

# Ken Lewis article "How you can help dismantle America's economic apartheid" published in Triangle Business Journal

---

## Related Professionals

Ken Lewis  
919.755.1800  
klewis@nexsenpruet.com

## Media Mention

*Triangle Business Journal*  
12.22.2020

Nexsen Pruet's Ken Lewis, a business attorney in the firm's Raleigh office, published an article in the Triangle Business Journal, "How you can help dismantle America's economic apartheid."

In the article, Ken details personal experiences as a Black professional and offers insights and solutions to change the economic apartheid.

## Excerpt

In 1987, I began my career as the first Black associate at the largest law firm in the Carolinas. Less than a month into the job, my wife and I were strolling along a sidewalk in a tony section of Charlotte when I noticed a young partner and his wife approaching us. Happy to have spotted a friend in my new hometown, I smiled and began to speak, but the man clutched his wife as both dropped their heads and scampered past. This maneuver stung but did not shock me. During my youth in North Carolina, college years at Duke and stint at Harvard Law, I learned to dismiss these reflexive white gymnastics as garden variety ignorance, rudeness or racism.

This time, however, it was not so easy to dismiss.

### How Will Race Affect Our Chances?

As a young associate, my success at the law firm depended on being mentored and evaluated by this partner and his cohorts. It made me wonder what should I expect from the lawyers in the firm? What assumptions would they make about me? Could I expect fair evaluations or even a chance to prove myself? Could I expect the same opportunities as other associates? Ultimately, I was able to put those questions aside,

master my craft and succeed in corporate law. For more than three decades, I hadn't thought much about my encounter with implicit bias on the Charlotte sidewalk. That is, until last week, when I realized that it encapsulated hard realities still faced by Black professionals – and might offer a way for those that Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called “people of goodwill” to help us build a better America for all.

*To read the full article, [click here](#).*

---

Nexsen Pruet serves clients from nine offices across the Southeast. With more than 200 lawyers and professionals, the firm provides regional, full-service capabilities with international strengths.