

OCTOBER 2020

THE METRO REPORT

Moving to DiversCity



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And Much More

Whit Smith and
Glenn Forbes, Sr.
WhitneySmith Company
Photo by Rachel DeLira



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~ ERIC P.

FROM THE PUBLISHERS

Moving to Diversity

by Shevoyd and Anjie Hamilton

I wonder if you can see it. I wonder if you can tell. Is your city moving? Is it "Moving to Diversity?"

Every relocation of a company or corporate headquarters adds new area jobs, more opportunity and more diversity. They bring the opportunity to embrace diversity in culture, ideas, concepts, race, gender, beliefs, skill and experience.

For many people and businesses, the word "diversity" is just the latest catchphrase. It looks good on the company website, but within the four walls of the business there is little to no thought, action or support for diversity or inclusion. Where there is no diversity and inclusion, there is no shared equity.

Over the last few years, we have looked at some local businesses to see if they mention or support the principles of diversity. I must say that I have been surprised by some who have and do. But more surprised by some who say that they do, but they really do not. I have looked at company websites, visited some companies and witnessed a few at local events. I realize and acknowledge that my eyes do not see every facet of a business, but some signs of diversity and inclusion should not be difficult to see.

There are still challenges ahead on the acceptance and implementation of diversity.

It is only fair and right to mention that there are many businesses that do understand, value and place high importance on being diverse and understand that it is a way of business; a way of life. If embraced and with some patience—diversity has the opportunity to positively affect and change the trajectory of a business.

The Metro Report is a diverse business publication with a primary focus on women and minorities. We are a digital publication with reach in Greater Fort Worth, Dallas County and Collin County. Our mission is to shine the light on the fastest growing yet underserved new business ownership demographic in the North Texas area; women and minorities. We cover businesses, leaders, entrepreneurs and executives in the Metroplex. We use our product to tell stories that others can't or don't tell. Through The Metro Report we make introductions and become a resource to help businesses to stay in business by delivering great and encouraging story content, news, information and marketing opportunities.

As we continue to build our platforms, we invite you to share your news and information with us about diversity, inclusion and equality and other news highlighting women and minorities in business.

Beginning with this October issue, we will publish six issues per year on a bi-monthly basis. Our goal is to make each issue a more robust publication with articles, news and information that our readers have become accustomed to.

We have adjusted our ad rates to be more affordable for our advertising partners. Also, beginning with this October issue, we will offer a paid print subscription as well as our normal digital edition. We encourage you sign up and get your copy for the office, home or as a gift.

Lastly, we encourage you to support our advertising partners. They value you as much as we do.

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Florence Bruner: Inspiration to me and many

by Christie Eckler

Author Mark Anthony once said, "One day she discovered that she was fierce and strong, full of fire and that not even she could hold herself back because her passion burned brighter than her fears."

As I sit here thinking of how to best describe a leader like Florence Salazar Bruner, more than a few words come to mind: bold, vibrant, strong, intelligent, kind, loyal, driven, and most importantly, a game-changer.

Florence Bruner, owner and CEO of Firehouse Auto Sales, LLC, is driven to excel in everything she does, whether it's in her entrepreneurial business as a concierge auto dealership or as a community leader in her various board roles with the Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Hispanic Women Network of Texas, North Texas Tollway Authority and Fort Worth Sister Cities. Florence has been in the auto industry for 25 years and founded Firehouse Auto in 2012. Florence has thrived in a male-oriented business due to her tenacity, no-nonsense approach to business, and goal of excellent customer service in every experience.

Florence is a part of an amazing community of 4.4 million Latino-owned businesses in the U.S. that contribute to more than \$700 billion to the economy annually. According to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in 2019, Latino-owned businesses have grown 31 percent since 2012, more than double the growth rate of all businesses across America (13 percent). Fort Worth is fortunate to have her business leadership and support.

I met Florence many years ago when we both had connections in various networking circles. I learned about her business, her willingness to serve, her humility and her ability to make a deal come together. She gained my admiration and trust by watching her give so much back to her community and by watching her loving example as a mother of six children ranging in age from 10 to 31.

“

Florence has thrived in a male-oriented business due to her tenacity, no-nonsense approach to business, and goal of excellent customer service in every experience.

”

Her ability to read people is uncanny even for someone she just met – with one look she appears to understand and empathize with what I have been through in my day. She has zero tolerance for fake people or pretenses, and she is without a doubt one of the most real people I know. She told me once that she recognizes me as a kindred spirit and she'll never know what a compliment that was for me.

Back in 2018, Florence's expertise as a concierge auto dealership was a blessing during an extremely busy year for

me. I had just started a new job, was involved in several volunteer projects and had time-consuming family needs. My frustration reached its peak when my car started acting up, so I decided to call Florence and ask for her help. Few people may know that an auto dealership concierge can help them whether they seek an economy or luxury vehicle. The concept was new to me as well, but I decided to try it.

Because of Florence's quick assistance, I did not have to deal with a prolonged sales pitch from a car salesperson nor an all-day dealer negotiation. Instead, I got the treatment of my dreams. I simply told her the color and make I wanted in my new vehicle, and within a week she had sent me options with videos to view. I did not even have to call my banker because Florence found superior financing, giving me recommendations for refinancing and payoff that no one before had ever bothered to stop and teach me.

Through her tutelage during the car-buying process and getting to know her over the next year, I knew I had found a lifelong friend and business ally.

Then in the summer of 2019, tragedy struck. We almost lost Florence in a horrible accident. Through periodic visits while she recovered, I saw her push through toward a swift, full recovery from ICU to rehab, wheelchair to walker, and finally, to a cane. Relying on the help from close family and friends, combined with a determination to get back out there so she could resume helping others, she had the resilience not to give in to adversity.

In 2020, Florence's determination shined as she quickly recovered and started immediately meeting the auto needs of DFW amid COVID-19. I can attest because I was a return customer in 2020. For her outstanding testimony and work she has been named Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's Businesswoman of the Year in 2020. For more information and to celebrate her on October 9, 2020, check out the fwhcc.org website.

It's this kind of example – and more – that leave me humbled and inspired by the life of Florence Bruner. Because she lights a fire for all who follow in her path, I am honored to do business with her, to learn from her, and to have the blessing of her friendship.



Florence Bruner, owner and CEO of Firehouse Auto Sales, LLC
Photo credit: Rachel DeLira

Striving to leave a legacy – Deputy Chief Tarrick McGuire

by Steve Rochun

Motivated by a desire to leave a legacy for his sons and make his community and policing better, Deputy Chief Tarrick McGuire has been serving the Arlington community as a police officer since 2003. He's as serious about his service as a police officer as he is about the people that he serves.

Born and raised in the Dallas community of Oak Cliff, McGuire knew at a young age he wanted to be either a football player or a police officer. His upbringing in Oak Cliff was a big factor in his career aspirations. "When you say I graduated from Carter High School, it comes with great responsibility to the (Oak Cliff) community and wherever you establish footprints. I have encountered many people who associate Oak Cliff as an African American poverty-stricken area. I see it differently. Oak Cliff is an area that has produced some premier athletes, doctors, lawyers, police executives, movie directors, business executives and some of the greatest trailblazers of the 21st century. It is a special place to me," says McGuire.

McGuire witnessed many Carter High School football players move on to the National Football League which made that possibility more realistic in his and his classmates minds. Although he had a desire to be a professional football player, his desire to serve and make a difference in his community was stronger. Two men in his church would make his choice easier. Lloyd Whitaker and Joe Fletcher were Dallas police officers and served as deacons in his church. They came to Wednesday night bible study during their break and returned to work when bible study was complete. He was invited to a ride-out with Officer Whitaker and recognized his calling

"[Deputy Chief McGuire] is proud to be part of the Arlington Police Department, which was recognized by the White House as one of the top 15 exemplary police departments in the country."

was to the police force. He went on to attend Oklahoma State University where he played football and graduated with a BA in speech communications. He joined the police force after his graduation to begin the career he had dreamed of.

Having traveled the country, Chief McGuire has worked



Deputy Chief Tarrick McGuire, Arlington Police Department

Photo credit: JSoulent Photography

on national police reform alongside the Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services and White House administration to provide reforms and technical assistance to police departments needing help on improving policies, community relations and implementation of task force recommendations. He is proud to be part of the Arlington Police Department, which was recognized by the White House as one of the top 15 exemplary police departments in the country. He also is a sought after public speaker and has traveled in North and South Americas to deliver keynote speeches and lectures on how to improve education, leadership, policing and community-police relations.

Asked what he believes are the biggest misconceptions about policing, McGuire responded, "There are many challenges that face our nation today and policing is at the forefront of the conversation. Despite the narratives behind defunding and abolishing the police, this profession is a calling. There are 18,000 law enforcement agencies and more than 900,000 officers in the federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies.

Most officers work tirelessly to keep our communities safe. Most importantly, officers have millions of interactions that do not involve using force. Officers use force an average of 2 percent during interactions with citizens. Every day is an opportunity to help someone, change their life and help improve their circumstances."

McGuire believes that every organization, whether public or private, should make workplace diversity a priority. There are two fundamental views to workplace diversity. First is that racial categories should not be a factor, but should be recognized as colorblindness because employees should be solely judged on performance when making organizational decisions for hiring, assignments and promotions. The second school of thought is that racial and ethnic make-up should be considered in relation to creating a multicolored environment, where workplace culture can be intentionally established. Both are important views and are applicable in creating an equal opportunity in policing. In law enforcement, officers respond to a variety of calls encountering people with different life experiences. With that in mind, it is important to understand that diversity is not just about race or gender, but also other characteristics including religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, language ability, background and experience. These things are critical when building trust with communities. Decades of research show that when members of the public believe their law enforcement organizations represent them, understand them and support them, communities perceive police as fair, legitimate and accountable.

It is equally important to acknowledge that improving minority diversity in policing must be a top priority for police departments because there is still need for improvement. Over the past few decades, women constitute less than 13 percent of total officers in police

organizations and an even smaller percentage of African Americans are in executive command positions at major city police departments. At the executive level, it is important mayors and municipal leaders understand the value of having a diverse management structure to overcome the historical challenges that have prevented workplace diversity. To improve diversity in police organizations, departments must have a strategic hiring plan with a focus on working with community stakeholders, regional partners and academic institutions to improve organizational diversity. The plan should include recruitment of Historically Black Colleges and Universities, majority minority colleges and universities and attending job fairs where participation is representative of a diverse population. Police executives employ fair testing and promotional processes that eliminate bias supported by policy and independent assessments outside the organization. Simply stated — diversity and inclusion must be intentional.

Despite the challenges we face, McGuire believes that we can only get through these trying times together. We must effectively implement public policy and systems to address the deficiencies in policing that improves national standards and practices. We must also take a strong approach and develop a plan to reduce violence in our communities. Together we can make a difference for the next generation and improve community-police relations.

When work isn't calling, McGuire's ideal relaxation involves boating, grilling and listening to music. He also enjoys traveling to exotic islands and relaxing by the ocean. Tarrick McGuire's greatest desire is to leave a legacy behind for his sons with a strong desire for them to exceed his accomplishments. He wants simply to make them proud, but more importantly, he wants to make God proud and be a model Christian.

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St. Francis Veterinary Clinic's Cristina Jaramillo and Mario Valdez

by Steve Rochun

It only takes spending a few minutes with Cristina Jaramillo before you begin to feel and understand her passion for animals.

At the age of seven, while growing up in Colombia Cristina knew she wanted to work with animals. During her time in college at the University of Texas at Arlington, Cristina volunteered at local animal shelters. Caring for animals was her passion.

Though she had an interest in that led her to explore a possible career in marine biology it was during her first semesters in college she made a conscious decision to pursue veterinary medicine. Cristina moved to California for further studies. While there a friend introduced her to Mario and they became fast friends. Shortly after their meeting she moved back to Texas and Mario soon followed her. "I just couldn't live without her," he said.

After gaining five years of valuable experience at clinics in Fort Worth and with the support and encouragement of her family, she ventured out on her own. "My father, having his own medical practice in Nederland, TX, together with my mom, gave me the confidence that I had what it takes to be my own boss and be successful." My parents made the decision to start my own business easy, and with the support of Mario, it was the next logical step. In 2016 she and Mario opened St. Francis Veterinary Clinic in southwest Fort Worth.

“Even during challenging times, Cristina [Jaramillo] is diligent about her work and providing quality service to her clients and pet owners.
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Even during challenging times, Cristina is diligent about her work and providing quality service to her clients and pet owners. Caring, hard work and dedication are the foundation of her business. She, like many business owners, has had difficult challenges and not only during the Coronavirus pandemic.

"Doing what I love is the easy part of business, but there have been some challenges," says Cristina. Their first major decision was whether they should build from the ground up or find an existing building and renovate. "We spent more than a year looking at existing locations. Then we came across these vacant lots in front of Mira Vista, across the street from Trinity Valley School. We fell in love with the surrounding area which is only 10 minutes



Cristina Jaramillo and Mario Valdez, owners of St. Francis Veterinary Clinic

Photo credit: Steve Rochun

away from where we live in Benbrook. Then the reality of funding the construction, the equipment and ultimately initial cash flow for our little startup were eye-opening challenges for first-timers like us." But with the help of their family, relationships with their banking institutions and family experience of owning a medical business, they managed to confront those hurdles head on. This prepared them for whatever challenges are yet to come. Cristina is also passionate about her service on the HSNT (Humane Society of North Texas) Board for the last couple years, which goes hand in hand with her passion and care of animals in general.

When asked what is the most challenging things about her business industry, Cristina believes like many vet clinics, St. Francis, with a staff of 11 (not including family), struggles to find, train and keep employees. She believes one of the biggest challenges about this industry is the emotional distress that not many people understand about the profession. "I'm not talking just about terminal patients, though they are the hardest to cope with emotionally; because we veterinarians unfortunately cannot and do not save them all. There are limits to what our training has prepared us and we cannot avoid attachment to your pets. We feel, truly and deeply when those final moments come, and unavoidably we share them with our clients. Equally as distressing is the all too frequent abandoned, neglected animals or even worse, violence toward innocent and defenseless pets. These are dark realities that bear down on many animal care

professionals and leads to changes in professions. I am blessed with a wonderful support team and a superb staff that continues to evolve and step up when I need them." She says. "In particular, Shugar Phillips who after two years as personal assistant to Dr. Jaramillo, is now the clinic's assistant manager. Cristina says, "She has been with us since before the start of our business, caring for our children and has learned and transitioned into the needed roles at the clinic. She excels at every turn, takes on new challenges and has earned our trust over the years. She's more than a vital member of this team; she's like a family member."

Though there are set office hours the staff of St. Francis understands that duties occasionally call for extended work and services and now even offer curb-side services due to COVID-19. When a patient comes through the doors that needs hospitalization, the medical staff is prepared and will visit the patient at odd hours of the night to monitor their condition. Weekend hours at the clinic are the norm. "Even when we refer patients to other clinics, we follow up to make sure medical plans are followed through," says Cristina."

As co-owner Mario helps where he is needed, whether it is HR, PR or building maintenance. Since opening four years ago, he says that he's done it all — from interviewing applicants, graphic design and marketing, to walking and playing with our boarding guests and cleaning up after them. When discussing how he balances his roles

Mario says, "Quorum is an amazing employer and has always supported my personal and professional goals. It so happens that I get to work on projects that go hand-in-hand with my wife's passion for animal welfare." Quorum is a leading expert in animal care design and has been involved in more than 50 animal shelter and adoption center projects across Texas. He's had the opportunity to play a major role in several of them in the last few years. "As for the day to day, I am diligent in meeting deadlines and put in the extra hours when the clinic duties take me away for extended periods of time."

As for having any spare time, they definitely make time to be with their children to play new games or explore new activities. Among their pastimes are crafting, drawing, painting, soccer in the back yard, bicycling and more recently, rollerblading. On date nights, though few and far in between, they enjoy long dinners where they can talk about the old days and dream together about their future.

On his own, Mario enjoys attending networking events and getting involved in the community activities through some of the organizations he's been involved in for several years. He also plays soccer a couple nights a week, usually after the kids have been tucked in bed.

On her own, Cristina enjoys gardening and taking long walks with the family dogs. She longs for the extra time when she can take up swimming again and perhaps pick up her cello lessons again, too.

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- Leah King, president and CEO of United Way of Tarrant County


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The Promising Intersection of Profitable Business, Social Justice and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Practices

by Estrus Tucker

For the first time in the history of our nation an impressive number of big businesses and local small businesses are joining social justice movements in advocating for racial equity, launching ad campaigns and naming systemic anti-Black racism as a serious problem. And increasingly diverse consumers are paying attention and speaking out on both sides.

From corporate boardrooms and C-suites to city government and nonprofits, diversity, equity and inclusion issues are disrupting business as usual. If you believe that human capital is a valuable asset, how long can you afford to operate with top down assumptions or neglect the cultural norms that would allow people to show up more fully for work, which by the way directly impacts their performance? Of course I may not be talking to you, but far too many successful enterprises see the videos of police brutality, current peaceful protests, unprecedented big business ads advocating equity, and the political partisanship regarding systemic racism and policing as only social problems unrelated to their bottom line. A wake-up call is on the horizon.

It is important to be clear about what this moment is and



ESTRUS TUCKER

is not. This is not a PR challenge, utilizing the most scientific tactics of influencing people. This is not a time for superficially enhancing the organizational optics by hiring one or two key visible people of color like flavors of the month. This is not a call for a comprehensive DEI assessment, audit or survey of the company culture, policies and structures that dare to reveal disparities and inequities but sit idle because leadership lacks the courage to identify legitimate causal factors and support a robust call to action. This is not a mandate for yet another off-the-shelf training that ignores the pre-existing conditions and the critical, diverse and important perspectives of employees, consumers and other key stakeholders.

No doubt well designed PR campaigns, key new hires, DEI assessments/culture audits, and key stakeholder training are essential to sustainable change. Too often missing is the development of replicable and relevant DEI practices infused in the organizational culture that is the difference maker. These DEI practices must be tested and proven over time in the workplace experiences of your employees and reinforced by carefully aligned structures, processes and incentives. And finally, the skillful and early

SEE PROMISING ON PAGE 26

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- Estrus Tucker

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Can we bank on it?

by Devoyd Jennings



DEVOYD JENNINGS

COVID-19 has once again put the spotlight on a pandemic that continues to create a tremendous issue for African American businesses regarding the lack of access to capital. It is both a social and economic issue of "equity."

While some are making an issue of how important diversity and inclusion are, its equity that is the economic answer to most social ills.

To not have this same issue when we come out of Covid-19 with a vaccine, we must take a cure to our economic pandemic by having a better relationship with our bankers. To this end, the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber is on an equity tour which began in July 2020 with our banks.

We are aware that in Fort Worth/Tarrant County there are no blacks or browns on the boards of these institutions, nor are we in their C suites in appreciative numbers. We believe that the banks could enhance their Community Reinvestment Act ratings by sincerely making it their goal.

One of the impediments we sadly continue to hear is that we "can't find candidates to fill these positions." We have a

list of 25 potential candidates who are qualified and we have invited 40 bank presidents to a community breakfast on October 8, 2020. (We will practice social distancing, etc).

As previously noted, the chamber met with a focus group of bankers in July and believe there is interest in trying to improve this anemic situation.

African American businesses must build deeper and better banking relationships in order to create economic equity in order for diversity and inclusion to have true meaning.

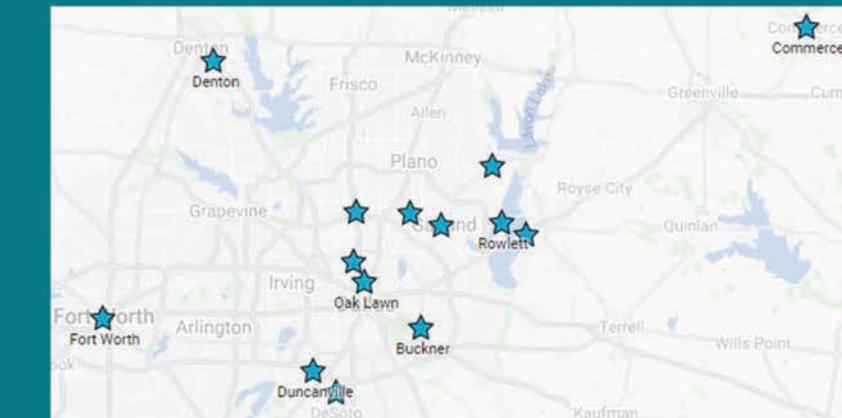


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Challenge Accepted

by Steve Rochun

Glenn Forbes, Sr. was born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut but, one would think that he was born in Fort Worth. He has been a staple in the local banking industry for 30 years which helped cement Fort Worth as his home. Dee Jennings of the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce says that Glenn is a man all about Fort Worth. "He cares deeply about this community and has a passion to see this become the best city in the country."

Forbes is normally soft spoken, but don't let the smoothness of his speech or the neatness of his dress fool you. He speaks from knowledge and experience with confidence and strength.

You can challenge his opinion; you can challenge his beliefs; you can challenge his views, but he rarely bends and he definitely won't break. He always tries to point to the facts and looks at challenges as opportunities to learn and grow, to share and teach. Each is an opportunity to become better and make things around him better. He knew that coming to Fort Worth and working in the banking industry was going to be challenge.

A graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga, Forbes was asked how he made his way to Fort Worth. Glenn recalls, "I had declined previous offers to come to Texas upon graduating from Morehouse. One of the recruiters was Whit Smith. I was recruited again one year later, when Whit Smith was traveling to Michigan on a college recruiting visit. Detroit wasn't for me. It was a much different climate than I prepared for and had a winter worse than any I had ever experienced. I loved Detroit for the 30-45 days of sunny weather but, it was too cold for me. By that time I was ready for warmer weather."

Whit Smith, President of WhitneySmith Co, a full-service Human Resources company, said this about recruiting Forbes, "Let's bear in mind that when I first met Glenn, it was at least 40 years ago or thereabouts. My recollection, though, is that (during) our recruiting trip to Morehouse, I recall Glenn being somewhat soft-spoken, intelligent and very easy to talk to. I also recall that he had a great smile then, which he still has to this day."

"

As it was the days of the boardroom, [Forbes is] still willing to make people uncomfortable if it makes things better; if it makes a positive difference.

"

Initially Forbes and another recruit, Jerome Luke, rejected his offer to join Fort Worth National Bank and they elected to move to Detroit. This is where the story gets funny. Smith says, "It was an extremely cold winter and I recall both Glenn and Jerome calling me and saying that they had made a huge mistake in moving to Detroit. He wanted to

know if I would extend an offer for employment to both of them again. I did not hesitate. Frankly, that was probably one of the smartest decisions I made during my career at the Fort Worth National Bank."

Whether Forbes called Smith or Smith went to Detroit... Forbes made it to Fort Worth.

As a recent keynote speaker at a diversity workshop, Forbes shared his thoughts and experiences on how he sees Fort Worth. In 1984 when he arrived, he noticed that there were very few African American and minority business executives. He thought surely there had to be more than what he'd seen.

So, he made it his mission to find and get to know where and who they were. Fort Worth was much different from



Glenn Forbes, Sr., Executive Recruiter, WhitneySmith company Photo credit: Rachel DeLira

other cities that he had lived in. New Haven was an inclusive city and Atlanta was and is a hub for black businesses and leaders. So, to not see many African American leaders of businesses was challenging for him.

Forbes quickly realized and embraced the belief that diversity had to begin in the business community with those in leadership positions.

Early in his banking

career, when he saw firsthand how potential clients were treated differently in regard to business lending because of the color of their skin or because of the community their business was located, he knew something had to be done. He realized there needed to be a change in how people were treated and how business was done within the minority community. "Change how you do business from the inside first," he said. He knew that speaking up would make others in the boardroom uncomfortable. "It's okay to be uncomfortable. We've always been uncomfortable (referring to African Americans)." He voiced his concerns and thoughts based on facts, on what he had experienced and on the stringent requirements for minorities and he pointed out how it would eventually have a negative effect on the long-term business of the financial institution. "Of course, things didn't change overnight, but the seed was planted and progress was soon being made," said Forbes.

There was also the challenge and expectancy from the minority business community that was placed on Forbes to get things done. "People would call or come to me and expect things would immediately change for the better

SEE CHALLENGE ON PAGE 27

Ahead of the Curve

by Steve Rochun

Fort Worth native Whitney Smith gained an early understanding of the need for diversity from his parents and early childhood. "I was born and raised in Fort Worth and remember distinctly the racial divide that existed in the early 50s and 60s. We lived on Locke Street just on the edge of Como and many of my friends lived in the Como neighborhood. I recall taking the Fort Worth city bus with my mother to downtown Fort Worth and I had a really hard time understanding why I could not sit in the back of the bus with some of my black friends. I also recall going into Monnig's Department Store and seeing the two water fountains on the wall. One was black with the word "colored" posted above it, while the other was white with the word "white" posted above it.



Whitney Smith, founder and president of WhitneySmith company Photo credit: Rachel DeLira

Smith will never forget when integration was established and became a reality in the Fort Worth Independent School District. "It seemed so wrong to me that black students needed police and military protection to integrate into white schools. I remember vividly George Wallace and his hate-filled speeches that just made no sense to me."

During a trip with his father to

Williamsburg, Virginia, they had lunch at a drugstore and were waited on by a black man who asked his father if a visit to Fort Worth was possible for a black family. Smith's father encouraged the man to bring his family to Fort Worth and suggested that lodging would not be a problem because Como Courts had recently opened and was available to the black community. After leaving the drugstore, Smith asked his father if a black family could stay in a motel that catered to whites. Smith recalls his father's response, "Not now Whit, but it will happen someday."

These unforgettable moments in Smith's young life shaped the direction his future life would take. Those early friendships and experiences shaped his outlook for the need for equality and fairness and placed him ahead of the diversity curve. He attended the University of Texas in Austin and received a BBA in Marketing and Personnel Management. He then attended Southern Methodist University Graduate School of Banking. After college, Smith joined Texas American Bancshares in Fort Worth where he was responsible for all executive and college recruiting.

Around 1982, the Fort Worth National Bank became embroiled in a Title VII class action lawsuit involving six

black individuals who felt the bank's decision not to employ them was based on color and gender. This case ultimately took nearly nine years to settle in the Fort Worth Northern District Court, presided over by Judge David Belew. During this period, Texas American Bancshares began making aggressive moves to become a more diverse banking organization.

"At that time, Fort Worth was not well known for attracting people from outside the community or the state for that matter," said Smith. There was no pushback when they began actively recruiting minority college graduates. In fact, the board chairman, Bayard Friedman, the youngest mayor in Fort Worth, was very supportive of the efforts. He was interested in recruiting not only from Atlanta University, but also from Howard University. It was through Bayard's leadership that the Harriet Tubman Scholarship for Outstanding Minority Students was established. Funds were placed with Texas Wesleyan College, Texas Christian University and Baylor University. "For several years we traveled to Atlanta University knowing that the quality of the students was outstanding and we were successful in our recruiting efforts. For me personally, that was a very rewarding period of time," said Smith.

It was during one of these recruiting trips Smith first met Glenn Forbes, Sr. He thought Forbes Sr. would be a good fit, not just for the bank but for the banking industry and Fort Worth in general. Forbes Sr. declined Smith's original offer. It took more than a year and another conversation, but Forbes Sr. eventually made his way to Fort Worth. Looking back at things, Forbes Sr. believes Smith was ahead of the curve in recruiting minorities and helping create diverse workplaces.

With more than 30 years of human resources and recruitment experience, Whitney Smith, president, and his wife, Gretchen, now operate WhitneySmith Company, a human resources consulting firm specializing in all of the primary functional areas of human resources. Almost 20 years ago, they also became a licensed private investigation firm to assist their clients with matters relating to discrimination, harassment and other workplace issues. Smith and the

"

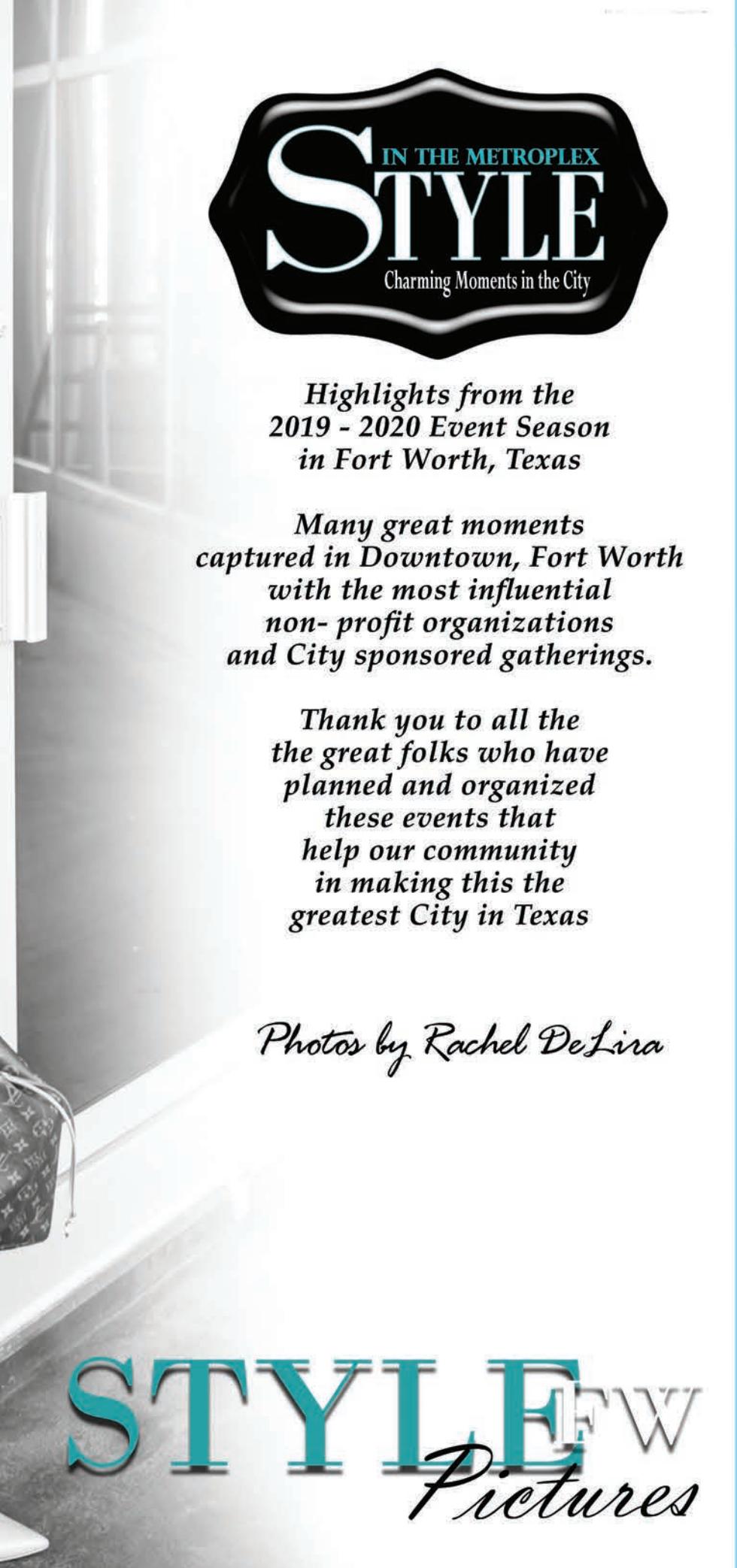
...diversity [in Fort Worth] is a work in progress, but I believe we are making progress... – Whitney Smith

"

WhitneySmith Company are not afraid to address issues such as anti-racism in the workplace and community and that lack of fear shows that he is still working to make Fort Worth a more inclusive city. According to Forbes Sr., "He has spent a long time ahead of the curve. There are more turns ahead, but as long as there are people like Whit Smith

SEE CURVE ON PAGE 27

Highlights from the
Great Gatsby Engagement
Style Shoot of
Victoria Puente & Brock Peters
in Fort Worth, Texas



Highlights from the
2019 - 2020 Event Season
in Fort Worth, Texas

Many great moments
captured in Downtown, Fort Worth
with the most influential
non- profit organizations
and City sponsored gatherings.

Thank you to all the
the great folks who have
planned and organized
these events that
help our community
in making this the
greatest City in Texas

Photos by Rachel DeLira

STYLE FW
Photographs by Rachel DeLira
Pictures

North Texas LEAD...Today and Tomorrow

by Dredene Flynn-White

Any discussion on this topic begins with a definition of diversity and inclusion and should ask why businesses want to consider it as a critical business strategy.

Diversity and Inclusion: **diversity** refers to the traits and characteristics that make people unique and **inclusion** refers to the behaviors and social norms that ensure people feel welcome. To be effective, both elements need to be present, first the recognition and appreciation of individual differences and a welcoming environment that permits and encourages the individual's contribution.

"A **diverse** mix of voices leads to better discussions, decisions and outcomes for everyone." — **Sundar Pichai**

Therein lies the value of diversity and inclusion for businesses. Given the changing demographics as well as the multigenerational consumer, businesses need innovative methods and approaches to enhance, build and change their products and services. Devoid of diversity and inclusion it is less likely that those innovations will occur in a timely manner or at all.

The role of North Texas LEAD is to connect our Employer Partners with a diverse and professionally qualified group of potential job applicants.

In the words of our **Board Chairman, Richard Casarez, VP Fort Worth Customer Operations, Oncor Electric Delivery:**

"Oncor has been a long-time Corporate Partner with LEAD. The LEAD network has enabled our HR professionals to identify key diversity talent available for position openings. Consequently, we have filled positions within Oncor thru our LEAD partnership. Further, our partnership provides Oncor and our staff the ability to collaborate with other major employers on diversity and talent acquisition in the DFW region. We look forward to continuing our work with the leadership and staff of LEAD!"

LEAD utilizes a three-step vetting process to enhance applicant readiness.

The first step in this process is for the applicant to attend a "briefing." This meeting is open to anyone interested in LEAD who meets the requirement of a bachelor's degree and three years of professional experience. During the briefing, attendees are introduced to the North Texas LEAD program. The next step provides for the selection, from the briefing, of 18 attendees and three alternates. Those selected are invited to participate in our panel interview process, the second vetting step.

The panel interviews are hosted by one of our Employer Partners and staffed by human resource and hiring managers from among our various Employer Partners. Applicants participating are interviewed using a behavioral interviewing process.

Applicants **are not** interviewing for a specific position, but rather to obtain feedback on their interview performance.



DREDENE FLYNN-WHITE

That feature of today's job search process is almost impossible to achieve. Following the interview, the interviewers deliberate over the effectiveness and readiness of the applicant. If there is concurrence on the interview performance, experience, credentials and preparedness of the applicant they will achieve the third step in the vetting process... **"endorsement"** This endorsement signals our Employer Partners, as applicants apply for positions, that they have successfully completed all levels of vetting and have been singled out as an exceptional applicant. As "endorsed" applicants they are invited to our quarterly **Candidate Networking Receptions**. These receptions are exclusive job fairs of

endorsed applicants and our Employer Partners.

North Texas LEAD helps businesses find that "**diverse mix of voices**" needed for their business.

LEAD, like everyone else in the age of COVID-19, has had to reconsider processes. Until COVID, most interactions have been face-to-face, the job market was stable, and unemployment was low. Things have changed. Every aspect of our economy feels uncertainty which impacts employment. Our briefings are now virtual. We work more closely with our applicants, coaching, counseling and encouraging them through these difficult times.

Like everyone else we live in uncertain times. Since we do not know when or if we will return to normal, we need to innovate to consider a "new normal." That new normal will include technology solutions and revised processes. Whatever the future brings, one thing is certain. We will remain true to our mission and vision:

MISSION

We attract and connect top talent to outstanding organizations whose leaders are committed to driving diversity and inclusion.

VISION

To be a driving force in North Texas that fosters an open environment of diversity and inclusion for top talent

Jobseekers interested in LEAD services can apply at www.northtexaslead.org. Employers interested in learning more about becoming a LEAD Partner can contact either myself or Executive Director Gyna Bivens.

Dredene Flynn-White
Senior Director of Strategic Diversity Initiatives
dflynnwhite@northtexaslead.org

Gyna Bivens
President and Executive Director
gbivens@northtexaslead.org

A Different Optimization – The Importance of Board Diversity in 2020

by Board Builder Staff

Regardless of industry or field, leaders at every level are looking for innovative ways to optimize operations. Whether it is improving performance of frontline staff as they answer phones, or implementing a new program to elevate efficiency across a product line, we all seek to operate at the highest possible level across our organizations. Simultaneously, we understand that leadership at the highest levels of the organization has the largest impact on overall performance, making large-scale decisions on policy and process that create lasting effects, for better or worse. Unfortunately, too often, we do not fully grasp that these two concepts should be applied together to achieve a truly transformative effect.

Chief executives and board chairs agree that the board has an impact on organizational performance. What may be less well known is that according to the same group, two particular board characteristics matter most: the board's understanding of its roles and responsibilities and the board's ability to work as a collaborative team toward shared goals. A board built on diversity takes these truths and infuses them with a broader reach and strength. A diverse group can better see the unique challenges and opportunities presented to each role, and a diverse group brings a wider range of ideas and experience in collaboration.

Board diversity is a choice that must be made repeatedly and systematically. Strategic board composition does not happen on its own. Boards must define what the ideal board composition looks like – not just in terms of diversity, but also in expertise, experience and networks – and then be vigilant about finding it through focused and disciplined board recruitment. For some boards, this means changing the way they identify potential candidates by moving beyond the personal networks of existing board members and considering nontraditional recruitment strategies (like BoardBuild).

Just like the organizations they represent board composition is not one-size-fits-all. However, constructing a board that is homogeneous risks having blind spots that negatively impact its ability to make the best decisions and plans for the organization. These blind spots are created by a lack of racial and ethnic diversity and may become self-fulfilling cycles resulting in strategies and plans that ineffectively address societal challenges and inequities, or even reinforce them. Whether intentional or not, the composition of a board reflects its organizational values. A lack of diversity may already be an issue and that issue is exacerbated without a diversity of leadership on which to rely.

There is a need for diversity in social sector leadership. Diversity benefits boards and organizations in substantial ways. Having the right people on a board makes

higher performance – in both the board's internal and external functions – more likely. At the most fundamental level, who serves on a board impacts how it functions and the decisions it makes. The senior leadership groups of an organization have the ability – the responsibility – to look for ways to optimize their performance, as well. Nowhere is this more crucial than within the nonprofit world. By enabling and executing a policy of diversity when constructing a governance board, organizations can ensure higher performance by adding innovative thinking that injects new and fresh perspectives to the decision-making process, while extending the reach of organizational networks.

For more information on building a successful board, contact BoardBuild at <https://www.boardbuild.org>.

Nonprofit governance **boards impact** organizational **performance**.

These strengths matter **most**:

- 1 The board's **understanding** of its **roles** and **responsibilities**
- 2 The board's ability to **work collaboratively** toward shared **goals**



Diverse culture key to fintech provider's success

by Betty Dillard

Since its launching in 2009, Alkami Technology Inc. has evolved into a driving force in the financial services industry.

Headquartered in Plano, the cloud-based digital banking solutions provider for small to medium banks and credit unions, is one of the fastest growing software companies in Texas and among the fastest growing privately-held tech companies in the country. Recent recognitions include Best Place to Work in Fintech; Inc. 500 America's Fastest-Growing Private Companies; Deloitte Technology Fast 500; Tech Titans Top 5; and SMU Cox Caruth Institute Dallas 100.

“Our culture is intentional and in so many aspects diversity and inclusion are simply part of who we are.”

Alkami — the company takes its name from the phonetic spelling for alchemy meaning magical/chemical transformation — has the highest growth rate in end users over the last two years in the mobile banking market as measured by market share, according to FI Navigator, a U.S. banking vertical data and analytics platform provider. The fintech firm, which posted revenue of \$75.5 million in 2019, currently has more than 165 clients with 9.8 million users contracted on its platform.

“Our remarkable clients are among the fastest growing in the country, in part, because they are early technology adopters. Alkami recognizes the strategic importance of embracing the best of fintech innovation and bringing the right partners into the platform,” said Alkami founder and chief strategy and sales officer Stephen Bohanon on the company’s website.

Aside from offering advanced digital solutions, both online and mobile apps, proven to be strategic to the future health of financial institutions, there’s more behind the fintech provider’s soaring success and growth over the past decade.

“Simply put, [it’s] our culture,” said Mas Kono,

vice president of quality assurance.

According to company executives, Alkami’s culture embraces a work environment where diverse perspectives and viewpoints are valued, unique experiences and talents are appreciated, practicing inclusivity is essential, investment in potential is deliberate and communicating openly and transparently is encouraged.

“Our culture is intentional and in so many aspects diversity and inclusion are simply part of who we are. Yet, it is upon us to always be listening and learning to do and be better,” said Alkami leadership.

In an effort to “do and be better,” Alkami recently created an internal diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) program for its 585 employees, known as Alkamists, of which 35 percent represent a diverse population with women making up 31 percent.

“Given that our individual social, economic, race, gender, religious and cultural identities shape and influence our experiences and perspectives, it stands to reason that Alkami must do its best to ensure diversity in our workplace by practicing inclusivity in how we work and connect with one another,” the company said.

To reinforce its ongoing focus on “creating a culture that embraces diversity, rejects racism and discrimination and demonstrates a commitment to be better,” the company implemented a 12-member advisory DE&I council,



called Synergy, in July. During the first year of Synergy, a coach-adviser with prior DE&I experience provides coaching and consultation to the council.

Listen and Learn Forums conducted in August allowed participating Alkami employees to hear about the company’s DE&I efforts and to voice improvement and solutions in the areas of diversity, equality and inclusion. Alkamists noted the Synergy Council and HR’s support of different cultural groups as ways the company is already championing DE&I. Some participants said they chose to work for Alkami because of the culture. Several expressed that Alkami is more open, welcoming and diverse than other organizations where they’ve been employed.

The company said its recruiting team continuously looks for ways to attract diverse talent, but to boost its efforts, Alkami added a recruiting and program management position to the team to assist on sourcing talent and to be accountable for the success of the company’s internship program and other community and professional networks with a focus on DE&I in its recruiting.

Branded internally as GROW (Goal, Real, Opportunity, Will), Alkami’s recently created internship program helps

participants expand their professional and personal development. The firm stepped up its education and training for all employees and interns, offering additional training in bias and culture as well as leadership development. Interns are considered for future employment, the company said.

The company continues to increase its two-year partnership with Per Scholas, a nonprofit organization that provides tuition-free technology training to unemployed or underemployed adults for careers as IT professionals. Ninety percent of Per Scholas students are non-white and one-third are women. Five of Alkami’s employees today are Per Scholas graduates.

In August, the company conducted a benchmark Alkamist Engagement Survey, which included additional diversity and inclusion questions. The results were positive, according to Alkami.

“Ultimately, we measure our performance through the lens of the health and wellness of our Alkamists and our clients,” officials said. “With that, we were heartened to see record-high level employee engagement scores in our August 2020 employee survey and positive gain in our client net promoter scores.”

The Potential Impact of a Comprehensive Non-Discrimination Act on Business Activity in Texas

Discrimination in employment, housing, and access to public places such as restaurants, hotels, and shops leads not only a loss of dignity and opportunity for those on the receiving end of such treatment, but also involves significant economic costs stemming from both a diminished ability to attract knowledge workers and reduced opportunities for tourism, conventions, and related activity. The Perryman Group (TPG) recently examined the potential economic benefits of passing a comprehensive non-discrimination act (CNDA) as well as the associated increase in tax receipts to the State and local governments.

- The Perryman Group estimates that if Texas passes a CNDA in 2021, it would lead to increases in

- o technology-oriented business activity in the state of \$11.6 billion in annual gross product and approximately 103,800 jobs as of 2025, with gains rising to \$89.5 billion in annual gross product and nearly 594,100 jobs by 2045;

- tourism-related business activity of \$8.2 billion in annual gross product and 76,424 jobs by 2025, with benefits increasing to \$14.8 billion in annual gross product and approximately 107,900 jobs by 2045; and

- total business activity (from both technology and tourism effects) of \$19.8 billion in annual gross product and over 180,200 jobs in 2025 rising to nearly \$104.3 billion in annual gross product and 702,000 jobs by 2045.

- Metropolitan areas and regions with greater concentrations of knowledge workers and greater opportunities for tourism and convention activity tend to be most significantly affected.

- As of 2045, these effects represent more than 3.6% of anticipated aggregate employment, many of them in high value-added technology related sectors.

- Cumulatively over the 2021-45 period, a CNDA passed in 2021 could be expected to lead to total gains in Texas gross product of more than \$1.3 trillion as well as almost 9.1 million job-years of employment.

- The Perryman Group estimates that annual fiscal benefits of passing a CNDA in 2021 would be \$1.2 billion to the State and \$0.9 billion to local

The Potential Impact of a Comprehensive Non-Discrimination Act on Business Activity in Texas 2 government entities by 2025, with gains of \$5.7 billion to the State and \$4.5 billion to local entities by 2045. Cumulatively over the 2021-45 period, the total increase in tax receipts to the State associated with passage of an CNDA in 2021 is estimated to be \$73.6 billion, with \$56.4 billion to local entities. In summary, assuring that Texas creates an environment that is welcoming to all workers and visitors is a key to sustained and accelerated growth in several sectors that are crucial to the future economic performance and prosperity of the state.

Published May 27, 2020

Read the full report compiled by The Perryman Group by visiting the Perryman website and searching their publications.

www.perrymangroup.com/publications

CHAMBER SPOTLIGHT

Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Name of chamber: Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

Name of Chamber CEO/President: Anette Soto Landeros

How long has this chamber been established?

The Fort Worth Mexican American Chamber of Commerce began in 1973 when a small group of Fort Worth minority business and community leaders recognized the need for effective representation in the local business community.

The organization was chartered on August 3rd, 1974 and became only the Fourth Mexican American Chamber of Commerce to be established in the State of Texas.

What is the focus or vision of this Chamber?

Our Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has a vision to participate and contribute in building a better Fort Worth through inclusion and strategic partnerships.

What are the objectives of this Chamber?

Our Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce has a vision to foster a vibrant economic environment for our members, individuals and the greater Fort Worth area.

What are the recent successes or impact of this Chamber?

Since the start of the 2020 year, our chamber has received 35 new members, community outreach through programming & events; we've reached about 1,100 individuals, raised well over \$40,000 for Chamber initiatives and the scholarship fund, and conducted 20 business consultations.

What is the two to three-year plan for this Chamber?

Our chamber is eager for what's to come, we expect to have a greater impact in the following areas: promoting corporate talent & diversity, expanding small business development services, championing MWBE opportunities, developing tomorrow's workforce, and showcasing FWHCC business economic impact. We've also recently signed a Tri-Chamber MOU with the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce and the Fort Worth Metro Black Chamber of Commerce. Our two-three plan encompasses in our Fort Worth Business Community to start and scale to the highest limits.

Please tell us in 150 words or less about this chamber:

The Fort Worth Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is slowly becoming a one-stop shop to aid in our business community. Our chamber staff, board of directors, ambassadors and volunteers consistently are dedicated to creating and enhancing business and economic development opportunities in Fort Worth. Every day we aim to provide the programming and resources to help you and your business succeed.

Please give contact information:

Anette Soto Landeros, CEO/President

Lisette Castillo, Executive Assistant,
Lisette.castillo@fwhcc.org

Jazmin Gutierrez, Director of Business Development,
jazmin.gutierrez@fwhcc.org

Jerene Bustamante, Director of Member Relations,
jerene.bustamante@fwhcc.org

Sarina Lora Davidson, Special Events Manager,
sarina.davidson@fwhcc.org

Chamber Website:
www.fwhcc.org



FORT WORTH
HISPANIC CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE



Photo credit: Rachel DeLira

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Rattana Mao

Name, title, company: Rattana Mao, Director of Development, Child Care Associates

City of residence: Fort Worth, TX

City of birth: Battambang, Cambodia

Children: Gavin Thompson 13, Conor Thompson 10

Company description: CCA is one of the largest child development programs in North Texas and is recognized as an early education leader both regionally and nationally. Established in 1968, CCA annually serves more than 15,000 children and their families and more than 790 educators who benefit from coaching, mentoring and training.

Years with company: 1 year

Personal business strategy: Work hard and play harder.

Challenges your company (or industry) will face the next 12 months: Not having enough quality infrastructure to serve those that are most in need of early childhood education in the Tarrant County.

Business advice to share: TRUST your gut.

Worst business decision: Going into business with a business partner that I did not know well and I ended up losing money and walking away from the friendship.

Your greatest achievement: In my 20's getting my Bachelors and first in my family to get my Master's degree, In my 30's getting 40 under 40 award, And now in my 40's in an executive leadership role and making a difference in my community

First job: Grocery clerk

Dream job: CEO, of a local corporation or non profit



Photo credit: Steve Rochun

Hobbies Reading, running, hanging out with my 2 boys, bowling and watching movies

Role models: Sandra McGlothlin; Empire Roofing, Susan Medina; SKM Communication, Kara Waddell; CCA, Erin Rahr; Rahr & Sons Brewing, my mother and 2 sisters

How I know I'm successful: When my heart is full of happiness. I am able to enjoy both my professional and personal life.

Best places to find talented employees: Networking and charity events, you don't know who you will end up sitting next to.

Favorite book(s): The Bible, You Are A Badass, Girl Wash Your Face, Girl Stop Apologizing

Favorite movie(s): Elf, Home Alone, Titanic, Sing, Beauty and the Beast, The Lion King, Toy Story

Favorite restaurant: Red Lobster

People I'd most want to share a meal with: My family

Pet peeve: Being late

Colleges attended: Arizona State University, B.S. and University of Phoenix, MBA

Favorite place to get away: Lake Tahoe and Orange Beach

I collect: Shoes

Motto or theme song: TIME: Make every minute count

The talent you'd most like to have: Singing and dancing

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Tiesa Leggett

Name, title, company: Tiesa Leggett, VP Community Advocacy & Membership Engagement, North Texas Commission

City of residence: Fort Worth

City of birth: Fort Worth

Spouse: Taking Applications

Children: Mello, my nephew puppy

Company description: The North Texas Commission is a unique public-private partnership that drives large impactful projects and legislative issues benefiting a robust 13-county region. The Commission tackles the region's greatest challenges with board and staff subject matter experts who provide resources to market the region and educate future leaders. We manage our region's unified advocacy voice at the state and federal levels.

Years with company: Started on July 13, 2020

Personal business strategy: Always refine goals, define my purpose, and remain aligned with God.

Challenges your company (or industry) will face the next 12 months: COVID-19 changed the landscape of how we do business. At the North Texas Commission, we believe that local government should be able to represent their needs at the Capitol, that diversity in our region should be encouraged, and ensuring that our economy remains strong by supporting initiatives that attract businesses – not repel them. By remaining focused on funding public education, encouraging the economy to rebound through job creation, and ensuring North Texans have access to high-speed internet, as well as transportation, families can continue to survive during these most difficult times. Additional support for small businesses and c6 organizations, like ours, is critical to our sustainability. We absolutely need relief like the Cares Act to protect jobs and keep the economy moving.

Business advice to share: Keep learning.

Worst business decision: All learned lessons.



Your greatest achievement: Serving as Founding President of BRIDGE Fort Worth.

First job: McDonalds, Play Pal Birthday Party organizer

Dream job: Not having a “job” but a fulfilling career.

Hobbies: Reading and listening to jazz.

Role models: The late Tarrant County Commissioner, Dionne Bagsby, my grandparents, William and Melba Jackson, Norma Roby, family. I am inspired by so many people. It's always hard for me to answer this question.

How I know I'm successful: When I can influence change for the better and everyone - including me, benefits.

Best places to find talented employees: The North Texas Region, of course! Pick a college, any college!

Favorite book(s): Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred D. Taylor; The Circle Maker, Mark Batterson

Favorite movie(s): Sarafina, Angels in the Outfield, Turner and Hooch, both Sister Acts 1 and 2, and A Time to Kill

Favorite restaurant: Chadra's and Tastebuds Eatery

People I'd most want to share a meal with: Barack and Michelle Obama, Trevor Noah, Barbara Jordan, Denzel Washington, and Whoopi Goldberg.

Pet peeve: People who face other people in an elevator.

Colleges attended: University of North Texas and University of Texas at Arlington

Favorite place to get away: Bahamas

I collect: Greeting Cards from people. I like reading old ones and remembering the positive times.

Motto or theme song: All the Stars – Kendrick Lamar

The talent you'd most like to have: Singing

SPOTLIGHT ON:

Courtney Garner

Name, title, company: Courtney Garner Lewis, Team Leader North Texas Middle Market Banking, BancorpSouth

City of residence: Fort Worth

City of birth: Dallas

Spouse: Damian

Children: L'Darrius (26), Emilleo (23), Evie (19)

Company description: BancorpSouth is a regional bank founded in 1876. We operate over 300 full service locations in 8 states. In addition to traditional personal, business and corporate banking, we have insurance, wealth management and mortgage divisions.

Years with company: Started with the firm on 9/28/2020

Personal business strategy: I focus on building relationships one at a time and seek to become a source of advice and resources to my clients. Banks are only one part of the capital structure of a company and finding the right mix of debt and equity is critical for a business to thrive. I take a more consultative approach in developing the relationship that will hopefully lead to a long term business relationship.

Challenges your company (or industry) will face the next 12 months: Covid has impacted the way that we traditionally do business by limiting in person interactions. Building repertoire over Zoom is a bit more difficult than over coffee. Many industries are dealing with declines in revenue and new operational challenges. Bankers will have to be creative, empathetic and diligent to navigate the landscape over the next 12 months. EBITDAC is our new proxy for cash flow!

Business advice to share: Listen first for understanding and treat everyone with the same respect from the janitor to the CEO. Surround yourself with people who are different from you to create an environment that has diversity of thought. Dissent is not always convenient but helpful in avoiding the pitfall of group think.

Worst business decision: Replying immediately to an email that made me angry. I learned to wait a day and sleep on it before responding.

Your greatest achievement: Graduating from SMU as a first generation student and single mother to 2 boys aged 6 & 3 at the time.

First job: First professional job was as an investment bank analyst with Chase and my very first job was scooping ice cream at Braums.

Dream job: Just landed it here with BancorpSouth.

Hobbies: Reading and spending time with my husband and three grandsons. I attempt golfing from time to time.

Role models: Martin Noto has been a mentor and advocate to me for over a decade. We continue to serve together in Rotary and the Housing Channel.org organizations although we have not worked for the same bank since 2015.

How I know I'm successful: I think the definition changes the older I get. I always remember the verse “To whom much is

given, much will be required”. I think once I reach the level to become a philanthropist I will feel truly successful. Success happens at the intersection of hard work and good luck.

Best places to find talented employees: Referrals are always best but I always am on the lookout for talent.

Favorite book(s): I am reading Disunited Nations by Peter Zeihan now and he would be my favorite non-fiction author at the moment. For fun I love anything by Ann Rice.

Favorite movie(s): Hamilton Broadway Play

Favorite restaurant: Waters

People I'd most want to share a meal with: Malcom Gladwell

Pet peeve: Insincere people

Colleges attended: Dallas Community College and Southern Methodist University

Favorite place to get away: Cancun

I collect: Books, both paper and Audible.

Motto or theme song: Survivor

The talent you'd most like to have: I wish I could sing or play an instrument.



Photo credit: Rachel DeLira



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Promising

FROM PAGE 10

integration of your company's core values and strategic direction with the development of these DEI practices lead to an organizational culture where all human beings thrive in ways both meaningful and measurable.

For the private and public sectors as well, now is the time for a renewal of integrity from the inside out. Integrity at its core is about walking your talk, ensuring that your mission, vision statements, values and image are reflected in the attitudes, behaviors and overall culture of your workplace. A renewal of an integrity approach seeks to understand, respect and fully engage the human capital as well as the monetary capital. To be profitable principally because you are committed to the humanity of people is the high bar of enterprise. And to waste finances and human capital on crafting a marketplace image that doesn't reasonably mirror your workplace culture as reflected in employee experience and overall morale is short lived and destined to become a costly and reoccurring business problem.

Consumer preference for companies that treat their employees, customers and communities equitably is growing and will continue. An increasing diversity of people are demanding that companies show more responsibility to others and to the planet. Window dressing will not meet

this demand. This quality of sustained accountability and profitability requires culture clarity and culture change. The best strategy alone is insufficient for as the saying often attributed to Peter Drucker goes, "culture eats strategy for breakfast."

Responsively designed DEI practices and engagement can resource culture as a competitive advantage. This is the essence of a work culture that honors our common humanity and champions diverse human identities. Our corporate culture is how we demonstrate that the fundamental moral compass for corporate social responsibility is that of respect for human dignity.

Many of our companies like other organizations and institutions are experiencing and anticipating the rippling revolution brewing in the hearts and minds of employees and consumers. This can be a bottom line disruption or a gateway for unprecedented infusion of diverse talent, market expansion and profitability. Isn't it time that we live up to the best of our promises for everybody, in our companies, our communities and our country?

Estrus Tucker is the Principal & Chief Equity & Integrity Officer of DEI Consultants LLC

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Challenge

FROM PAGE 12

because I was black. I had to educate and share the process for securing business capital was more difficult for minorities, and that meant they had to make sure they were on top of their game."

In response, he worked with potential clients to make sure they were prepared before presenting a business loan application, making sure paperwork, business plan and proper wording were in order. "I had to be honest with them and true to myself about how the business works and how to take care of business."

Things were not easy for him. Forbes remembers the time he was assigned a portfolio of clients on a Friday and by Tuesday of the following week, his portfolio had changed. "There were some clients who didn't want me assigned to their account because I was black. It was a disappointing reality, but I was determined to not let this deter me from being successful. I had come to believe that I was in this city for a purpose. And that was to make a difference. And it had to begin with staying dedicated and focused."

Over time Forbes was able to build relationships and even change how some business owners and CEOs felt about him as a banker. For some people he became one of the "go to guys" for making connections within the African American business community. "Some years ago, when I wanted to know more about the minority leadership in the business community of Fort Worth, it was recommended that I meet with Glenn. He had a wealth of information and a great insight on the state of leadership in the business community as it related particularly to African Americans," says Shevoyd Hamilton, publisher/CEO of *The Metro Report*.

Forbes continues to share what he has learned about business and life, personally and professionally to build and connect the next generation of minority leaders for the city that he calls home. It's his part of helping Fort Worth embrace the benefits of diversity. As it was the days of the boardroom, he's still willing to make people uncomfortable if it makes things better; if it makes a positive difference.

Though things have changed somewhat since Forbes Sr. first arrived in Fort Worth, he believes there is still a ways to go to make Fort Worth a diverse city in the business community. "It's going to take everyone doing their part and seeing the value in having a diverse community. I believe there are enough people in this community with the concern, desire, strength and resources to help shape Fort Worth into an even better place as a destination to live, work, play and do business."

He's been challenged personally and professionally. And by all accounts he has come out standing strong.

No, Glenn Forbes Sr. doesn't back away from a challenge... unless it's cold weather.

Q & A with Glenn Forbes, Sr.

How have you seen Fort Worth change as it relates to the business community?

To meet the growing demands and future success of Fort Worth, new residents will continue migrating from diverse

geographies within the US and abroad. I often joke that my first visit to the City was with a true "television western vision" and today it is becoming far from it. Being a part of this growth will be interesting to watch and be a part of.

How have you seen Fort Worth change or progress as a diverse community?

Being careful not to nosedive into a political response, there has been positive change. And yet, with today's growth, continued and sustainable progress within the public and private realm will be needed. Leadership diversity within broad segments will help shape how Fort Worth wants to be known for years to come.

Is there one thing about you that you wish people knew more about?

I'm trying to collaborate with my spouse on a motivational short book. I have gained an immense dependency on God and faith, having lived through and with untimely spousal death, spousal cancer challenge and divorce. We have successfully blended six children, that have produced five college degrees! I would love to be a voice for those who find difficulty believing that achievement is possible beyond obstacles and their fears.

What do you do in your spare time?

I enjoy family time and disappearing in music. Though Taverna's is our "Cheers," Marie and I often seek new jazz and food venues around the metroplex to enjoy with good friends. Movie going or sports activity with the youngest son keeps me "youthful" and keeps the coach inside of me alive.

Curve

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still willing to make a difference, there will be more curves behind us and straight lanes ahead."

The landscape of Fort Worth has changed over the years. Many of Smith's clients are working hard to become more diverse and they have a number of clients that have already achieved a great deal of diversity within their staff. "I do recall a time when Fort Worth saw very little movement from other parts of the country to this city. Today that is so different though, and I am pleased that in many respects Fort Worth has become much more of a cosmopolitan and even an international city. Nonetheless, diversity here is a work in progress, but I believe we are making progress," says Smith. He would like to see more members of the black community in leadership roles in Fort Worth businesses and believes having an African American chair the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce would be a small part of the bigger picture.

For the longest time there was a saying in Fort Worth that we will do things 'the Fort Worth Way.' "I really do not care for that statement because I believe it fosters less inclusivity," says Smith. He may never get the image of the separate water fountains out of his head or seeing the military escort students into school or being separated on the bus, but there is no doubt that Fort Worth is better because he has stayed ahead of the curve. As his dad said, "It will happen someday."

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