



# Lathrop GPM Continues Increasing Diversity in Franchising Speaker Series with “Increasing Diversity in Franchise Systems”

February 2, 2022

(February 2, 2022) — Lathrop GPM continues its *Increasing Diversity in Franchising* speaker series with its second session on "Increasing Diversity in Franchise Systems."

Held virtually on February 8, 2022 (11 am PT; 12 noon MT; 1 pm CT; 2 pm ET), the session includes a panel discussion on developing diversity initiatives, recruitment and retention of diverse franchisees, and creating a diverse franchisor organization. Panelists include **Gerry Fernandez**, President & Founder of Multicultural Foodservice and Hospitality Alliance, **Loretta Sexton**, Vice President of People Services at Tropical Smoothie Café, and **Valerie Kinney**, Vice President of Marketing at CertaPro Painters. The panel will be moderated by Lathrop GPM Franchise & Distribution Partner **Mark Kirsch**.

**To register, click here.**

Future sessions will address:

- Franchising: What it Means for Business Owners and Brand Owners
- From Dream to an Agreement: Business and Legal Considerations for Franchisees
- Navigating the Access to Capital Challenges

The first session in the *Increasing Diversity in Franchising* series, on October 28, 2021, addressed "Where Are We & How Can We Improve?" It included a presentation from Dr. Marcia Chatelain, Professor, History and African American Studies, Georgetown, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Franchise: The Golden Arches in Black America*. The session also included a panel moderated by Franchise & Distribution Partner Justin Sallis with Dr. Chatelain, Vice President of Emerging Markets Franchise Development at Choice Hotels International John Lancaster and Vice President of Federal Government Relations at the International Franchise Association Michael Layman. **View a recording of the first session here.**

*Increasing Diversity in Franchising* is a virtual educational speaker series designed to increase ownership in franchising by underrepresented racial and ethnic groups - as both franchisees and franchisors. Lathrop GPM's franchise and distribution professionals are passionate about the industry and believe encouraging



and educating potential franchisees and franchisors from diverse communities will help them to capitalize on business opportunities they may not otherwise explore.

With one of the world's leading franchise and distribution law practices, Lathrop GPM's Franchise & Distribution Practice Group serves franchisors and master franchisees at all stages of development in markets across the world. The energetic and diverse group of more than 30 lawyers, paralegals, and other franchise professionals works in teams, creating a collaborative environment that brings clients a wide range of experience in virtually every facet of international and domestic franchising. Serving franchise clients is a priority for Lathrop GPM; many of the firm's attorneys who practice in other areas of business law also are experienced in advising and representing franchisors.

The group responsible for the *Increasing Diversity in Franchising* speaker series includes franchise attorneys Liz Dillon, Mark Kirsch and Justin Sallis, along with Director of Diversity & Inclusion Vanessa Vaughn West, Chief Client Officer Jasmine Trillos-Decarie, Director of Practice Management Katie Weinlaeder, and Senior Business Development Manager Susan Seilnacht.