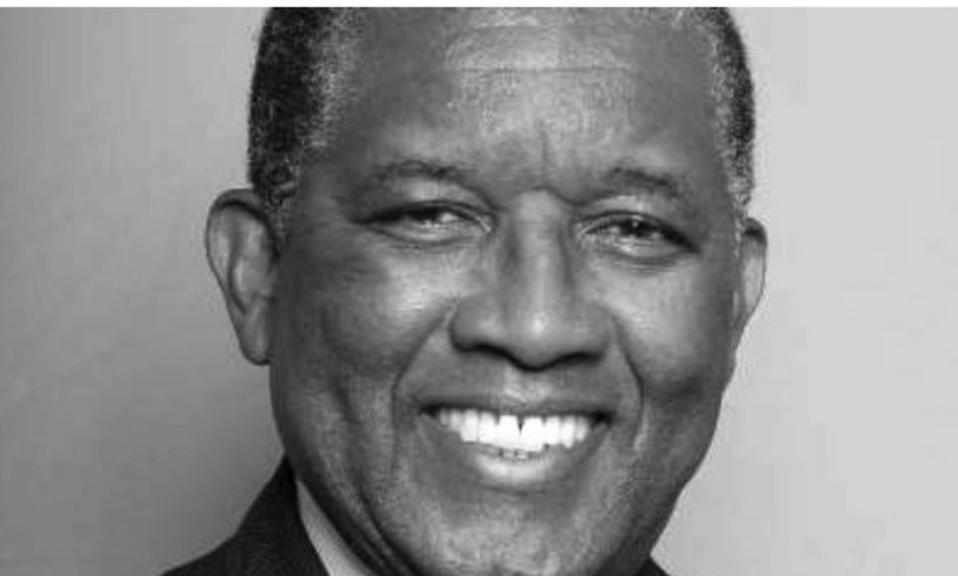


March 2015 Edition

A Collection of Quarterly Editorials for ABFE Members



**ABFE MAGAZINE**  
— A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities —



**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Leverage the Trust: Conversations with Trustees on Leadership (pg. 3)
- Connecting Leaders Fellowship Application Now Open (pg. 6)
- Empower Philanthropy! (pg. 7)
- In Times Like These: More Black Trustees. Jean E. Fairfax: 1996 James A. Joseph Lecturer (reprint) (pg. 8)
- 2015 James A. Joseph Lecture Award Announcements (pg. 10)
- Coaching with a Racial Equity Lens: The Experience (pg. 15)

**LEAD!**



## FORWARD...

In 1996, Jeanne Fairfax, a respected leader in the field of philanthropy, gave the James A. Joseph Lecture; her title, In Times like These: More Black Trustees. Ms. Fairfax served as a trustee on five boards herself including the Edward Hazen Foundation, the Southern Education Foundation, and the Ruth Mott Foundation to name a few. Her lecture highlights the important role of "Black policy makers" (e.g., trustees and CEOs) in American philanthropy and called for an agenda to increase the number of Black trustees and to support them in their important role of leading foundations in this country. She envisioned a bold action plan that would guide trustees to direct grantmaking based on research and what's known about "what works" for our community as well as for others.

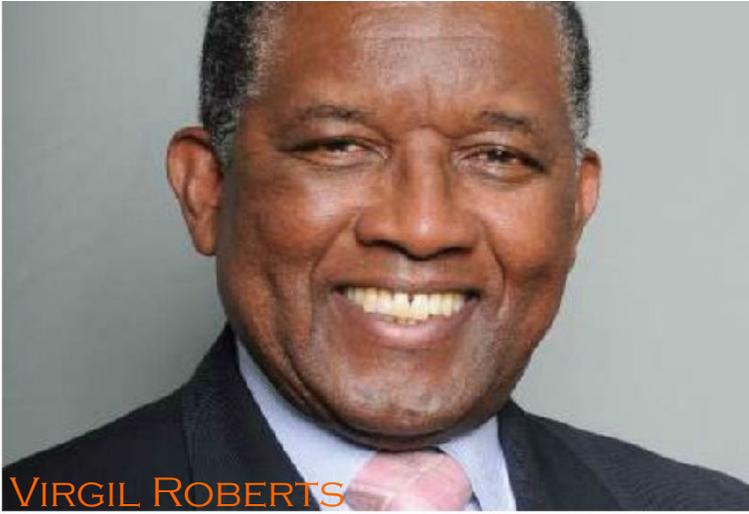
In this issue of ABFE Magazine we are focused on the importance of leadership... from the "top" of foundations as well as leadership from the "middle". We are re-printing Ms. Fairfax's Lecture as it has relevance today; in 2011 ABFE initiated *Leverage the Trust* our current work to support Black leaders at the top. To use Ms. Fairfax's term, we have renewed our work to ensure that Black policy makers in the field are supported in their work. You will hear directly from three foundation trustees on their experiences in leading from the board room as a prelude to an upcoming report from a larger group of trustees. Also, in this edition we share the experiences of two participants in our latest offering to support leaders in the field; Coaching for Racial Equity. And don't miss our announcements of the 2015 James A. Joseph Award recipients as well as the call for nominations for our next class of the Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program.

Lead...it's what we all have the opportunity to do. The alternative is to follow; make the wise choice!

Health and progress,

*Susan Taylor Batten*

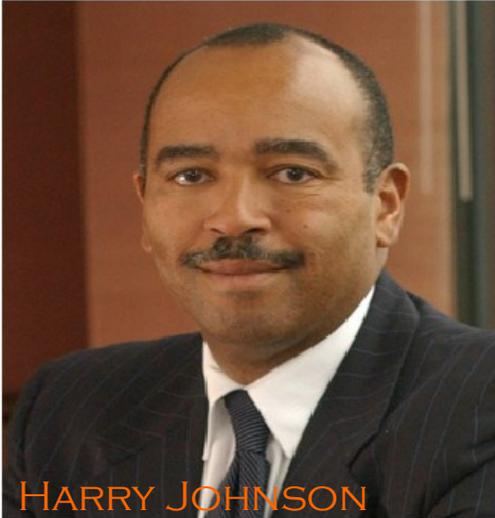
“Investments that build on collective responsibility, self-help and cultural pride, along with those that address the systematic exclusion of Black people and communities of color from opportunity and advantage, are truly wise investments.”



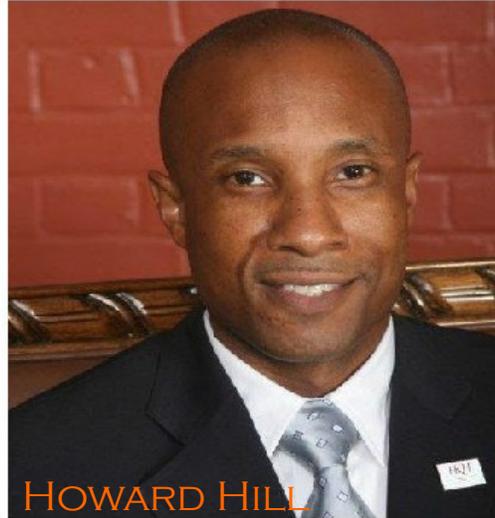
VIRGIL ROBERTS



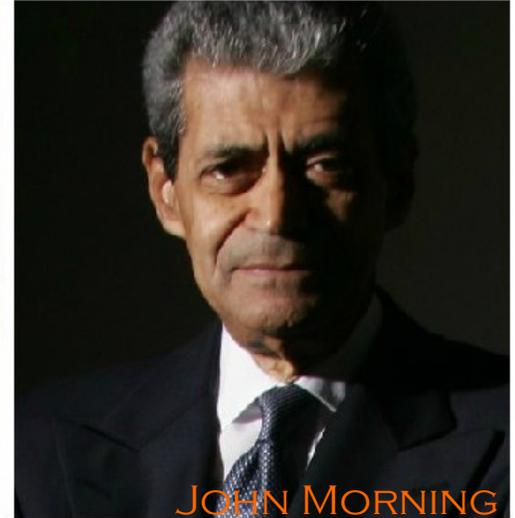
LYNN HUNTLEY



HARRY JOHNSON



HOWARD HILL



JOHN MORNING

# LEVERAGE THE TRUST

## Black Foundation Trustees on Their Experiences

As told to Dr. David Maurrasse, President and CEO, Marga Incorporated.

**Virgil Roberts**, Trustee, The James Irvin Foundation

**Lynn Huntley**, Trustee, Jessie Ball Dupont Fund and The Community Foundation of Greater Atlanta

**Harry Johnson**, Trustee, Baltimore Community Foundation

**Howard Hill**, Trustee, Community Foundation for Greater New Haven

**John Morning**, Trustee, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and Turrell Foundation

## ABFE Magazine: What's the role of Trustees in helping to build pipelines of Black leadership in their foundations?

### Virgil Roberts:

Board members can talk about the importance of diversity on staff and how it can help create a more effective organization. The job of the board is to evaluate the CEO. Boards can make sure that CEOs are evaluated based on the diversity of staff and leadership.

ABFE should make Black staff feel it is not only OK, but a good idea to talk to Trustees. There seems to be an unwritten rule that staff should not talk to board members. In one recent example I can think of, I noticed that a number of Black staff members were coming and going with frequency at a certain foundation, but not connecting with the Trustees. The CEO had indicated that staff members should not get close to board members.

The question is: why? This kind of invisible wall can block the flow of ideas and information. In our case, we meet four times a year. There are presentations by staff, but there are no opportunities to get to know staff individually. We need opportunities for staff and board members in foundations to exchange information. It takes an organization like ABFE to do this.

### Lynn Huntley:

You have to raise the issue and discuss how more inclusion would enhance the work.

You have to expose the foundation to talented individuals. Once, our foundation was searching for potential trustees. I was hired as a consultant at this time. And I gave them a list of prospects of color. They interviewed many of them; and two of them were brought on the Board. When one of these people stepped down, I was asked to join the Board.

### Harry Johnson:

It starts where you search. If you only post job openings in vehicles targeting the majority com-

munity, this is what you get. You have to reach out to people like Susan Batten to identify people of color in the field. The foundation has to be more proactive in opening up avenues. And when foundations have minorities in their ranks, they should look to move people up.

### Howard Hill:

We need education on how to be influential -- training sessions on how to be a leader in Black communities. Black trustees need to help Black people understand where they are and who they are. Some are individually successful, but not as a race. The measure of impact has to be on the number of Black people you can help. Marketing is also important. It is important to make it known to the Black community who are the Black trustees on foundation boards.

### John Morning:

This is one of the most frustrating aspects of philanthropy. There is not enough. As a Board member, when there are openings, you have to continue to ask if they have sought out Black candidates. Things happen when the CEO insists on a diverse candidate pool.

## ABFE Magazine: Clearly Trustees can influence the diversity of staff. What is the role they play in increasing opportunities for Black professional services to foundations?

### Virgil Roberts:

I would have a one-on-one conversation with the CEO and ask, "Who are the vendors? And who is managing the funds?" Trustees can promote the concept that the foundation should be diverse in all that it does. To help do this effectively, however, trustees need to have vital information at the ready. For example: I have been asked on occasion which money managers are solid, well regarded. I know of one, but not others. I am at a disadvantage because I do not know all of the firms out there. ABFE could make available a list of insurance brokers, money managers, caterers and others. Those who make the ABFE list should be people who are carefully vetted, so that a board member who is approached for referrals can feel comfortable in suggesting the name of an individual or business entity on the list.

### Lynn Huntley:

Emmett Carson recently commissioned a report on financial managers. I received the report, and forwarded it to the Pres-

idents and Chairs of my two foundation Boards. I asked them about their thoughts on the report, which sparked the conversation. So, it is important to provide the information to spark the conversation. And sometimes you have to raise the issue directly. One has to say something and not sit around and be intimidated.

**Harry Johnson:**

Catering is a classic area because in every town there is a minority catering business. Just open up the list of people you call to use caterers. The Black community is not as generous in “civic” philanthropy. Much of the giving is to churches. If Black business people are on the Boards of foundations, they can affect the decision making. If you don’t put money into the game, why should they care about what you say?

**Howard Hill:**

Our foundation has mission related investments to give organizations low interest loans. The work of the organization just has to have mission alignment with the foundation. So, these investments could be tailored to the Black community. It is also important to educate the community about how to be more entrepreneurial and separate but equal. The Black community needs rebuilding. And it is important to redefine what it means to be Black in America. The foundation would have to be deliberate about making sure a particular percentage of mission related investments are for Black companies.

**John Morning:**

There are a limited number of accountants, investment firms, insurance firms working with foundations – they have to reach out to Black Trustees about doing business with foundations.

**ABFE Magazine: What about expanding grantmaking to Black communities? What's the role of Trustees?**

**Virgil Roberts:**

A lot of this has to do with the knowledge and experience base of trustees. Not all trustees have knowledge of the community. Some are

invited to participate on boards because they represent the community, but not necessarily because they are in touch with community groups. Foundations rely on program officers for this kind of information.

Nonprofit boards try to do things by consensus. This attempt to be collegial actually enhances their ability to influence, which of course helps in steering money to deserving organizations. The selection process of board members does not always lead to people who are really plugged into the Black community. ABFE can fill a role in educating trustees about the communities they serve. Trustees can be middle and upper income, and not living in areas where there is great need in the Black community. They might not be connected to these areas. So you can have racial and gender diversity, but not necessarily economic diversity. Black folks on boards can sometimes know about the community, but are often no longer of the Black community. This absolutely does not mean that they cannot ably serve the Black community, however. ABFE can play an important role in assisting with that. It should educate trustees and help them learn about their communities so these trustees can more effectively advocate. We want to end up with diversity on boards, yes, but we also want diversity of funding, to get those dollars where they need to go.

**Lynn Huntley:**

At community foundations, you can create donor advised funds so that the foundation can receive proposals from local organizations. You can also actively monitor the fund and provide insight. The Board can put before the funds a number of local organizations.

**Howard Hill:**

The foundation has to be strategic; and it has to collaborate. The foundation makes grants to several hundred organizations every year, and has intimate details on these organizations. Economics, education, and health are the areas in which Black organizations are doing their work. It is important to focus on the issues that most affect the Black community. The foundation has to zero in on grants in the areas of greatest need in the community. And it is important to coordinate resources among Black donors and educate those donors about what is going on. It still comes down to control – how Black communities have control. Foundations need a larger strategy than an investment here and there. It has to be much bigger and include collaboration with other donors.

### John Morning:

Trustees can bring Black organizations to the attention of the foundation. But many of the services touching the Black community come through non-Black organizations such as the school system. It can be a tricky road to make recommendations to staff members in foundations. Some foundations might be receptive, and some might not be receptive to suggestions from Trustees.

### Note from Author Dr. David Maurrasse:

#### Going Forward

Many lessons are clear from these interviews, despite the various differences in the types of foundations interviewees represent. It is important for Black trustees to help build bridges to networks that can lead to potential leaders, contractors, and grantees. It is very difficult to successfully increase inclusion without being explicit about race and racial equity. Trustees must use their voices in order to put the issues on the agenda and establish the dialogue that can lead to changed policy. ♦



## Connecting Leaders Fellowship Applications Now Open

The online application for the 2015-16 Class of the Connecting Leaders Fellowship is now available at [CLFP 2015 Application](#).

Applications are due on **June 1, 2015**.

The Connecting Leaders Fellowship is ABFE's premier professional development program. As the Fellowship approaches its 10th year, the long term results are impressive. Alumni Fellows credit the Fellowship for strengthening their regional and national network in philanthropy; for deepening their commitment to and effectiveness in using philanthropy to improve life in Black Communities; and for helping them to advance their careers. Nine CLFP Alumni have become President or CEO of a foundation since their Fellowship experience.

The Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program is a year-long experience, which includes:

- The Leadership Summit--a week long learning experience in a city using the lived experiences of the Black community as a backdrop;
- A 360 Assessment of leadership style, communication styles, workplace motivators and emotional intelligence;
- 10 hours of one-on-one Executive Coaching;
- Monthly conference calls with your cohort and philanthropic leaders from the ABFE network; and
- A community-based learning project, that each Fellow conducts in their home community.

The Connecting Leaders Fellowship is open to current ABFE members with 2 or more years experience in Philanthropy. The cost of the Fellowship is \$750.

To learn more about the Connecting Leaders Fellowship Program, key 2015-16 dates and application instructions, please [click here](#).

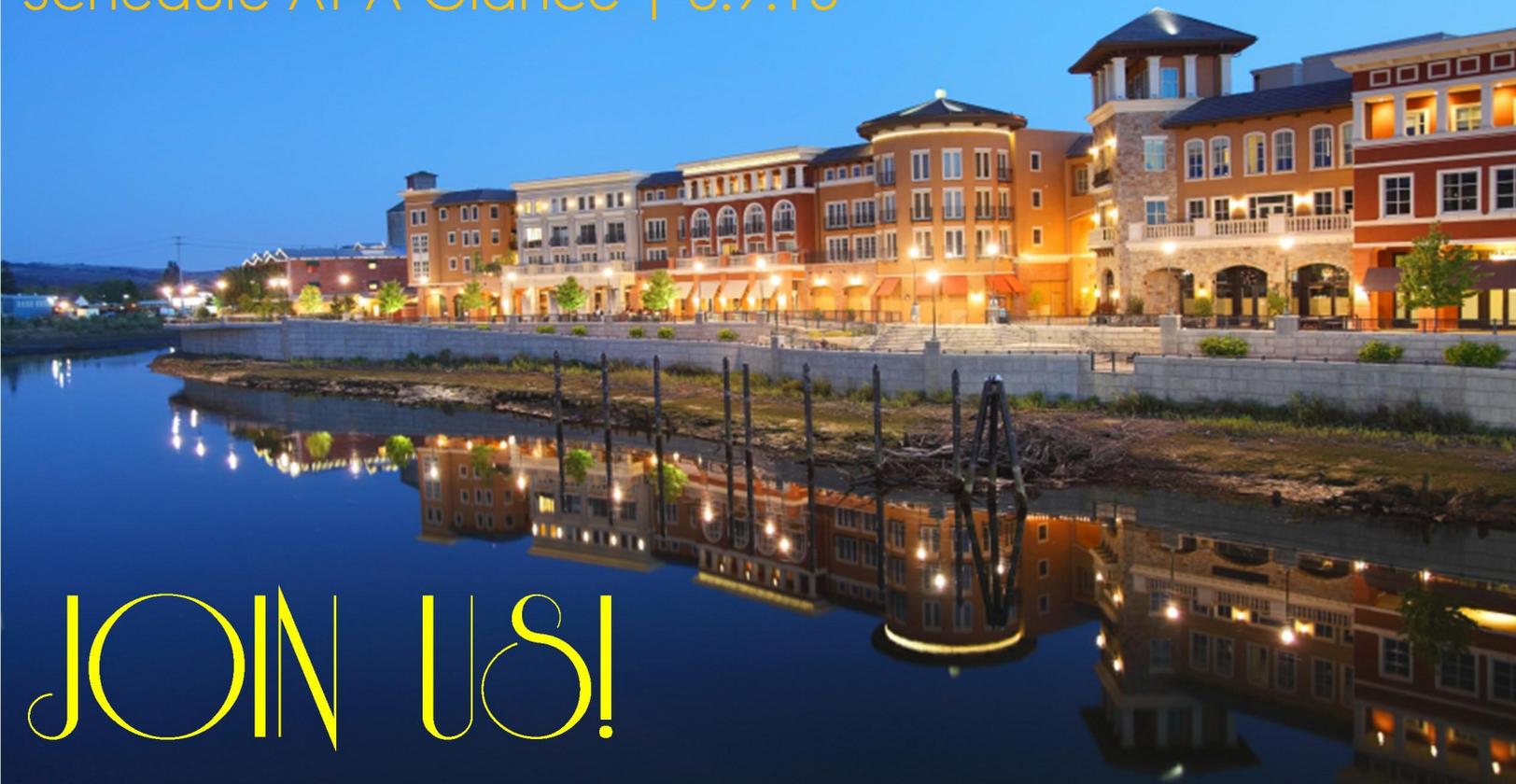


# Empower Philanthropy!

## 2015 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Presented by ABFE: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities

Schedule At-A-Glance | 3.9.15



# JOIN US!



**ABFE**

A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities

# Napa Valley

California

---

April 23 - 25, 2015

For the latest updates visit [www.ABFEconference.org](http://www.ABFEconference.org)

REGISTER TODAY!

[WWW.ABFECONFERENCE.ORG](http://WWW.ABFECONFERENCE.ORG)



JEAN E. FAIRFAX

SIXTH JAMES A. JOSEPH LECTURER, 1996

## FOR TIMES LIKE THESE: MORE BLACK TRUSTEES

The 1996 honoree, Jean E. Fairfax, has been a trustee of the Southern Education Foundation, the Hazen Foundation, and the Muskiwinni Foundation. She has served on the board of directors of the Council on Foundations, was one of the Founders of Women & Philanthropy and, in 1988, received the Council's Distinguished Grant-maker Award.

*ABFE is re-printing her Lecture in this edition of ABFE Magazine as we feel it has continued relevance today regarding the role of trustees.*

There are times when we are summoned to behave outrageously! In 1971, at the Council on Foundations' annual conference in Montreal, eight blacks protested the slate of nominations for the Council's board of directors. The protesters were demanding the inclusion of blacks who had demonstrated a commitment to a concept of philanthropy that addressed the needs of minorities and the poor.

This was an era of outrageous acts to dramatize the plight of oppressed peoples worldwide, to install their advocates on major policy-making bodies, and to demand the reallocation of institutional resources as a demonstration of solidarity with economically marginalized groups. In 1968, I was one of three black delegates to the World Council of Churches Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden, who protested the failure of the mainline denominations that we represented to propose any blacks to serve on the World Council's Central Committee. We blacks had to nominate ourselves as substitutes for prominent leaders of our denominations—in one case, an eminent president of a theological seminary; in my case, the president of my church. In May, 1969, James Forman disrupted services at Riverside Church in New York City by reading the Black Manifesto and by symbolically nailing to the door of this Protestant Cathedral a proclamation for the economic reformation of society that demanded \$500 million in reparations for blacks from the white religious establishment.

What is significant is that these black disturbers of the peace of solemn assemblies were not outsiders. They were insiders who had concluded that just being present in mainline institutions is not enough. If our people are to receive their fair share of the funds of major private as well as public bodies, Blacks must be at the table as policy makers with effective power, making decisions about institutional priorities and the allocation of their resources.

What is significant is that such audacious acts were emboldened by the intellectual ferment in the Black community at that time. Black theologians were writing expansively about the philosophical underpinnings of Black power and were articulating an ideology of philanthropy that was reparations-not noblesse oblige.

Tonight we honor the Montreal 8. Their courageous act was truly a watershed. It struck down forever the notion that Blacks are content to be only powerless recipients of charity. It opened the door for Blacks to emerge as policy makers and national leaders in American philanthropy. But for them, there would be no James Joseph Lectureship. Now, 25 years later, an in-depth report on Blacks in policy-making positions in foundations is long overdue. It is my hope that my reflections on Black trustees in this lecture will motivate others to undertake a comprehensive study about Black CEOs and others who participate in shaping the policies of America's grantmaking institutions.

Consider the environment in which policy makers work today. Much of the unfinished business of the 1970s is still the unfinished business of the 1990s. We continue to pay the price for our failure to heed the warnings of the Kerner Commission. The indices of separateness and inequality grow—and not just as domestic concerns. Our environment is now global: global technology, communications, and finance; global production of goods and services; global environmental degradation; and global ethnic cleansing.

American and European skinheads exchange briefing books. So-called patriots attempt to cleanse our nation with hatred and violence. Global horrors of ethnic cleansing are flashed daily across our television screens. Some trends in American society make this era different from the '70s and present new challenges to policy makers in foundations. Let me mention three trends that must be the urgent concern of Blacks in policy making and grantmaking roles in foundations:

1. We have become more economically stratified. Long before the New York Times devoted a week-long, book-length series of articles to the impact of downsizings and massive layoffs ("The Downsizing of America: A National Heartache," March 3-9, 1996), we had compelling evidence

that the rich are getting richer and the poor, poorer. The proportion of the nation's wealth held by the richest one percent grew from 22 percent in 1979 to 42 percent in 1992. And this disparity will be greater with the intergenerational transfer of wealth, expected to be \$8-\$10 trillion by the early decades of the 21st century, that will disproportionately benefit those who are already wealthy. Meanwhile, Blacks are disproportionately poor: 30.5 percent of Blacks are in poverty compared to 9.5 percent of whites and are disproportionately unable to escape poverty. The University of Michigan's Panel Study of Income Dynamics found that while 65 percent of white men and 29 percent of black men who turned 21 before 1980 reached middle-class earnings by age 30, 47 percent of white men and only 19 percent of black men who turned 21 after 1980 had earnings that put them in the middle class by age 30.

Growing economic inequality is a national disgrace. But no political leaders are proposing bold action to give hope to the poorest of the poor. And there is no mandate from the electorate. The middle class, feeling insecure, traumatized and betrayed, appears unwilling to form alliances with the poor to force action.

2. We are experiencing the greatest transfer of power and devolution of federal responsibility to the states since the New Deal. There is no assurance that governments closer to the people, leaner and meaner, can be trusted to be compassionate-as they invest more in prisons than in children- and to mend the holes in the safety net that this devolution of responsibility is creating. Those of us who thought we had attended the "requiem mass" for states rights are now witnessing its resurrection with the Supreme Court singing the Hallelujah Chorus!

Confronted by the reality of less governmental responsibility and fewer public dollars and programs to address the needs of our society, nonprofits and the foundations that support them have stated unequivocally that the private sector cannot do what we have come to rely upon governments to do. What has been missing is a clear message from foundations concerning what they can and will do, particularly to address the growing problem of economic inequality. If others are not raising this issue on foundation boards, Black trustees must.

3. America is undergoing the most dramatic demographic changes since the Middle Passage transformed the racial composition and cultural definition of America and since waves of Eastern and Southern European immigrants gave an ethnic dimension to the political dynamics of northern cities.

It is the nature of, as well as the rapid rate of change of our population mix, plus the lack of preparation for the anticipated and wrenching dislocations in our institutions, that must concern us. The proportion of Blacks will remain about the same, but Hispanics will add the most numbers, surpassing blacks within 25 years. While Asians will continue to record the most rapid rate of growth, non-Hispanic whites will lose their majority status, and the number of bi- or multiracial persons will increase.

In this new racial and ethnic mix, and as we move toward becoming a nation of minorities, how should we define racial groups, monitor their participation in society, and address race as an issue? How will groups attempt to reposition themselves to claim political and economic benefits? Will foundations feel obligated to review in new ways the racial and ethnic patterns in their grantmaking?

Many of us had naively assumed that the '90s would be a decade of celebration of diversity, of savoring new and exotic flavors in our stew. Instead, we are witnessing a backlash against multiculturalism. The debate about immigration has thinly disguised

racist overtones. And multiculturalism has a new color: white. A syndicated columnist, reporting on white consciousness and white ethnics who "want a piece of the multicultural pie," commented on the "ultimate and perhaps inevitable outcome of advanced multiculturalism- an insistent and in-your-face demand that the community recognize, respect and celebrate the diversity of a group that has felt itself maligned and marginalized in an age of affirmative action. That group, of course, is whites (Jonathan Tilove, "Color Scheme," The Arizona Republic, March 17, 1996).

We cannot ignore white ethnic consciousness. It is appearing in requests for grants. Foundations must be alert to differentiate programs that may be new and benign efforts to seek identity in the new mosaic from those that are new and malignant growths of white supremacy.

Blacks have a stake in diversity. Our leaders must reach out to new immigrant groups, especially to Asians, because we have not had the long years of coalition-building efforts that we have had with Puerto Rican and Mexican Americans and may be as guilty as whites in stereotyping Asians. As black policy makers promote diversity, two concerns must be uppermost: First, we must not forget, or let our foundations forget, the unique role blacks have played in shaping the American identity and culture as well as our nation's legal and political systems. Ralph Ellison in his 1970 essay, "What America Would Be Like Without Blacks," wrote about the "complex and confounding role in the creation of American history and culture" that Blacks have played:

Without the presence of Negro American style, our jokes, tall tales even our sports would be lacking in the sudden turns, shocks and swift changes of pace (all jazz shaped) that serve to remind us that the world is ever unexplored, and that while a complete mastery of life is mere illusion, the real secret of the game is to make life swing. It is its ability to articulate this tragicomic attitude toward life that explains much of the mysterious power and attractiveness of that quality of Negro American style known as 'soul.' An expression of American diversity within unity, of blackness with whiteness, soul announces the presence of a creative struggle against the realities of existence."

...Indeed it is almost impossible to conceive of what our political system would have become without the snarl of forces-cultural, racial, religious-that make our nation what it is today...

Materially, psychologically and culturally, part of the nation's heritage is Negro American, and whatever it becomes will be shaped in part by the Negro's presence. Which is fortunate, for today it is the black American who puts pressure upon the nation to live up to its ideals. It is he who gives creative tension to our struggle for justice and for the elimination of those factors, social and psychological, which make for slums and shaky suburban communities ... the black American who puts pressure upon the nation to live up to its ideals. It is he who gives creative tension to our struggle for justice and for the elimination of those factors, social and psychological, which make for slums and shaky suburban communities ...Without the black American, something irrepressibly hopeful and creative would go out of the American spirit, and the nation might well succumb to the moral slobbism that has always threatened its existence from within.

They are an American people who are geared to what is, and who are yet driven by a sense of what is possible for human life to be in this society. The nation could not survive being deprived of their presence because, by the irony implicit in the dynamics of American democracy, they symbolize both its most stringent testing and the possibility of its greatest freedom. (John Callahan, ed. The Collected Essays of Ralph Ellison. Modern Library, New York, 1995)

# Congratulations 2015 Award Recipients

The James A. Joseph Lecture and Awards Reception is ABFE's signature event that highlights philanthropic leadership in support of Black communities. ABFE will present the "Emerging Leader in Philanthropy" and "Institutional Leader in Philanthropy" awards, and you will hear from our 2015 lecturer. A reception for ABFE members, friends, supporters and guests immediately follows the lecture and awards ceremony.

## James A. Joseph Lecturer



**Gladys Washington, Program Director, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation**

Gladys leads the Program Team and supervises Network Officer, Program Associate and Grants Manager activities. Gladys also oversees grants and PRIs in Gulf Coast Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and the Delta. She leads the Program Team in planning and learning on public policy grantmaking. Before coming to the Babcock Foundation, Gladys was a Program Officer for the Community Foundation serving Coastal South Carolina in Charleston, South Carolina.

## Institutional Award Recipient



A COMMUNITY IS ONLY AS STRONG AS ITS FOUNDATION

The mission of the **POISE Foundation** is to assist the Pittsburgh Region's Black community in achieving self-sustaining practices, through strategic leadership, collective giving, grantmaking and advocacy.

## Emerging Leader Award Recipient



**Maisha E. Simmons, Program Officer, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation**

Maisha Simmons, MPA, is a program officer on the Vulnerable Populations Team where she is responsible for coordinating Forward Promise. Forward Promise is the Foundation's new \$9.5 million initiative that aims to improve the health of middle school- and high school-aged boys and young men of color, as well as their opportunities for success in school, work and life.

Second, Black policy makers must not forget, or let our foundations forget: that as the nation enrolls new citizens into our social contract, many old citizens-whose ancestors were here long before 1776 and who had to fight to become included in the contract-are still not fully covered. The struggle for racial justice is not over. Affirmative action, one piece of the machinery to redress the legacy of slavery and legal segregation, must remain until the structures of institutional racism have been dismantled. Foundations must be advocates and Supporters of affirmative action and the larger civil rights agenda of which it is apart.

Furthermore, we must resist those who claim that their advocacy of diversity relieves them from responsibility to require affirmative action and mandated outcomes. Harvard's President Neil L. Rudenstine, in his article "The Uses of Diversity," (The Harvard Magazine, March-April 1996) made a compelling case for diversity. I am troubled, however, by his conclusion that diversity in university admission programs is not an "attempt to compensate for patterns of past societal discrimination...[and admission programs do not] use set-asides ...[or] involve mandated outcomes." There is clearly a need for education about what affirmative action was designed to accomplish and about its continuing role as the changing racial/ethnic composition of our population raises questions in some minds concerning historic injustices and who should pay to compensate for their legacy.

Confronted with these dramatic changes in American society, we are also challenged by the remarkable expansion of philanthropy and its institutions in the last quarter century:

- Total annual giving has increased. In 1992, it was \$124 billion.
- In 1993, there were 3 1/2 times more foundations with assets over \$1 million than in 1975.
- In 1994, community foundations received more than \$1 billion, according to the president of the Columbus Foundation, who concluded that each should now be judged by its success in adding \$30 million annually to its assets.
- In 1995, 99 of the largest community and private foundations increased their assets to a total of \$90 billion.

There is much speculation concerning whether the intergenerational transfer of wealth will create a new generation of philanthropists and, if so, whether they will establish new charitable funds. What is clear, however, is that as the rich get richer, through earned or inherited wealth, more money will potentially be available for organized philanthropy.

The world of philanthropy has become more diverse. There has been a significant growth in the number and variety of funds-women's, minority and so-called alternative funds-and more grantmaking by unapologetically conservative foundations to support think tanks, litigation and causes that advance their agenda.

As the plight of persons at the margins of society becomes more desperate, and the climate to meet their needs more inhospitable, demands for grants from private funds to serve an economically and ethnically more diverse society will be more competitive. Grantmakers will undoubtedly be inundated not only with more requests for dollars, but with proposals that project different visions of America and different understandings of national or local priorities. Foundations may have more dollars, but more difficulties in making decisions about allocating them. Compelled to reorder priorities, revise missions and operating styles, and to

seek new relationships with nonprofits, they will need professional staffs of the highest caliber. We must, therefore, be especially concerned about one of the findings in ABFE's report, Status of African Americans in Grant-making Institutions, published last year, that very well-qualified and experienced Black professionals may leave the field because of their difficulties in dealing with the culture and the funding priorities of their foundations.

It is more important now than in the '70s for Blacks to be present in policy-making positions in foundations. Where are Black policy makers? (The data from the Council on Foundations cover only 3 percent of foundations, although they represent 40 percent of total assets and grants.) In 1994, according to the Council Blacks were 3 percent of CEOs and 6.1 percent of trustees.

In 1984, 5 percent of trustees, reported as persons of color, were probably all Black. Data indicate that there has been very little progress and present too optimistic a picture of the Black presence, since most foundations that do not report to the Council are family funds and small foundations that generally do not have black trustees. Over the years, about 95 Blacks have served on the Council on Foundations board.

Black trustees are very few and unevenly spread, tending to be in small public and large community foundations, according to the ABFE study. Foundations, other than Black charitable funds, that have a majority or critical mass of Black trustees or other persons of color are rare. The Black trustee is likely to be alone, maybe with one other person of color some time during his or her tenure on a board.

As I thought about this lecture, I initially considered entitling it "The Black Trustee's Lament: Who Will Second my Motion?" But after some long conversations with other Black trustees whom I consulted in recent weeks, I decided that I could not properly honor the Montreal 8-and Jim, who was one of them-with a lament!

Bernard Watson, the third lecturer in this series, gave an eloquent charge to Blacks in philanthropy: to bring to our work our "special experience and different perspective"; to be "representatives for the disenfranchised, interpreters for the inarticulate, advocates for new and potentially risky approaches to grantmaking"; and to "help foundations understand and deal appropriately with the new voices and faces in American society." How can we effectively communicate our perspectives? How can we shape the culture of foundations?

Following the verdict in the OJ. Simpson trial and the Million Man March, media pundits declared with surprise what we always knew-that Blacks and whites see the world differently; our images are formed through different lenses. Blacks and whites do not talk to each other honestly. The failure of communication is not just among strangers; it is a major and pervasive problem in our board rooms. I have completed long terms on nonprofit boards without the faintest idea of the values, philosophies and life experiences that have shaped the votes of my fellow directors. A Black trustee confided to me recently that he leaves board meetings burdened and depressed because the chasm between himself and other trustees has never been acknowledged, discussed or bridged.

Many of us believe that we were carefully selected to be trustees because we are Blacks who will fit in, behave, and contribute constructively, meaning without being disruptive. But we must not let our silence mask the solidarity we feel with the masses of oppressed and disadvantaged people, even though we humbly recognize that we cannot truly represent them from the privileged positions we have attained. We are not spokespersons for the race.

African-Americans have never been homogeneous and we are becoming more diverse, living out our traditions in new settings and in different ways. It is the richness of the contemporary drama and the variety of our experiences as Black people that create the special perspectives-and I use

the plural. Our task is to be vehicles for the perspectives to be brought into American philanthropy, beginning with our own boards.

Black trustees have an obligation to initiate honest discourse, even when it is not in the tradition and may be painful. How often we have said: "We're tired of educating white folks!" But recall the words of Langston Hughes:

We intend to express our dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased, we are glad, and if they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves.

(The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain, 1966)

We have a model who should be an inspiration for all of us. Reatha Clark King, now president and executive director of the General Mills Foundation and one who has had extensive experience on different kinds of boards, is convinced that Black trustees should capture opportunities provided by what she calls "teachable moments." She prepared a statement on the Million Man March that was not just a treatise of the scholar—that she is—but a very personal and moving account of the involvement of three generations of her family in a "defining event." Circulated to her trustees, as well as to officials in the company, it stimulated discussions that would never have occurred had she not seized the opportunity to articulate some Black perspectives on a nationally debated event.

The failure to communicate is no longer just a Black-white matter and will have even more serious consequences as America becomes more diverse. If we cannot make progress on our small boards, what hope is there for achieving honest discourse with so many new voices in the larger society?

Whether Black trustees can shape the culture of their foundations is part of larger questions concerning whether it is the board or the CEO who creates the culture, and who can be most effective as the agent of change. Obviously, this can be answered only case by case. But the question is being raised across the country as foundations are being challenged to respond to urgent critical issues and as exposes about the failure of boards to fulfill their legal and moral responsibility for accountability focus attention on trustees. Being a tiny minority does not absolve one of the requirement to be a faithful bearer of a public trust.

When asked about their efforts to shape the culture of their foundations, Black trustees reported mixed success. One reported deep involvement and encouragement to take initiatives, commenting: "I never had to put my combat boots on!" Others, like myself, have often failed when we have proposed bold action. What is clear, however, is that Black trustees often bring far more expertise than is apparent on their resumes and surprise their colleagues with a wealth of experience on matters that may have nothing to do with race: board oversight, for example, board-staff relations, fiscal accountability, budgets, etc. Many are centrally involved in personnel policies. Some mentioned their fearlessness in dealing with sensitive issues, such as conflicts of interest and what one trustee described as the "weird and startling interpersonal dynamics" among board members. It is not unusual for a Black trustee to be thanked privately by a fellow director for raising a sensitive matter that others had silently agonized over for a long time. Blacks are expected to bring knowledge about the Black community, but many have had key roles in institutions and organizations that are not predominantly Black. Coming out of, and often still

based in the nonprofit world, many Black trustees see their role as addressing the gap between nonprofits and foundations and raising questions about the priorities and styles of grantmakers from the point of view of grantees.

Wenda Weekes Moore, a trustee of the Kellogg Foundation, is an example of a Black board member who is shaping the culture of her foundation in important ways. Following a meeting at the White House on the then-upcoming Fourth World Conference on Women, she made an impassioned plea to her board in Battle Creek to get involved. Kellogg sponsored a delegation to Beijing of 30 grantees, staff and trustees, later created a Beijing Task Force of staff from all program areas and has increased grants to women's causes. She is certainly successful in getting others to second her motions!

Over time, trust gained through wisdom and sensitivity in addressing internal matters and recognition for what Blacks bring from their involvement in organizations have sometimes paid off, but after what one trustee described as long periods of no reinforcement. Black trustees know that they must be prepared to operate politically, choosing issues and battles carefully and finding allies. One trustee succeeded in changing his board's policy against grants to public authorities and won a decision to provide generous capacity-building funds to a municipality struggling to serve its poor and minority residents.

The experience of having honed one's political skills in other organizations gives confidence. I often reflect on my seven years on the World Council of Churches Central Committee. American Black, Third World and liberal white members—though still a numerical minority—succeeded in changing WCC's culture in some very important ways. That Central Committee launched WCC's Programme to Combat Racism, made grants to liberation groups in Africa and social justice activists around the world, severed all financial dealings with apartheid South Africa, and elected a black general secretary.

Black trustees hesitate to claim responsibility for dollar amounts of grants to support Black causes. But they are very clear about their role in raising questions about the ultimate beneficiaries of grantmaking, about the ethnic and racial composition of grantees boards and staffs and about whether certain nonprofits have easier access than others to their foundations. Black trustees also monitor progress in going beyond traditional ways of doing business and propose contracting with minority investment managers, vendors and consultants.

We should investigate what happens to the culture of a foundation when the composition of its board changes, especially when Black trustees become a critical mass or a working majority. The Southern Education Foundation would be an excellent case study. When I joined the board in 1979, the median age of trustees was 75 years and some had been on the board for 40 years. There were a few very prominent Black men. Eleanor Roosevelt had been the only woman. Traditionally committed to Black education since its predecessor funds were created after the Civil War, and without changing its mission, SEF changed its grantmaking priorities: from supporting public and private agencies operating within segregation to funding groups that were agents of empowerment and change. Largely under the leadership of Lisle Carter when he was chair, SEF dramatically changed again and became an operating foundation with a primary focus on systemic reforms and public policy formation.

Black trustees value their involvement with nonprofits and not just because it may have been a factor in getting elected to a foundation's board. They often view themselves as two-way emissaries: advising their fellow directors on developments in the nonprofit world and working with specific organizations to help them overcome their often unrealistic perceptions of the world of grantmakers.

This is a very critical period for nonprofits. Interviewed in a recent issue of the Chronicle of Philanthropy, the Ford Foundation's new president, Susan Berresford, described this as a "shakeout period" of bleak choices for nonprofits as some may have to be merged or "reinvented" to survive. Foundations, she said, can help groups rethink their missions. In the same issue, William Dietel urged foundation officials to sit on nonprofit boards, sharing their wisdom and helping to meet the need for "hard-headed, courageous leadership." This is exactly what Black trustees have been doing for years. Their involvement with nonprofits goes beyond site visits for their foundations and more often than not is with groups that are not current or potential grantees. It should be expanded and become

more than the personal voluntary work of black trustees who want to give something back to the community.

In recent years, foundations have become partners with a major Black institution, the Black church, in collaborations to promote common goals that are more than negotiations over funding projects. I do not know whether trustees played a role in fashioning these partnerships. My guess is that the first initiatives came from senior administrators like Lynn Walker Huntley and Emmett Carson when they were at the Ford Foundation and program officers like Grant Wood at the Piton Foundation. Black trustees should take the initiative now to link their foundations with other Black organizations. I would give a high priority to partnerships with Black philanthropies, that would supplement but go beyond current efforts by community foundation to recruit Black donors. The Twenty-first Century Foundation, after two decades of quiet but very effective grantmaking largely to grassroots groups in the South, is in the process of becoming a kind of national Black community foundation. It would be a family of Black charitable funds, but would have field of interest funds, such as a proposed African Diaspora Fund, and would sponsor national programs to educate Blacks about philanthropy. Black trustees should encourage their foundations to explore the potential for partnerships with foundations like this one.

We need to find ways to increase the number of Black trustees, as Blacks whom I have consulted generally value the experiences they have had on foundation boards. They have appreciated being "humanly involved," as one commented, in the process of grantmaking even though difficult decisions must be made when urgent needs compete for funding. Even when they were the only dissenters, with no one to second their motions, they have continued to be respected by their colleagues on their boards as persons of integrity.

What has been most fulfilling to some has been the recognition they have received as trustees that has opened up opportunities for wider participation in the philanthropic enterprise: in leadership roles in affinity groups, in the work of regional associations of grantmakers, on the committees and board: of the Council on Foundations. Hugh Burroughs and I have often discussed the experiences we have shared in the larger world of philanthropy: in ABFE (he had a tenure as chair); in Women & Philanthropy (we were both on the board and I was an early chair); and we both have served on the Council's board. We have agreed that these experiences have 'been personally very rewarding and that Black trustees must be discovered early in their tenure and encouraged to get involved in the organizations of philanthropy across the board.

Black trustees have been invited to serve as consultants to other foundations and even to be outside mediators during crises that affect the field. A few years ago, I was a member of a delegation of African Americans, selected because I am a trustee, who went to Mexico to meet with the president and other leaders in the government and the private sector. Invitations like this are often extended to Black trustee.

I now propose a new role for Black trustees. The assignment: to bring Black intellectuals into American philanthropy, beginning with a partnership between Black trustees and Black public intellectuals. For years intellectuals have made their scholarly skills available to Blacks in the struggle for justice. Remember W.E.B. DuBois. Remember Thurgood Marshall's team of legal scholars and social scientists. Remember the Black theologians whose writings inspired, energized and emboldened the civil rights movement.

Early last year, writers in the New Yorker and the Atlantic Monthly described with excitement the new phenomenon of Black public intellectuals as "becoming the most dynamic force in the American intellectual arena." Two months ago, the Washington Post had a long article on "Harvard's Dream Team" that featured Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and the interdisciplinary team of scholars he has assembled. Black public intellectuals are compared to the Jewish intellectuals in New York a generation ago and to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. What is different is their access to a national audience through the media, the lecture circuit and their writings.

Committed to overcoming Black suffering in this society, Gates hopes his team "will reflect a new spirit in Black America, one of resilience and resistance. On the one hand, it is open season on us...On the other hand, we had got to be creative in our response-intellectual, political, economic," he told the Post. Described by Robert S. Boynton in the Atlantic as "street smart, often combative and equipped with a strong moral sense...and a talent for shaking things up," Gates and his team are the kind of intellectual partners we need. The writer in the Post, stating that Black intellectuals are "under pressure to engage and change the world, to use their privileged position and their brainpower to frame the issues facing the Black community," asks whether the team can "bring its scholarly prowess to bear on national issues in a tangible way? Or is this the ebony answer to the ivory tower?"(Jacqueline Trescott, "Harvard's Dream Team," The Washington Post, February 26, 1996)

The goal of the Partnership of Black Trustees and Black Public Intellectuals would be to produce a Black Scholars Action Plan for American philanthropy—a series of policy analyses and position papers on the role foundations could play to address the plight of those on the margins of American society. It would combine the research and analyses of academics with documentation from the field, from grantmakers and practitioners, about their programmatic implementation of approaches that appear to work to bring marginalized people into the economic mainstream. Our objective would be to identify the kind of nonprofits that warrant support from foundations, and if such are not in place to "reinvent" (using Berresford's language) segments of the nonprofit sector to produce institutions that will work.

Widely disseminated, the Action Plan would certainly shake things up! What a thought—that we might shake up American philanthropy with Black power, Black intellectual power! How audacious! How outrageous! How right!

When James Joseph inaugurated this lectureship that bears his name, he called us back to our deep historical and metaphysical roots the African cosmology of connectedness that provided the first philosophical principle of organized Black philanthropy on this continent two centuries ago. It was the faith of our ancestors that connectedness-solidarity with the less fortunate among us—was our only hope and the key to our survival as a people. Today, Blacks in philanthropy must give new meaning and vitality to that concept.

We must seize the opportunity to be messengers and enablers of connectedness, positioned as we are to connect some of the vast resources or our nation—as well as the rich creative and intellectual resources of our own people—to meet the needs of those who desperately need them. The faith of our fathers and mothers must be living still in us.

Copyright 1996 All Rights Reserved





**ABFE**

Do you have a seat at the table?

Become a member!

Join our **network** to help uplift **BLACK** communities!

A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities

Become an ABFE member  
today or donate

visit

**ABFE.org**

## COACHING WITH A RACIAL EQUITY LENS:

### THE EXPERIENCE



### Amy Seto

Executive Vice President and  
Chief Operating Officer  
Baltimore Community Foundation

In her current role, Ms. Seto leads strategic plan implementation, oversees organizational infrastructure and policies for fundraising, programs, finance, technology, administration, investments and human capital development. She also manages relationships with auditors, investment consultants, custodians, banks, insurance brokers, landlord, suppliers, and legal counsel as well as supervises and mentors BCF's vice presidents and directors. Ms. Seto also advocates for race, equity and inclusion internally and externally on investment manager diversity.

**Name three things that you learned that will help you with your work?**

1. Be present for meetings – as a Chief Operating Officer, I often have multiple thoughts in my head and move quickly from one thing to another. It is important to put the distractions aside and be mentally present for meetings. I have adopted this technique and found that my meetings are a lot more productive when I am focused and listening actively.
2. Use vulnerability as a tool – I used to be afraid of being vulnerable in front of others, because that was a sign of weakness. Being a minority who was not born in this country, I have to work extra hard to secure my professional status. I have learned that vulnerability can be used to create humility and build trust. I have practiced that with my direct reports and their reports. It makes me “real” and more welcome.
3. De-cluttering communication – this technique has become more interesting and practical after the sessions. Messages get fogged up due to different reasons – insecurity, fear, lack of preparation, desire to overpower. Knowing how to de-clutter allows me to cut through the noise and make decisions with clarity and confidence.

**Describe an “ah ha moment” that you had. Was it through a reading, a video, discussions with the group, discussion with a coach? How has that influenced your leadership in**

**the way you are showing up?**

I started the first coaching session with skepticism, especially after the extended breathing exercise (I prefer cardio to yoga). I am a Certified Public Accountant by training, and the kind of professional development I have experienced couldn't be more different from ontological training. I took a leap of faith and stuck to the process because I am an ABFE fan. In the end, I probably benefited more than other participants who have programs background and are much more advanced than I am on race, equity and inclusion issues. The coaching opens up my mind and capacity for learning. I reaped the benefits of diverse disciplines and experience.

**Would you recommend this to other colleagues? Why? What advice would you give them?**

I would absolutely recommend this to other colleagues in the field, in fact, I already have recommended a colleague from BCF and another from the Cleveland Foundation. My advice – let down your guard, trust your coaches and do your homework prior to the sessions.



### Patricia MacDonald

Assistant Vice President, Donor Relations &  
Education, Greater Kansas City Community  
Foundation and Executive Director,  
Black Community Fund

Ms. MacDonald has a long history in nonprofit management, research, strategic planning and resource development. She is a past President of the Mid-America Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and attained CFRE credentials in the field.

A product of New York City public schools, Ms. MacDonald holds the conviction that, “Great minds exist everywhere.” Thus, her personal passions lie in the area of urban public education. She lends volunteer leadership to help ensure students at her university alma mater graduate having had excellent academic and social experiences through her service as President of the UMKC Alumni Association and member of the UMKC Board of Trustees.

**Name three things that you learned that will help you with your work?**

Just three?!? - There was so much! First of all, I am grateful for this opportunity to reflect on the leadership program and its lessons because, as was reinforced in this program, only practice leads to mastery. This discussion is an opportunity for me to conduct a personal leadership ethos “check-up”. Here are three important take-aways from my participation that serve me daily and aid in my sense of success on a daily basis:

1. Be deliberate about “how I show up” – This drives the entire day! In this consciousness, I start out in my own command and the day unfolds in that flow.
2. “Name and Release what does not serve me.” – This keeps the day unfolding in the way that I want it to go.

“....an explicit ‘light touch’ can convey integrity and character...” –

garners trust and respect, those I endeavor to influence respond so well to my lead when I keep this in mind.

To summarize the above, do I want to be a breath of fresh air or the one who sucks the air out of a room? Do I want to mandate or inspire? We each must be ever cognizant that we have choices in every single episode of our day and know that each choice will have an affect on how others interact and react.

Describe an "ah ha moment" that you had. Was it through a reading, a video, discussions with the group, discussion with a coach? How has that influenced your leadership the way you are showing up?

There were a number of "Ah ha!" moments that occurred in all of the components of the program. A valuable epiphany occurred for me during a group discussion. The "Ah ha!" was learning that meditation is not as difficult as I thought. I understood meditation to mean achieving a completely clear mind. I gave up trying years ago because I could never achieve this for more than a few seconds. I learned, and now practice daily, that success in meditation does not require a clear mind but a level of discipline and calm to hold a single focus. I meditate with this goal every morning before my feet hit the ground and now enjoy my new ritual.

Other valuable teachings of the program illuminated some "enemies of learning" through video, and also how very in command each of us actually is; "We are each the authors of our own beliefs, and this absolutely influences how we listen, how we interpret words and actions that haven't happened yet." - Language and the Pursuit of Happiness

Would you recommend this to other colleagues? Why? What advice would you give them?

I would certainly recommend this experience to others. We should all make a point to participate in opportunities that stretch our individual perspectives. Under expert facilitation by ABFE, hearing from colleagues around the country provides that. Anyone who believes they want this experience should first fully commit to making his or her full participation a priority by organizing their personal and professional schedules to accommodate showing up on group conference calls on time, reading the assigned materials in advance of calls, participating in group email discussions – all make for a richer more rewarding experience for the participant and the cohort. ♦



ABFE

ABFE is a membership-based philanthropic organization that advocates for responsive and transformative investments in Black communities.

Partnering with foundations, nonprofits and individuals, ABFE provides its members with professional development and technical assistance resources that further the philanthropic sector's connection and responsiveness to issues of equity, diversity and inclusion. Established in 1971 as the Association of Black Foundation Executives, the organization was credited with many of philanthropy's early gains in diversity. It since has evolved into an influential network. In 2013, the organization shed its descriptor and adopted the simpler ABFE (ab-fee) to better reflect its broadening membership. For more information, visit [www.abfe.org](http://www.abfe.org).

Contact Us

ABFE: A Philanthropic Partnership for Black Communities  
333 Seventh Avenue, 14 Floor  
New York, NY 10001  
Main: 646.230.0306 | Fax: 646.230.0310