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The Institute for Well-Being in Law Kicks Off First Conference *Inaugural conference seeks to prioritize and improve wellbeing in the legal profession*

(CHICAGO) Katten announced that the Institute for Well-Being in Law is hosting an inaugural conference to press for systemic change in the legal profession so that wellbeing is a core component of professional success.

The virtual [“Redesigning the Legal Profession for a Better Future”](#) conference will run from **January 19-21** and feature 22 sessions across four different tracks: individual wellbeing, workplace wellbeing, law school wellbeing and leading law firm wellbeing.

“This conference is an important way for us to carry out our crucial mission — to lead a cultural transformation in the legal profession and establish wellbeing as a core centerpiece of professional success,” said Anne Brafford, vice president of the [Institute for Well-Being in Law](#) (IWIL). “The pandemic has raised the stakes and urgency of our mission,” she said.

The conference kicks off with keynote speaker Dr. [Martin Seligman](#), a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania and former president of the American Psychological Association. Seligman, the founder of positive psychology, has been recognized as one of the most influential psychologists in the last decade.

Seligman will offer insights about how institutions, organizations and individuals can become stuck and languish without the confidence, optimism and imagination needed to reimagine a new future and take steps to achieve it, according to Brafford. “This is very applicable to the legal profession right now as it tries to reimagine and create a new future in which more lawyers can thrive in all parts of their lives,” she said.

The program lineup includes:

- Harvard Business Professor [Ranjay Gulati](#) and [Preston Pugh](#), a partner at Crowell & Moring, address the strong overlap between inclusion and wellbeing: *What Your Black Lawyers Really Want: Retaining and Engaging Your Firm’s Black Lawyers by Supporting Their Well-Being*.

- [Libby Coreno](#), co-chair of the New York Bar Well-Being Task Force, leads a timely panel discussion on January 21: *Reversing the Great Resignation: Practical Well-Being Strategies for Supervisors to Support and Retain Their Teams*.
- Bestselling author [Susan Fowler](#) and lawyer and DEI consultant [Denise Robinson](#) discuss evidence-based guidance to create a flourishing professional life in their session on January 19: *Building Blocks of a Thriving, Self-Defined Professional Life*.
- Bestselling author [Dr. Donnie Hutchinson](#) and lawyer [Matt Hrutkay](#) provide guidance on navigating work-life boundaries to enable full wellbeing in their session on January 20: *How to Master Work-Life Balance in an Imbalanced Culture: Strategies for Lawyers*.

In addition to the wellbeing content, IWIL will announce the winner of the [Reed Smith Award for Excellence in Well-Being in Law](#) to recognize an individual who has made an outstanding contribution towards fostering systemic change in legal professional wellbeing. To see the full schedule and register for the conference, [click here](#).

IWIL was created in 2020 to address a growing concern about mental health, substance use and addiction, and stress affecting lawyers. Last spring, IWIL conducted a survey that found that 63 percent of participating lawyers and 51 percent of support staff met the criteria for burnout. IWIL Board Members [Anne Brafford](#) and [Matt Thiese](#) will talk more about these findings and what to do about them in a conference session on January 20.

The issue of wellbeing in the law has gained significant traction since the National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being (IWIL's predecessor organization) released its groundbreaking report in 2017, [The Path to Lawyer Well-Being: Practical Recommendations for Positive Change](#). The report's findings resulted in a national movement among stakeholders in the legal profession, including the judiciary, legal employers, regulators, law schools, malpractice carriers and lawyer assistance programs, and spurred the Task Force to establish IWIL in December 2020.

Five firms are Inaugural Founding Champions of IWIL: [Crowell & Moring LLP](#), [Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP](#), [Latham & Watkins LLP](#), [Morgan, Lewis & Bockius LLP](#) and [Reed Smith LLP](#). IWIL's additional principal donors include: Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP, Mintz, Levin, Cohn, Ferris, Glovsky and Popeo, P.C., Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, Covington, and Husch Blackwell.

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