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Akin Gump & Katten To Be Honored for Their Innovative and Comprehensive Flexible Working Initiatives

Awards to be presented at Diversity & Flexibility Alliance Conference on November 5

Washington, DC – October 21, 2020 -- The [Diversity & Flexibility Alliance](#) announced today that its **2020 Flex Impact Award Honorees** are law firms, [Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP](#) and [Katten, Muchin Rosenman LLP](#). The [Flex Impact Awards](#), which recognize initiatives that demonstrate a significant impact on the culture of workplace flexibility, will be presented during the Alliance’s virtual annual conference on Thursday, November 5, 2020. Registration information is available [here](#).

Akin Gump

Akin Gump was selected because of its comprehensive flexible working initiative that is supported by an exceptionally strong and effective infrastructure. Akin Gump’s program is unique in that it includes a high level of accountability, technology, tracking, training, communication and support for employees. Last year, prior to the onset of COVID-19, the firm hired additional technology support staff and upgraded technology capabilities and equipment to better serve those working remotely and traveling. Firm chairperson Kim Koopersmith and Practice Group Managers across the firm routinely track flex usage and productivity, and flexibility is a permanent variable in the firm’s evaluation process. Additionally, since the onset of the pandemic, Ms. Koopersmith has sent regular firm-wide emails offering support and empathy for employees juggling working remotely with caregiving.

“At Akin Gump, we have long understood that being an inclusive firm means believing that we can provide seamless and exceptional service to our clients while respecting the need for flexibility in how our work is done,” said Ms. Koopersmith. “We have never been more appreciative of our longstanding commitment to flexibility and support for agile working arrangements than in these challenging times. We long ago made sure that our employees were well-supported and had access to all of the tools needed to be productive both in and out of the office. That has been a huge advantage and one that has served us well. Not only has it proved successful in meeting our clients’ needs, but our most valuable contributors—our people—have felt the support of a firm that truly cares,” she added. “We are absolutely

thrilled to be a recipient of the Flex Impact Award, and will use it to help sustain and further the culture of flexibility and inclusiveness that we've worked hard to instill throughout the firm."

"We selected Akin Gump for its innovative and comprehensive flexible working initiative," said Manar Morales, President & CEO of the Diversity & Flexibility Alliance. "Akin Gump prioritized programs and policies that established flexibility as a tenant of its firm culture. In doing so, the firm serves as an example of how a commitment to a flexible work environment, bolstered by firm-wide infrastructure and leadership buy-in, can lead to increased productivity, client satisfaction, employee retention, and firm morale," she added.

Katten

Katten was selected for its four-week, paid sabbatical initiative that is offered to all Associates once they have completed their fifth year and met their hours' requirement two out of the three previous years. This initiative, which has been in place since 2012, has allowed Associates to take a trip, dive into a personal project or extend a family leave. All Associates take advantage of this benefit and many plan for the time off long in advance. Katten has also reinforced its philosophy of flexibility by sharing consistent messaging from leadership, providing wellness information, offering parental coaching and caregiver support, and surveying to identify needs during COVID-19.

"The Associate Sabbatical Program reflects the supportive firm culture and flexible work environment we have developed at Katten. The program is one way we reward our Associates for their dedication, and it is a means of enhancing their work-life balance. By offering them the opportunity to temporarily step away from their daily work responsibilities, we give them a chance to recharge and come back to work re-energized," said Katten Chief Executive Officer Noah S. Heller.

"We are very honored to receive the Flex Impact Award because it spotlights Katten's deep commitment to providing policies, programs and resources that let our attorneys know they are valued, assist in their career progression, and ultimately empower them to reach their full potential. These offerings help us recruit and retain top talent and boost morale as well as the productivity and creativity of those serving the legal needs of our clients," Heller said.

"Katten's four-week Associate Sabbatical is a testament to the firm's commitment to its people and their well being," said Morales. "We were impressed by the fact that all Associates offered the sabbatical take it, indicating that firm leadership truly supports the benefits of taking time off to reset. This people-first mentality, endorsed by Katten's leadership, creates a work environment that is flexible, unbiased, creative and empowering."

The [Diversity and Flexibility Alliance](#) is a think tank that collaborates with organizations to develop non-stigmatized flexible work policies that promote inclusive work cultures and help to advance more women into leadership positions. The Alliance provides practical research-based solutions, training workshops, and strategic advisory services that increase organizational effectiveness through diversity and flexibility.