



**Education:** JD, Georgetown University Law Center; MS, chemistry, Emory University; BS, chemistry, Morehouse College

**Company Name:** Fish & Richardson P.C.

**Industry:** Law

**Company CEO:** John Adkisson

**Company Headquarters Location:** Boston, Massachusetts

**Number of Employees:** 1,157

**Your Location (if different from above):** Washington, DC

**Words you live by:** To be early is to be on time, to be on time is to be late, and to be late is unacceptable.

**Who is your personal hero?** Too many to name; my wife, a board-certified lab animal veterinarian, is at the top.

**What book are you reading?** *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates

**What was your first job:** Selling tennis shoes at Sneakee Feet in Towson, Maryland

**Favorite charity:** Montgomery Baptist Church

**Interests:** The Bs have it: board games, baseball, a nice Bordeaux, and the Bible.

**Family:** Kamela, my wife of almost 25 years, and my children: Justus (19); Kendall (17); and Jackson (13).

## I Will Lift Even as I Climb

What ignites my professional passion is being a torchbearer for others to follow, as my family members and mentors were for me. I am standing on the shoulders of giants, and I need to honor that. I did not achieve any of my successes alone. People died for me to have the freedoms that I do; folks have sacrificed for me to be where I am; somebody prayed for me before I was even here. The only way I know to pay that back is by paying it forward.

My great-grandmother, who helped to raise me, grew up in rural North Carolina and was raised in part by her great-grandmother, a woman who had been born a slave. So here I stand in 2020, blessed and fortunate enough to be an equity principal and management committee member at the best IP law firm in the world,

having been raised by a woman, who was raised by a woman, who was born a slave. So I am impelled to make the most of the opportunities that I have, at once striving to make her proud, while at the same time showing those who come after me that I will lift, even as I climb.

One of the many famous quotes that you often hear at my alma mater is from noted educator, philosopher, theologian, and fellow alumnus Howard Thurman, who said, "Over the heads of her students, Morehouse holds a crown that she challenges them to grow tall enough to wear." My story is still being written, but I hope that I have grown into that crown, and I hope that my children and grandchildren will strive to go even further.

The passion that drives me

is really about a legacy, about what is captured so well in the oft-invoked eulogy what's in your dash, but on a personal basis. As a patent litigator, I am enormously proud of the legal work I have done. I am thrilled with the successes I have achieved on behalf of our clients, both large and small, from Fortune 50 companies to independent inventors. I am also proud to have become the first Black full-equity principal at my firm. All of that matters. But in the end, the questions that matter most will be these: Have I touched lives personally and made a difference? Did I encourage someone along the way? And was I an ambassador for Christ?

If the answer to those questions is yes, then I'll know I deserved this award; I was a Black Leader Worth Watching, after all.