

In Business LAS VEGAS

# DIVERSITY IN ACTION

2009

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## FROM THE SPONSORS

### Dear In Business Las Vegas readers,

The University of Southern Nevada is proud to sponsor the 2009 Diversity in Action awards. It is an honor to be part of this great event, which recognizes the many people, businesses and organizations that have contributed to the advancement of diversity in Southern Nevada.

During the past century, Southern Nevada has emerged as one of the most diverse areas in America, attracting people from all over the world who not only visit but also come here to live, establishing thriving businesses and enriching our community with a unique blend of culture.

Likewise, the University of Southern Nevada has emerged as an institution with remarkable diversity. Celebrating our 10th anniversary, the university has grown tremendously since establishing Nevada's first and only College of Pharmacy in Henderson. Today, with the addition of a College of Nursing, College of Dental Medicine and a Master of Business Administration program, the university enrolls hundreds of ambitious and high-achieving students from Nevada, the surrounding region, across the country and around the world. It is these students, along with a diverse faculty, that enhance the quality of education received at the University of Southern Nevada and prepares our graduating health care professionals to deliver competent,



### Dear In Business Las Vegas readers,

Loews Lake Las Vegas Resort would like to congratulate the honorees and winners of this year's Diversity in Action awards. Loews Hotels' business philosophy embraces diversity in the workplace, and Loews Lake Las Vegas Resort strongly supports organizations in our community that excel in creating a multicultural environment.

We are proud to host this year's Diversity in Action event and proud to be *In Business Las Vegas*' friend, partner and neighbor. These type of win-win partnerships within our community enable businesses to survive and prosper in this tough economic environment. This fall, in an effort create opportunities for our business partners, Loews Hotels is launching Loews Flexible Meetings. All

### Dear In Business Las Vegas readers,

On behalf of the nearly 30,000 employees of Harrah's Entertainment's Las Vegas properties and corporate offices, we are pleased to sponsor *In Business Las Vegas*' special Diversity in Action publication and congratulate all of the nominees and recipients of the 2009 Diversity in Action awards.

The individuals and organizations highlighted here represent Las Vegas at its best. They exemplify passionate leadership and integrity in their actions and interactions with everyone they meet. Their commitment to diversity and inclusion has helped strengthen the fabric of our community.

Harrah's and its foundation have a long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion. We work with suppliers, contractors and other minority-owned, women-owned, disabled and disadvantaged business enterprise vendors. We provide charitable support to organizations with a demonstrated commitment to serving diverse communities. We employ a diverse pool of skilled and talented individuals.

At Harrah's, our commitment to diversity and inclusion is a priority and is woven into our day-to-day operating structure. Under the guidance of our Code of Commitment, our pledge to our employees, guests and communities that we will honor the trust they have placed in us, we offer our

compassionate, ethical and high-quality care regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability.

Diversity will play a major role in Southern Nevada's economic recovery, as motivated, intelligent, interesting and innovative people are attracted to communities, businesses and organizations that embrace diversity. These people are also invaluable catalysts in stimulating economic growth and prosperity, as they inspire improved decision-making, increased productivity and competitive advantages.

The University of Southern Nevada congratulates all of those recognized today for their outstanding and inspiring commitment to diversity. As we celebrate their accomplishments today, I encourage all Southern Nevadans to continue the advancement of diversity in our community.

**Dr. Harry Rosenberg**  
 Founding President  
 University of Southern Nevada



companies holding business meetings — large or small — receive 10 percent of their purchase back in added value, whether it's \$300 or \$30,000. The company can apply these savings to upgrade their guest experiences, receive credits toward audio-visual bills, use the business center and more. This is our way of acknowledging that budgets are tight and times are tough, but Loews Hotels is extending an offer to provide your company with a high-caliber meeting experience at a lower cost.

As business leaders in the community, we invite you to experience Loews Lake Las Vegas Resort. We look forward to partnering with you in future endeavors.

**Dale McDaniel**  
 Managing Director  
 Loews Lake Las Vegas Resort



employees a great place to work, and we share our successes with our communities through charitable giving and by promoting supplier diversity.

And while we are proud of our contributions and our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we are honored to be a part of this community. There is something quite special about Las Vegas: We have a wonderfully diverse population, we band together in times of need, and we recognize the accomplishments of individuals who champion our causes.

We hope you will join us in supporting the organizations and congratulating the individuals who make a difference in our community through their dedication. By working together to support diversity in action, we can truly achieve wondrous things.

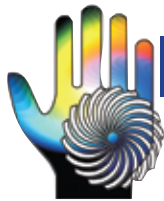
**Fred Keeton**  
 Chief Diversity Officer  
 Harrah's Foundation



*The Will to do Wonders™*







## DIVERSITY IN ACTION

### OTTO MERIDA

**Occupation:** President and CEO, Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce

**Latin Chamber Pioneer:**

Born in Havana, Cuba, Otto Merida came to America as a political refugee in 1961. He made his way to Las Vegas in 1974, where he worked for the Nevada Department of Education and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Program. In the late 1970s, Merida helped establish the Las Vegas Latin Chamber of Commerce. Today, it has more than 1,500 members. Merida also is the past chair of the Las Vegas Housing Authority. In 1999, Gov. Kenny Guinn appointed him to serve for the Nevada Commission on Economic Development.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

You have to have total commitment from the top management that will permeate through the whole company. That will be a good start. Also, some sort of diversity training that will be done in an ongoing basis with your employees through the months and years to come.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

It is of great importance to have a diverse work force that represents your community. You should do it not because there might be some federal office lurking around ready to fine you for noncompliance, but because it is the right thing to do. At the end, it will benefit you and will increase your profits.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

Unfortunately, diversity efforts have been greatly impaired by the recession. In large corporations, whole departments have disappeared because of budget cuts. These departments were organized in the last few years, and they were the first to go. But the demographics of the country and individual states are changing, and, therefore, I believe the nature of diversity in the work force will inexorably move forward for the benefit of the country.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

Arturo Cambeiro, (who was) the first president of the Latin Chamber of Commerce. Unfortunately, he

passed away too soon. He was an architect, and his work and that of his brother Domingo are all over Clark County: elementary and middle schools, the Thomas & Mack at UNLV and many others. He came to me one day at the "Cuban circle" and said, "Let's organize an entity that will have economic strength that will give Hispanics social and political influence." That was 1976, and this continues to be the main mission of the chamber in 2009.



### AARON FORD

**Occupation:** Associate, Snell & Wilmer LLP

**Law Diversity:**

Aaron Ford keeps busy enough as an associate with Snell & Wilmer LLP; but he also finds time to give back to his community.

Through his employer and the Victory Neighborhood

Services Center, Ford spearheaded a program that allows underprivileged or minority students to be introduced into the legal field. He also participates in the Nevada State Bar's program to increase minority representation in

large law firms; is on the board of the Urban Chamber of Commerce; and is a member of the 100 Black Men of Las Vegas. Ford recently served as the diversity outreach chair for the Clark County Democratic Party.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

In my view, a truly "successful" diversity initiative involves at least three components. First, the person initiating the program must have a sincere personal desire to foster diversity in the workplace. Second, there must be management buy in and support. Third, the initiative should have as much stakeholder participation and inclusion as possible. Absent any of these, employees may view the initiative as hollow.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

I have always believed that having a diverse workplace is simply the right thing to do. Beyond that, having a

diverse workforce in the legal arena allows law firms to analyze and access their clients' needs from a more diverse perspective. It likewise allows firms to be more expansive in terms of predicting the ramifications of following the advice they give.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

The most patent example of the recession affecting diversity efforts is that firms have reduced their overall budgets for recruitment and hiring. HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) with law schools are particularly affected, primarily because none exist in our geographic area, but instead are primarily in the South and the East (e.g., Howard University in Washington, D.C.; Southern University in Baton Rouge, La.; and Texas Southern University in Houston), requiring extensive travel and expense to recruit.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

The Honorable Johnnie B. Rawlinson, U.S. circuit judge for the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.



### IRENE BUSTAMANTE ADAMS

**Occupation:** Director of Construction Diversity, MGM Mirage's CityCenter

**Diversity Pro:**

In her role as director of construction diversity for MGM Mirage's \$9 billion CityCenter mixed-use development, Irene Bustamante Adams is responsible for implementing and advancing the diversity strategy of the MGM Mirage Design Group, which oversees the project. She previously held the position of director of national diversity relations for MGM Mirage, in which she helped implement the company's diversity initiatives and managed numerous local and national strategic alliances. Bustamante Adams also serves on the boards of the Latin Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Minority Contractors and the Organization of Chinese Women. She also has won numerous national and local awards for her diversity efforts.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

A company's recipe for success in diversity should always be driven as a business imperative first. When diversity is included as part of the company's overall corporate structure, the initiative has the sustainability needed to weather any storm.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry?**

Our campaign slogan of "The World Works Here" is a demonstration of the wide range of diverse talent within our company. The future work force trends, such as declining births, retiring baby boomers and increase in ethnic populations, all reveal that we must be worthy of retaining, recruiting and engaging the new labor force. Having a diverse work force will, in turn, help us continue to meet and exceed the needs of our diverse customer base.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

The recession has only helped to strengthen the business case for diversity. Companies that have

emerged from this period stronger and more competitive are the ones that weave diversity into their overall strategy.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

Renee West, newly appointed president and CEO of Mandalay Bay Resort, has helped me refine my leadership skills; but, more importantly, she has taught me how to be a better human being.







## STAN SAITO

**Occupation:** President, Las Vegas Asian Chamber of Commerce

### Diversity outreach and beyond:

After recently completing a 30-year public relations career with Embarq, Stan Saito knows something about longevity. Transferring to Southern Nevada with then-Sprint from Texas more than two decades ago, Saito also has been a strong supporter of the local Asian community and disadvantaged Clark County residents. Saito has served on Congresswoman Shelley Berkley's Asian Advisory Committee, is a member of the Metro Arts Council of Southern Nevada, and also serves on the board of trustees for the Hispanic Museum of Southern Nevada. In 1997,

he received the Humanitarian Award from the Help Them Walk Again Foundation.

### What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?

Communication — having a clearly written mission statement that is understandable and attainable.

### Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.

Having a diverse work force brings with it the richness of many cultures, and their individual ideas (combined) together (work) toward a common goal. It enriches the flow of ideas and gives relevancy to any employee who

wants to contribute.

### How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?

It has affected our ability to reach out to more of the business community. A decline in membership and sponsorship means we can't touch as many people with our programs and events.

### Who is your mentor or hero?

I have two: Robert Young, chairman, Asian Chamber of Commerce and Wayne Tanaka, educator.



## JENNIFER MORSS

### Occupation:

Executive Director, Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN)

### The Cause:

Watching a television show in 1999, documenting the lonely, isolated experience of AIDS patients was what propelled Jennifer Morss into a career of

fighting for the dignity and rights of the HIV-positive population. Today, as executive director of

Aid for AIDS of Nevada, Morss' life goal is to decrease HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Under Morss' leadership, AFAN secures private funding; corporate sponsorships; federal, state and local grants; and other resources to provide HIV prevention education and vital services for the thousands of Nevadans affected by the disease.

### What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?

AFAN strives to source top talent, develop that talent and ultimately retain diverse employees, while assimilating diversity into our corporate behavior, providing distinctive and collaborative solutions, and aligning our diversity strategy with our strategic plan.

### Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.

The value of different perspectives and talents are vital to

an organization's survival and growth. The value of work place diversity is that these differences create an entity that is far more powerful and greater than the sum of its individual parts. For AFAN, this is essential to the concept (that is) within our tagline, "Together, we make a difference."

### How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?

Unfortunately, many companies have been hit hard by the recession, and the reduction of their work force has had a negative effect on their diversity efforts. It's unfortunate, but the recession has placed diversity as a secondary priority in many companies.

### Who is your mentor or hero?

Amy Ayoub of Ayoub & Associates. Amy has been an amazing mentor through my AFAN journey, and I truly don't know the leader I would have been had I not had her by my side the entire way. She's truly a hero.



## NV Energy is proud to Congratulate Carolyn Sharp

Carolyn is being honored for her support and contributions that have made an impact on diversity throughout the local business community.

She is Diversity in Action.





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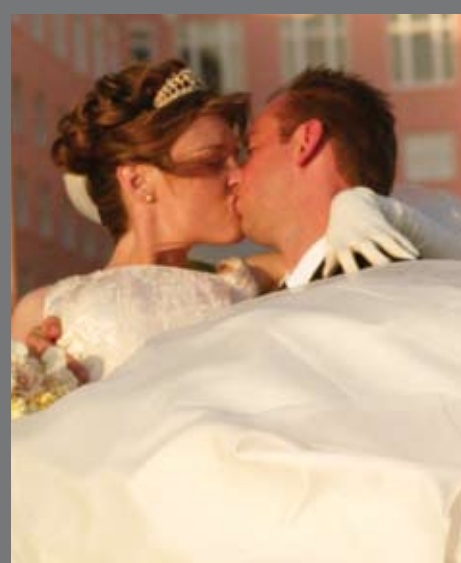


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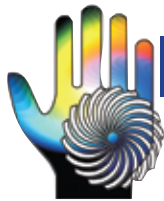
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## DIVERSITY IN ACTION

### NAPOLEON MCCALLUM

**Occupation:** Director of Community Development, Las Vegas Sands Corp.

**Diversity Champion:**

To many, Napoleon McCallum is known as a professional football player whose career was cut short by an injury. But in Las Vegas, McCallum is making a name for doing his part in the world of diversity. In the late '90s, after his football career ended, McCallum started Digital Pro Graphics, a successful company he eventually sold, in Nevada. He has used his business experience to mentor other minority business owners, and through his position with Las Vegas Sands, has worked to pair minority suppliers with corporations that need their services. McCallum is on the board of directors for the Nevada Minority Supplier Development Council and has spoken publicly on the topic of workplace diversity.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

The first key is having top levels of management who are supportive and willing to look at the numbers and

want to know how we, as a company, can do better. The second key is a diversity champion willing to research and make observations and be able to find the best way to improve diversity, while working in a way that also works best for the company. The third key is to work with and help the leaders in the community who are also trying to improve the situation for the diverse members of their respective communities.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

Our customers are diverse, and they want an excellent experience. Part of the comfort they feel, when they come to a resort like ours, is the many high-qualified, friendly, diverse team members who provide that experience to them.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

Every company is looking for employees who can do more for less; it doesn't matter so much about your external features. They are looking for can-do people. It's a great opportunity for people to step up and show what they can do. This is the time that leaders rise to the top

and can be noticed. It's their chance to position themselves (for) when the economy turns around, for that raise and greater responsibility in the company.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

Bobby Siller, past commissioner for the Nevada Gaming Control Board, would be my mentor. I had several opportunities to talk with him about diversity in our industry and my future in this field and ... where I fit (in). He instilled in me a sense of duty and a need to carry on with this very worthwhile endeavor, so that more people would have the door opened to them in the casino industry.



**Occupation:** Majority Leader of the Nevada Senate

**Majority Leadership:**

After being first elected to the Nevada state Senate in 2004, Steven Horsford is now the Silver State's first African-American state Senate majority leader. Beyond his political appointments, the Las Vegas native serves his community in a variety of other capacities, including membership in the Latin, Asian, Urban and North Las Vegas chambers of commerce, chairing the Young Professionals Committee for

the Urban League of Clark County, and executive committee membership in the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He is also a board member of Aid for AIDS of Nevada and a member of the Southern Nevada Workforce Investment Board.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

The first critical ingredient is a shared analysis of what a diversity initiative looks like. In other words, an agreement on what diversity means and how it can be achieved. That shared analysis will then become the framework for all of the other ingredients needed, such as support and input from stakeholders who make up the many different faces and experiences of our community.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

I actually work in an industry that provides people, from all walks of life, opportunities to gain new skills to

enhance their professional cachet. It is important that our particular work force represents all people, with all abilities, as our primary goal is to provide quality service. An industry cannot only be inclusive of diverse backgrounds, but (must) also utilize those rich experiences to enhance service delivery; (this) will (make it) successful and will sustain that success over time.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

We have been forced, in many respects, to look sincerely at issues of unemployment, poverty, fair wages and how each has impacted all of us. An unexpected value emerging is this consensus by the community to rally in unity to support policies and programs that will help all of us.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

Rose McKinney-James has been a mentor to me because she has the determination, tenacity and ethics necessary to succeed in the business community. She ... has become a valued and respected business leader in our community. In addition to being a mentor, Rose is also my friend.

### STEVEN HORSFORD

### RITA VASWANI

**Occupation:** Vice President & Relationship Manager, Bank of Nevada; President, Las Vegas India Chamber of Commerce

**Causes:** Rita Vaswani was raised in the Philippines by Indian parents before coming to America in the early 1970s. Today, the Bank of Nevada vice president is also the founding president of the Las Vegas India Chamber of Commerce. In addition, she has provided public relations support for Friends of India; served as a government affairs official for the Asian Chamber of Commerce; has been on the board of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce as well as the Chinatown Lions Association. She has called Las Vegas her home since 1992.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

Recognizing and promoting diversity means having an appreciation for difference. Have a diversity champion within the organization to further the cause and obtain commitment from senior management. Recognize your employees' biases and acknowledge them, which fosters

mutual respect. This will provide the staff with meaningful input in regard to how the company functions.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

At Bank of Nevada, we have a diverse group of employees from all the continents, which gives (us the) opportunity to serve a large client base in the community. Diversity isn't just about being socially responsible; it also drives the bottom line. Bank of Nevada has a work force that is reflective of that diversity.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

It would be all too easy for companies to suspend their diversity strategies. But during times of economic downturn, maintaining a diverse work force is more important than ever. It depends on how a company's leaders have reacted to the recession. Is your glass half empty or half full? Some companies have imploded, resorted to infighting or made poor operating decisions, which in turn have affected their ability to provide solid service to their clients. Other companies are rising to

the challenge presented by looking for new ways to add value to their current customers' experiences with them and develop new customer relationships. A company with a diverse work force is much better prepared to do this, as it will have a wealth of experience to draw from in these endeavors.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

Mentor: Punam Mathur; hero: Mahatma Gandhi







## JASON SMITH

**Occupation:**

State Director,  
Best Buddies  
Nevada

**The "buddy" impact:**

Jason Smith oversees Best Buddies Nevada, which helps to foster crucial one-to-one relationships, integrated employment opportunities

and leadership development for Nevada's intellectually and developmentally disabled population. He has helped secure the largest individual donation in the chapter's 11-year history and has hired a staff of six, growing the organization from a one-person operation. The nonprofit now has 13 active high-school chapters and one college chapter, totaling 589 participants. Smith also spearheaded the monthly "Take 5 to Care" news segment

on Fox 5, which features the inspiring interactions of friendship matches created by Best Buddies Nevada.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

Hands-on initiatives of any sort create a physical and emotional tie between an organization and the volunteer/employee/person served. We ... encourage a diverse group of employees, volunteers and donors. By encouraging a diverse volunteer force, every person has a connection with every other volunteer, and each individual's opinions, life experiences and ideas from this diverse group can be heard. As for the individuals we serve at Best Buddies Nevada, we serve any child or adult with intellectual and developmental disabilities regardless of sex, race, religion or ethnicity. Our mission is to connect people with disabilities to the community-at-large and create one-on-one mutually enriching, long-lasting friendships.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

Diversity provides a foundation, a voice that builds on separate ideas and experiences and enables Best Buddies

to offer the most rounded programming possible for the people we serve. Diversity translates to a collective voice of wisdom and sense of empathy that can only be achieved through each person's individual contributions.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

I'm not sure it has. However, we opened our office at the brink of the recession and, therefore, have no previous efforts to compare.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

My mother, Linda Smith, chief development officer and associate executive director of Opportunity Village. She has been a champion to people with disabilities and continues to mentor me whenever needed and my brother Chris, who was born with Down syndrome. He (Chris) has been a life mentor; always grounding me with his unconditional love and unmatched bravery. The third person, who has and continues to be a mentor, is Anthony Kennedy Shriver, the president of Best Buddies International. His passion, combined with his business acumen, founded Best Buddies and is the driving force behind its global movement.

## TONY GLADNEY

**Occupation:** Vice President, National Diversity Relations, Harrah's Entertainment Inc.

**Making diversity a priority:**

Tony Gladney helps implement Harrah's diversity initiative. He also is a local liaison for the gaming company's strategic partner relations on a local, regional and national level. In 2008, he received a medal of excellence from the Nevada Minority Supplier Development Council for his contributions to his employer's diversity efforts. Gladney is a board member of the Urban Chamber of Commerce, serves on the board of the Cultural Diversity Foundation and is an active member of the Latin and Asian chambers of commerce. Also in 2008, the Organization of Chinese Americans Las Vegas Chapter awarded Gladney with its community service award.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

At Harrah's, we continually grow and improve through diversity and inclusion by keeping diversity relevant. We

approach diversity and inclusion in parallel paths, through traditional, representational diversity and through cognitive diversity. Cognitive diversity allows us to leverage the contributions of everyone to produce better business outcomes.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

In the past, the diversity conversation has been focused primarily on the protected classes of race, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability. While incorporating individuals from these various groups is crucial in developing a diverse work force, diversity and inclusion is taken much further at Harrah's through cognitive diversity. Cognitive diversity celebrates and leverages contributions from individuals with different backgrounds, different cognitive processes and genetic wiring to produce better business outcomes.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

When you consider the Harrah's diversity and inclusion model,

having a diverse and thoughtful team of thinkers will provide better business outcomes. In this recession or "new economy," challenging and, quite simply, diverse teams produce better business outcomes and that, quite honestly, is a result all businesses need to leverage.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

Although I have numerous heroes who have influenced my life at various times, the one person who has had the greatest impact during the course of my entire life is my mother.



**Occupation:** Founder, President and Executive Director, Cultural Diversity Foundation

**Culture and Opportunity:**

For more than a decade, Joni Flowers has helped provide learning opportunities to the diverse Clark County population. Through her nonprofit, the Cultural Diversity Foundation, disadvantaged Clark County residents, regardless of ethnic or cultural background, can gain access to technology education, college scholarship

programs and other educational resources that support professional growth and foster success in higher education. CDF's goals also focus on promoting multiethnic and multicultural awareness and acceptance in the community. Flowers is a member of the Urban Chamber of Commerce; she also founded the annual scholarship benefit, Educational Tastes of Excellence: Wine Tasting, Spirits & Jazz.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

When developing programs and services, nonprofits must take cultural backgrounds and experiences into consideration (in order) to have a positive influence on the communities they serve, including (having) diversity in organizational mission, goals, objectives and action plans; broadening the definition of diversity to reflect all possible groups (inclusiveness); coalescing with other organizations to support diversity initiatives; and building (an) image around diversity.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

Having a diverse work force that includes volunteers and board (members) enables nonprofits to understand and respond to the critical needs of the diverse populations that they serve. You can't solve a problem without including those affected by the problem.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

Due to budget shortfalls, companies may not be able to generously support diversity initiatives that help nonprofit organizations in their efforts to meet the needs of underserved individuals in the community.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

My mother. She has been instrumental in lending a helping hand to me in my efforts to achieve my educational and professional goals. Her strength and support enables me to reach for the stars!

## JONI FLOWERS





## DIVERSITY IN ACTION

### DIANNE FONTES

**Occupation:** President, Nevada Minority Supplier Development Council Inc.

**Supplier Diversity:**

As the president of the Nevada Minority Supplier Development Council, Dianne Fontes oversees an agency that represents the interests of more than 300 certified minority businesses and 80 major corporations throughout Nevada. The program, which is a member network of nationwide purchasing councils, has generated more than \$110 million since its inception and has links to 3,500 corporations and 15,000 minority businesses. NvMSDC is an affiliate of the National Minority Suppliers Development Council based in New York.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

Commitment is the foundation for a successful diversity initiative program. Companies that promote diversity in the workplace and in purchasing share some important common themes:

- Strong CEO Support — visible commitment from the chief executive officer and top executives for promoting supplier diversity inclusion as a corporate imperative throughout the organization
- Action plan for minority purchasing — making use of minority suppliers a priority
- Information sharing — internally and with others committed to diversity
- Goal Setting — realistic and ambitious
- Job assignments in purchasing — making minority

contracting a stated goal for all employees with purchasing roles

- Measure of progress — with accountability
- Determination — to continue trying new approaches to move ahead

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

Diversity in all areas of the business is the key to strengthening the economic fabric of any company. Many businesses, such as ours, are finding that workplace diversity is essential to being competitive — broadening the reach and effectiveness of a business, reducing turnover, improving morale and helping the business adapt to international markets. Further, the overall goal set by many companies is a workforce that mirrors the communities they serve — at all levels of the organization. Like other key business objectives, success in diversity hiring and retention comes from commitment throughout the company.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

The impact of the recession has been far-reaching. Not only have diversity efforts been affected, but every level of the business world. Unfortunately, many companies have trimmed or eliminated diversity departments to cut costs throughout the company. The severity of this action for minority businesses and organizations like ours has been enormous. Without the support of major corporations to foster and develop suppliers, we are having to be creative in our approaches for our survivability. ... At the core of the economic stream, many companies are working with skeleton staffs but have the willingness and ability to

promote diversity vigorously, which will have an impact on their competitive success and the economic vitality of the recession and beyond.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

My biological dad, who passed away when I was 15 years old. My father was a budding entrepreneur inside a musician's body — always trying to sell an idea or product in between working in the mills and performing on weekends with his brothers. ... he taught my sisters and me to reach for the top no matter what the obstacle and never let anyone steal your dream. At 11 years old, after returning from school feeling frustrated and defeated by my dyslexia (not known until I was 19), my dad gave me a book, *The Power of Positive Thinking* by Norman Vincent Peale. This book turned my life around and made me understand that, with will and belief, anything is possible. I still read this book regularly and continue to lift myself up when necessary, but the best part of reading it is (that) I feel like my dad is sitting by my side saying, "Now go do it — you know you can!"

### CAROLYN SHARP

**Occupation:** Procurement Associate, NV Energy

**Championing Diversity:**

As a procurement associate for NV Energy, Carolyn Sharp works to promote supplier diversity throughout the utility. She has been known to take on new minority-owned companies

as NV Energy suppliers, while doing some mentoring to assure success in working with Nevada's largest utility. Sharp also is involved with the

Nevada Minority Supplier Development Council, the Asian, Urban and Latin chambers of commerce, and the National Association of Women Business Owners, as well as NV Energy's Diversity Champion training program that supports cultural awareness within the company. In addition, Sharp supports Junior Achievement and assists with NV Energy's United Way fundraising efforts.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

The key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative are leadership commitment, advocacy, inclusion and an environment where everyone is treated with respect.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

Work force diversity creates a broad pool of qualified employees who bring a variety of viewpoints to the

decision-making process. This benefits our company and, ultimately, benefits our customers, shareholders, employees and the communities we serve. It also impacts the way we do business, as we reach out to suppliers of diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives. It brings new ideas and creative energy to our company. Our differences help us win.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

Companies are taking the time to reevaluate their strategies and develop new innovative ways to communicate or partner with others. During this time, the focus is on building relationships with employees and vendors that will position companies to be competitive when the economy recovers.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

My son, Timothy Sharp Jr.

### THOM REILLY

**Occupation:** Executive Director, Harrah's Foundation; President/CEO, The Reilly Group

**Diversity Champion:**

Through his firm, The Reilly Group, Thom Reilly helps create and oversee corporate responsibility programs for nonprofits and large and small companies. Reilly, Clark County's first openly gay county manager, oversees the Harrah's Foundation, where he has helped the gaming giant expand its support of diverse programs by establishing and facilitating valuable nonprofit partnerships. Reilly also helped implement a policy at Harrah's Foundation that ensures its exclusive support of organizations that provide services and volunteer opportunities to all individuals regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, identity or disability. Additionally, Reilly is a professor at San Diego State University, where he teaches social work classes.

**What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?**

1) Secure company's leadership commitment; 2) diverse representation at all levels; 3) financial commitment to diversity by the company; 4) consider all dimensions of diversity but maintain a commitment to racial and ethnic diversity; and 5) evaluate results. The most important aspect for the Harrah's Foundation was to incorporate diversity in all aspects of our operation. In order to be considered for a gift from us, applicants must demonstrate how they are committed to diversity.

**Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.**

Organizations should reflect the diversity of the population they serve — at all levels of the organization.

**How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?**

I have really appreciated the fact that Harrah's

continues its commit to philanthropic giving and diversity even when times get tough. I don't think that is the case with many organizations. Corporate giving and diversity efforts are often some of the first areas sacrificed in tough economic times.

**Who is your mentor or hero?**

I have too many to list. I am a great believer in having multiple mentors.







## CORNELIUS EASON



**Occupation:** Founder and Former President, Priority Staffing USA Inc.

### Giving back:

Arriving in Las Vegas in the late '90s, Cornelius Eason's background was in the computer services industry. In Las Vegas, he translated that experience into a human resources business, Priority Staffing USA Inc., which he recently sold. Along the way, Eason has been known to reach out to aspiring black entrepreneurs and provide guidance and mentoring assistance. He also has been involved with the National Association of

Minority Contractors, which helps tradesmen take steps to becoming business owners, and is currently the president of the Urban Chamber of Commerce.

### What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?

Source talent, products and services from all areas of a community. After establishing qualifications, look to find value in each individual and opportunities for them to contribute. Establish parameters for respect and inclusion.

### Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.

(An industry can) gain from varied experience, life experiences and perspectives shaped by the individual's environment.

### How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?

As companies contract, they seek to reduce cost centers and expand profit centers. In general, diversified staff and resources tend to be viewed, real or perceived, as cost centers.

### Who is your mentor or hero?

Mentor: Rose McKinney-James; hero: W.E.B. DuBois

## LORRINDA GRAY-DAVIS

**Occupation:** Director of Diversity Development, Perini Building Co.; Principal, Next Level Diversity Consulting LLC

**Diversity Champion:** Hired as Perini's first director of diversity development in 2005, Lorrinda Gray-Davis helped one of the industry's largest contractors become a diversity model. Between 2006 and 2008, Perini awarded more than \$782 million in construction contracts to 349 minority and women-owned business enterprises. Gray-Davis also has helped establish training programs for MWBEs and is the chairwoman of the Grand Canyon Minority Supplier Development Council. She has won numerous awards for her diversity efforts.

### What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?

(You) must have buy in from the chairman down internally. Educate existing and new employees about why it is important to the company and the community. Build internal advocates. Make a strong business case. Learn from the buyers, what their challenges have been, then educate the community. External communication to

the community is imperative ... be honest! If there are not direct opportunities within your company, ask why not. Advance knowledge to the business community about opportunities. Break down barriers, set new standards and always challenge the status quo. Provide incentives (to) employees that meet or exceed procurement goals. Share best practices and publicize success stories.

### Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.

People come from different life experiences that affect our decision-making process. Without a diverse work force and (with) the economic challenges we currently face, it is imperative for all companies to make excellent decisions. That only happens when people challenge each other's way of thinking. It is also important for the community to see itself involved in a project.

### How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?

The impact on small businesses to find bonding and loans has been detrimental to the economy. It has not impacted our diversity efforts, as we see issues as

opportunities to help grow companies. As a major corporation, we have leverage in the community and should use it to impact growth.

### Who is your mentor or hero?

I don't have a particular mentor in mind, as everyone I have worked with has mentored me in one area or another, from the chairman down to the superintendents. My hero is my mother, who is physically disabled and faced many challenges; she never let that get in her way or hold her back. As I get older I understand the sacrifices she made for my brother and me and admire her for not giving up, and for always telling us we could achieve anything we wanted.



**Occupation:** President & CEO, MIG Nevada LLC

### Building diversity:

In May 2006, Paul Jenkins Sr., a fourth-generation African-American builder, realized his longtime dream of working on the Las Vegas Strip. Since that time, his Michigan-based general contracting company, MIG Nevada, has built more than \$100 million-worth of casino, office, restaurant and hotel room projects in Las Vegas. MIG also has enjoyed diversity participation in all of its local projects, ranging between 25 and 100 percent. Jenkins, while

maintaining MIG's competitive edge, prides himself in helping other minority-owned contracting firms learn the ins and outs of the business, so they, too, can find success.

### What are the key ingredients to a successful diversity initiative?

Find people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds who bring integrity and passion for what they do in order to create a team that has an intuitive understanding of as many aspects of our business environment as possible. Instill in the team a spirit that focuses on doing what's right for the owner and subcontractors for every project, regardless of size. Recognize that we are interlocked with our subcontractor base and seek to find minority-owned subcontractors who share our culture and then assist and mentor them as needed to develop safety programs, invoicing procedures, schedules and payment procedures, so they can avoid mistakes.

### Explain the importance of having a diverse work force in your industry.

Las Vegas is unique in that it encompasses so many people with different racial, ethnic, cultural and geographical backgrounds. The construction industry must use all the talents of our community if it is to build the best and most innovative solutions to our business needs.

### How has the recession impacted diversity efforts?

The recession has impacted construction at all levels due to the reduced number of projects available for bidding. Despite this, 2009 will be MIG's best year to date. We attribute this success to relationship building, which has made MIG a stronger team.

### Who is your mentor or hero?

My father, Joseph C. Jenkins, who was a celebrated civil engineer, who graduated from the University of Michigan in 1937 as the only African-American in the College of Engineering. His paternal grandfather was a leading Detroit African-American builder, and his paternal great-great-grandfather, the first Joseph Jenkins, was also a builder.

## PAUL JENKINS SR.

**Occupation:** Owner and Broker, Tonie Sison & Associates; Founder & Chairman, Philippine Chamber of Commerce of Southern Nevada

**Chamber Creator:** As the founder and chairman of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce of Southern

Nevada, Tonie Sison helps give a voice to the valley's growing Philippine business community. He also owns his own real estate company, Tonie Sison & Associates, and is a board member of the Federation of Philippine American Chambers of Commerce, where he provides assistance with government affairs issues. In addition,

Sison has been a past sponsor of the Thai Cultural Arts Association of Las Vegas events and is an original member of the Philippines-US Tourism Advisory Council in Las Vegas.

## TONIE SISON



# Leaders Among Us.



**Thom Reilly**  
Harrah's Foundation



**Tony Gladney**  
Harrah's Entertainment

## Congratulations, Thom and Tony.

Your leadership, integrity and commitment to fairness and equality are an inspiration. We are grateful for your dedication to our community, and for your never-ending pursuit to bring out the best in us all.

We are honored to salute you.

