiences have shaped and challenged and ultimately strengthened America," he continued.

Since the first Negro History Week in 1926, other countries have joined the United States in celebrating Black people and their contribution to history and culture, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, and the Netherlands.

Here is a list of resources about Black History Month:

- [Black History Month 2023: Facts, Origins & More](#)
- [Here's The Story Behind Black History Month - NPR](#)
- [Why Is Black History Month Celebrated in February?](#)
- [45 Books to Teach Children About Black History](#)
- [10 Facts for Black History Month](#)

**The theme for 2023's Black History Month is "Black Resistance".**

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## MARCH – WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY has been commemorated across the world on March 8th since 1911. There are a number of explanations for the reason for this date, but it appears that this date coincided with the date that it was celebrated in NYC, Russia, Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Today it is an official holiday in several countries including Afghanistan, China (for women only), Russia, and Ukraine. In Italy it is observed by men giving a flower called a yellow mimosa to women. According to Wikipedia in much of the world it is customary for men to give female colleagues flowers on this day. Polish-American actress Beata Pozniak introduced the first bill in Congress to recognize IWD. The bill was passed in 1994.



In March of 1980, President Jimmy Carter issued the first Presidential Proclamation declaring Women's History Week to align with International Women's History Day. In 1987 Congress passed a law making this a month-long celebration.

### Theme for 2023 Women's History Month: "Celebrating Women Who Tell Our Stories"

Here is a curated list of websites featuring resources that explore women's history in the United States and the world. These sites offer historical overviews, a variety of primary sources for analysis, and suggestions for using primary sources for learners of all ages.

- [Women and the American Story](#)
- [Women's History Portal](#)
- [Progress of the World's Women](#)
- [Celebrating Native American Women](#)
- [10 National Parks that Celebrate Women's History](#)
- [The Women of NASA](#)
- [Women in India: Unheard Stories](#)
- [Revolutionary Women](#)
- [Representation with a Hyphen: Latinas in the Fight for Women's Suffrage](#)
- [Women Leaders in African History, 17th-19th Century](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Women Who Made History](#)
- [Women During the Holocaust](#)
- [Women in the Ancient World](#)
- [Votes for Women: A Portrait of Persistence](#)

## OUR MISSION:

At NFC, we celebrate Diversity, promote Inclusion, and strive for Equity to ensure a welcoming workplace for our valued colleagues and clients. DEI is deeply woven into the fabric of NFC, allowing us to ignite courageous and compassionate change in our Firm and communities, by:

- ✓ Leading with respect and empathy for others in all that we do
- ✓ Empowering and positioning historically underrepresented groups for success in the legal field and beyond
- ✓ Creating intentional opportunities and platforms for DEI awareness and growth
- ✓ Honoring and embracing each person's authentic self and uniqueness
- ✓ Serving as role models to promote equity and belonging within the workplace and society

**Our goal is to embody Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion the "NFC Way."**



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