

## Caplin & Drysdale Celebrates the Launch of Caplin-Swanson Diversity Fellowship and Black History Month with First Conversations with Caplin Event

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*Caplin & Drysdale*

**WASHINGTON, D.C. – February 22, 2021:** On Friday, February 19th, Caplin & Drysdale’s Diversity Committee hosted their first Conversations with Caplin event entitled “Conversations with Caplin: Being Black in the Law” in honor of Black History Month and the launch of the Caplin-Swanson Diversity Fellowship.

During the private virtual event the committee welcomed members from both the Caplin and Swanson families along with our Inaugural Recipient of the Caplin-Swanson Diversity Fellowship Brooke Radford. Professor Kim Forde-Mazrui, a Mortimer M. Caplin Professor of Law and Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Law at the University of Virginia School of Law, served as the guest speaker. After Professor Forde-Mazrui spoke Risa Goluboff, Dean of the University of Virginia School of Law, was able to join in on the conversation and say a few words about the new fellowship.

The fellowship honors the actions taken by two men of great character, our Firm’s founder Mortimer Caplin and Gregory Swanson, the first Black person to study law at the University of Virginia. In 1949, Mortimer Caplin was a young law professor who successfully rallied the entire law school faculty to admit Gregory Swanson to the University of Virginia School of Law. When the University’s Board of Visitors rejected the law school’s decision, Gregory Swanson fought and won the right to enroll in 1950. Mr. Swanson’s case helped lay the foundation for *Brown v. Board of Education*. Years later, when Mr. Caplin was Commissioner of the IRS, he hired Mr. Swanson to be an IRS attorney. Mr. Swanson worked at the IRS until his retirement in 1984.

Victor Jaramillo, Chair of the Diversity Committee, moderated the conversation with Professor Kim Forde-Mazrui where they discussed Professor Forde-Mazrui’s personal history, racial inequality, Gregory Swanson and the University of Virginia’s history with race, and Black History Month. Mr. Jaramillo closed out the event by noting that “*Inclusion works,*” and said “*let’s be mindful so we can hopefully change the world this way.*”

As part of a broader diversity initiative the Diversity Committee hopes to turn Conversations with Caplin into a series. Stay tuned for further announcements. For information on the fellowship and the men the fellowship honors, please visit our Diversity and Inclusion page.