

# **DIVERSONOMICS | EPISODE 1 - WHY YOUR FIRM NEEDS A DIVERSITY & INCLUSION INITIATIVE**

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In the inaugural episode of Diversonomics, co-hosts Roberto Aburto and Sarah Willis introduce listeners to the podcast and discuss their experiences with diversity and inclusion in the legal industry. They also outline some of the obstacles the profession faces with respect to adopting new strategies and overhauling old practices.

## **EPISODE TIP**

"Diversity is the one true thing we all have in common." — Sarah Willis, Co-host of Diversonomics and an associate at Gowling WLG



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## Transcript

**Roberto:** Welcome to Diversonomics. The podcast about all things diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. I am your co-host, Roberto Aburto, a lawyer at Gowling WLG in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, and I have here with me my co-host, Sarah Williams.

**Sarah:** Hi everyone. Sarah here. I am also a lawyer at Gowling WLG in Ottawa, Ontario and it is a pleasure to be here with you today. It's actually a pretty special episode because it is our inaugural episode. Very exciting.

**Roberto:** Hooray! Hooray! Hooray! Here we go, episode number 1. I love listening to podcasts and I'm very eager to take the driver seat of one. I'm always happy to hear the sound of my own voice so, at the very least, we'll have at least two listeners because Sarah has to listen to me as well.

On this episode we are going to talk about why we are interested in diversity and inclusion, why we decided to do this show and what you can expect from us in Season 1, as well as what you can expect to hear from our friends and colleagues.

**Sarah:** Who are really just smarter and funnier and generally more entertaining than us so you are in for a treat.

**Roberto:** Very critical that at least we get smarter and entertaining people on. Hopefully that will help.

**Sarah:** It will minimize our impact.

**Roberto:** Exactly. Just to tell you a little bit about myself I did an undergraduate in business administration at Wilfrid Laurier University. I also did a joint program in law at Michigan State University College of Law, as well as the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, which is a real mouthful.

I am a Gowling WLG “lifer”, having started in the Waterloo office in 2009 as a summer student, moved to Ottawa in 2013 and have had the privilege of staying with the same firm that whole time. I practice in municipal law and litigation with a focus on real estate disputes. If there is a fight that involves dirt I am all over that.

I also have the privilege of being one of the co-chairs of our National Diversity and Inclusion Council so that has been a real privilege and something that I have really enjoyed taking part in and certainly has been big shoes to fill.

**Sarah:** I will tell you a little bit about myself. I am also a former Golden Hawk. I did my undergraduate degree at Wilfrid Laurier and I went to Queen’s University for law school. I started my legal career in Toronto at a full service firm and I joined the Gowling WLG family last August. So it has been almost exactly a year since I joined Gowling WLG.

~~My practice is split between commercial litigation and professional liability. It's a bit of a mixed bag but it's very interesting.~~

## CPD

This podcast will count for up to **20 minutes** of Professionalism credit toward the mandatory CPD requirements of the Law Society of Upper Canada (subject to the LSUC’s overall limit of 6 hours per year for viewing archived video programs).



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## EPISODE GUESTS

### Roberto Aburto

Roberto Aburto is an associate in Gowling WLG’s Ottawa office, practising in municipal law and civil litigation, with a focus on real estate disputes, land use planning law and commercial litigation.

He is also an active member in the swimming and lifesaving community, serving on the board of directors for the Lifesaving Society (Ontario Branch) as the corporate secretary/legal adviser, and on the Lifesaving Society (National Branch) National Team Selection Committee for Lifesaving Sport.

He is also co-chair of Gowling WLG’s Diversity and Inclusion Council and is committed to promoting these principles.

### Sarah Willis

Sarah Willis is an associate in Gowling WLG’s Ottawa office, practising in the areas of commercial and civil litigation, and medical defence law. Sarah also has ecommercial and civil litigation experience in a variety of areas, including contractual and construction law disputes, tort actions, and small claims court claims. While in law school, Sarah was an oralist in the 2013 Willms and Shier Environmental Law Moot competition, sat as an executive on the Women and Law Association, and was the vice-president of the class of 2013 council in her final year.

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