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**MCCA Announces 2023 Charlotte E. Ray and Paula L. Ettelbrick
Award Honorees**

Washington, D.C. – Today, the Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) announced **Grace E. Speights** as the recipient of the 2023 Charlotte E. Ray Award and **Nassib Abou-Khalil** as this year’s Paula L. Ettelbrick Award honoree.

MCCA’s Charlotte E. Ray Award recognizes a Black woman who, like its namesake, has blazed a trail in the legal profession and broken down barriers for future generations of women of color.

This year’s honoree, Grace E. Speights, is a partner at Morgan Lewis, where she leads the firm’s global labor and employment practice and co-leads its racial equality and justice task force. Long before these ideals entered our national consciousness, Speights was unapologetically carving a path for others in the legal field to prioritize both intersectional advocacy and corporate responsibility. From bolstering today’s and tomorrow’s leaders by co-building the African American Managing Partners Network, to expertly guiding organizations through not just investigating but also proactively preventing employment discrimination, Speights has led an industry-wide shift towards action over complicity and coalition-building over othering—empowering Black lawyers, other lawyers of color, and allies to foster connection and accountability in the push to diversify the field and build truly inclusive workplaces.

“At every turn, Grace has held up the mirror to the legal field and corporate America, challenging us all to know and do better,” said **Jean Lee, President and CEO of MCCA**. “At a moment when leaders and organizations are facing growing resistance to workplace diversity efforts, her proactive, determined leadership reminds us that community-building, creative thinking, and decisive action are key to ensuring that corporate America respects and represents all of America.”

The Paula L. Ettelbrick Award recognizes extraordinary commitment to advancing equity for LBGTQ+ attorneys.

MCCA’s 2023 honoree, Nassib Abou-Khalil, most recently served as Chief Legal Officer at Nokia, where he led the company’s legal and compliance team. As Nokia’s first openly gay executive and an outspoken global



advocate for true inclusion in the legal field, Abou-Khalil has courageously built upon Ettelbrick’s legacy. He filled the silence around LGBTQ+ lawyers’ experiences in the field with his own stories, encouraging others to pursue diversity and inclusion beyond the bare minimum and create safe spaces for colleagues to thrive through connection around shared identities. At Nokia, Abou-Khalil sponsored the company’s LGBTQ+ employee resource group, championed an international talent development program for LGBTQ+ leaders, and instituted a cutting-edge quarterly scorecard for Nokia’s panel law firms to sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies. In addition, he scaled Nokia’s data-driven approach by partnering with MCCA on the first-of-its-kind Global Law Firm Diversity Survey, which promotes transparency and tracks progress across multinational firms to drive lasting transformation.

“Nassib leads with authenticity to bravely shift the status quo, inspiring entire communities and companies to rise united,” said **Wanji Walcott, Chief Legal and Business Affairs Officer at Pinterest and MCCA’s Board Chair**. “In sharing his experiences as an immigrant and member of the LGBTQ+ community, Nassib nurtures a global, inter-connected workforce that invites the diverse perspectives we need to succeed together.”

Nassib Abou-Khalil will be honored at MCCA’s 2023 Creating Pathways to Diversity Conference, and Grace E. Speights will be honored at the organization’s Diversity Gala on October 11, 2023, in New York, NY.

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The Minority Corporate Counsel Association (MCCA) is the preeminent voice on diversity, equity, and inclusion from the counsel’s office to the C-suite and across corporate America. For over 25 years, MCCA has championed diversity in the legal profession and beyond by publishing research, providing professional development opportunities, convening thought leaders, and offering advisory services. Today, MCCA empowers members with the tools needed to know, do, and lead better – and to transform their company, industry, and corporate America for the better.