

Creating an Opportunity To Be SEEN

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The sports and entertainment industries, while one of the most coveted industries to break into, have long been one of the most difficult to enter, particularly for black and brown professionals. These industries have lacked diversity, making it difficult for black and brown individuals to gain the exposure and experience needed to succeed in the business.

This combination has provided for a disparate impact, and one that Sports and Entertainment Equity Network (SEEN), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is looking to break.

Led by industry veterans and co-founders, Melcolm Ruffin and Tristan Mitchell, SEEN has made lasting impacts on 1500+ professionals as it strives to close the diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) gap prevalent in the business of Sports and Entertainment. Through advancement, community building and giving back, SEEN aims to offer its members the opportunity to accelerate their careers and build authentic relationships, providing them with impactful opportunities to reinvest their time and resources into the next generation of diverse sports and entertainment leaders.

While initially founded in 2015, amidst the global pandemic, SEEN and its leadership team decided to register as a non-profit to help its growth and promote its mission. With the legal assistance of Davis+Gilbert attorneys, including Davis+Gilbert associate and SEEN board member Andrew Richman, SEEN was able to successfully register and organize as a 501(c)(3) organization, and receive the expertise needed to begin the journey of a sustainable organization.

Davis+Gilbert has supported SEEN in its grassroots origin and has provided legal assistance in building the young organization from the ground up, providing support from a trademark perspective, advising on employment issues relating to SEEN's first full-time employee, providing risk assessments and analysis, drafting contract templates and participant releases, and helping launch their website SEENTogether.org. "Davis+Gilbert's pro bono consultation has been truly invaluable as we laid SEEN's foundation for sustainable, long-term growth" — Melcolm Ruffin, SEEN's President.

Making a Difference

To learn more about the organization, donate and find ways to support their mission, visit their [website](#) and connect with them on [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).



In the past year, SEEN has:

- Formed a highly successful mentorship program — "SEEN NextGen" — which pairs young black and brown professionals with two mentors each and has already led to several new career opportunities for its mentees.
- Executed the SEEN Career Showcase, in which over 125 black and brown professionals were able to network and connect with recruiters from eight of the top sports and entertainment organizations, including the NBA, MLS, CAA and Overtime.
- Launched the SEEN-McCormack Fellowship in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Amherst to annually provide two individuals in the SEEN network scholarships covering all tuition and fees for the McCormack Department of Sports Management's top-ranked MS or MS/ MBA program for the next three years.
- Executed several digital panels (including Black Activism in Sports: Athletes Leveraging Their Platform for Social Justice and Women Driving Change: A Celebration of Women in the Sports and Entertainment Industry) and various networking events attended by more than 500 members.