

Michelle P. Wimes, JD
SVP, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer
Children's Mercy Hospital



Michelle is a strategic leader who is deft at implementing change management strategies necessary for a comprehensive and effective diversity and inclusion and professional development program. Michelle joined the Children's Mercy Hospital System (CM) in 2020. In this inaugural role, Michelle collaborates with CM leaders to address health disparities and foster a workplace culture of inclusion while establishing and maintaining relationships with peers and partners in key organizations.

Under her leadership, the hospital was named a Best Place to Work for Diversity on Newsweek's 2023 list becoming one of 125 healthcare institutions to be named. Additionally, under her leadership, Children's Mercy was one of 64 hospital systems ranked as America's greatest workplaces for women in 2023 by Newsweek and one of 150 Top Places to Work in Healthcare by Becker's

Review in 2023.

Prior to her Children's Mercy tenure, Michelle served as the inaugural Chief Diversity and Professional Development Officer for Ogletree Deakins, LLP, one of the nation's largest labor and employment law firms, where she built an award-winning program from the ground up over the course of nine years.

Previously, Michelle practiced law for 14 years, where she handled all aspects of employment litigation while serving as an equity partner at a Kansas City-based firm. She focused on matters involving employment discrimination, harassment, and civil rights issues while representing clients before administrative agencies and courts.

Michelle is a nationally renowned presenter and author on professional development, diversity and inclusion issues in the workplace on topics such as, "Engaging Decision-makers and Practice Group Leaders in Diversity and Inclusion Efforts;" "Aligning Associate Competencies and Diversity Principles;" and "Reconciling Diversity, Inclusion & Meritocracy: Challenges & Opportunities." She has presented before organizations such as the Forum on Workplace Inclusion, the Children's Hospital Association, the Association of Corporate Counsel, the Practicing Law Institute, The Diversity and Flexibility Alliance, the National Association of Legal Professionals, the Professional Development Institute, and the Association of Law Firm Diversity Professionals.

Michelle has been recognized for her many professional contributions. In 2024, she was one of fifteen women nationwide to receive the Women Transforming Business Award in the area of Community Impact by CBIZ. In 2023, her alma mater, Tulane Law School, presented her with its inaugural Deans Kramer & Clayton Award for Leadership in Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. She was also recognized by Becker's Healthcare as one of the Top Chief Diversity Officers in Healthcare to Know in 2023. In 2021, the Kansas City Business Journal recognized her as one of 25 local "Women Who Mean Business." In 2020, she was awarded the Sly James Diversity and Inclusion Award given to members of the Kansas City area legal community for their contributions to diversity and inclusion in the legal profession.

In 2018, she received Missouri Lawyer Media's inaugural diversity and inclusion award honoring 20 state-wide individuals and organizations "for significantly advancing diversity, inclusion and dignity of all people in Missouri's legal profession." In 2016, she received the National Congress of Black Women's "Greater Good Award for Public Service" and was selected as a "Champion of Change" by the Bruce R. Watkins Cultural Heritage Center in 2015. Ingram's Magazine also honored her in 2015 as one of "50 Missourians You Should Know."

Michelle has also been published in the Journal of Clinical and Translational Science, Modern Healthcare, Beckers Review, the ABA Journal, The Federal Lawyer Magazine, Bloomberg Law, MultiCultural Law Magazine, and Global Legal Post. She resides in Kansas City with her husband, Judge Brian C. Wimes, and their three daughters.