

FIRM NEWS

Schulte Speaker Series: Mia Yamamoto Shares Journey as Trailblazing Transgender Attorney and Civil Rights Activist

June 28, 2024

In a powerful event for Pride Month and as part of the Schulte Speaker Series, the LGBTQ+ Affinity Group hosted the legendary transgender criminal defense attorney and civil rights activist Mia Yamamoto. Mia, who is celebrated for her trailblazing contributions to justice, served in the US Army from 1966 to 1968 with the 4th Infantry Division, USARV. For her distinguished military service, she was awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and Vietnam Service Medal. Since publicly coming out as transgender at the age of 60, Mia has committed herself to advocacy and representation for the transgender community, both legally in courtrooms and more broadly in society.

Introduced to the Schulte audience by Amy Leipziger, Director of the Free to be Youth Project at the Urban Justice Center, Mia candidly recounted her life story, shedding light on the experiences of transgender individuals facing gender oppression, familial rejection and anti-trans sentiment. Mia described her journey of becoming the first openly trans trial lawyer in the state of California, including affirming responses from many of her clients, judges and broader legal community.

Mia also discussed how civil rights movements benefit one another and urged us all to “stand up for each other” in the fight against inequity.

This event not only celebrated Mia's remarkable contributions to both the LGBTQ+ community and society at large but also reinforced the importance of advocacy, representation and solidarity.

[Read more about Mia here.](#)

[Read about DEI at Schulte here.](#)