

TWO **UNTAPPED**
TALENT POOLS

HOWARD ROSS: DON'T STOP
WATCHING AND DON'T STOP TALKING

THE LANGUAGE
OF **INCLUSIVITY**

INCLUSION

FALL 2015 + ISSUE 1

*Creating Globally Inclusive &
Culturally Competent Workplaces*



MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL'S

**WENDY
LEWIS**

Leading the charge on
implementing inclusive practices



Wendy Lewis, Senior VP of Diversity, Inclusion & Strategic Alliance, Major League Baseball

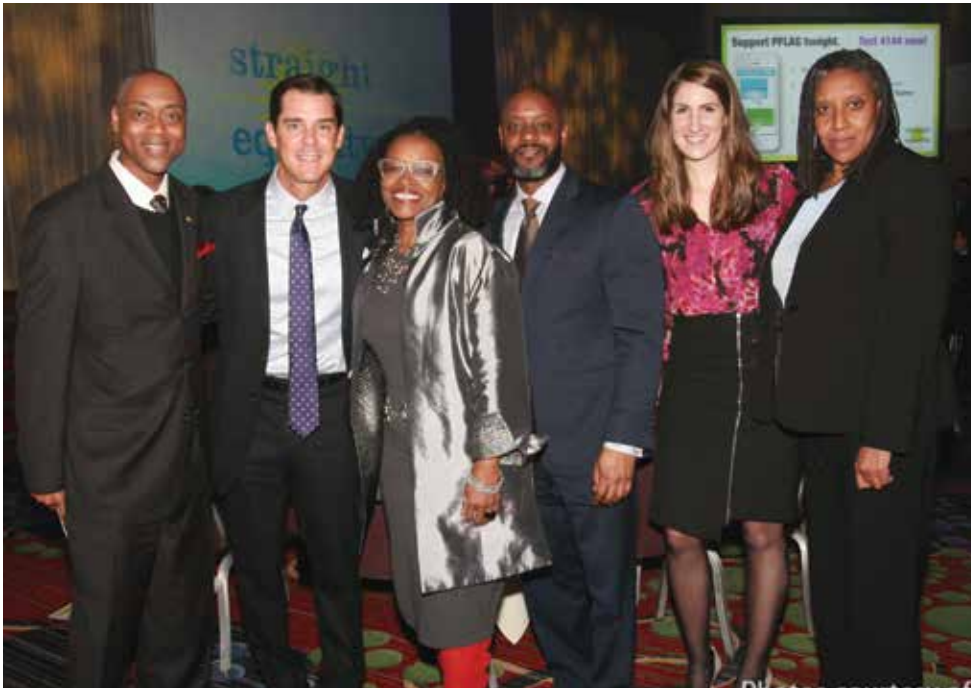
PEOPLE COME TO CAREERS IN THE FIELD of diversity and inclusion from different career paths. On the other hand, most people who work for Major League Baseball have the same impetus—a passion for the game.

That's certainly the case for Wendy Lewis, the chief diversity officer for Major League Baseball (MLB). She has worked for the league for 28 years, first with the Chicago Cubs, and for the last 20 years in the MLB commissioner's office in New York City.

"My family's favorite sport was baseball, as was the case for many African American

families," says Lewis, who grew up in Milwaukee. "Some of my fondest memories are of listening to games on the radio with my grandfather to experience the triumph and excitement of Jackie Robinson and the Brooklyn Dodgers. When I accepted the position with the Chicago Cubs my only regret was not being able to share the news with him."

Lewis received her undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh and her MBA from the Kellogg School at Northwestern University, and came to diversity and inclusion from a human resources and sales and marketing background.



MLB's Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Strategic Alliances

Our 2015 All-Star Game with the Cincinnati Reds led us to support in a very profound way Cincinnati's activism of Black Lives Matter.

"I was always interested in what is now conventionally called diversity and inclusion," she says. "Like with most companies, at first it was housed in the human resources department. As time went on, I realized how much could be learned and how much an organization could change just by closely examining data. Being in HR gave me an opportunity to take a careful look at metrics and trends, and therefore see the gaps in opportunity and other categories for people of color and women. It really gave me a snapshot of the whole landscape of an organization, and that's what led me to continue to focus on diversity and inclusion."

Inclusion: What is your role in terms of D&I in Major League Baseball?

Wendy Lewis: MLB's Office of D&I and Strategic Alliances has direct relationships with all 30 baseball franchises and their owners, general managers, human resources, and finance executives. Our role is to provide strategy development, analytics, and policy support. Our objective is to create an economic-based

platform for diversity and inclusion that is leadership driven and club-centric and drives positive franchise impact. A template for leadership strategy is provided to support MLB's franchise organizations, central office, MLB Advanced Media, and the MLB Network. We accomplished this with a business model approach to workforce, supply chain- and club engagements. Our results and deliverables are reported to the commissioner and his Ownership D&I Committee.

IN: What are some ongoing or special initiatives Major League Baseball is engaging in now to maximize inclusion?

WL: Most notably, our MLB Diversity Business Summit (DBS). The DBS is a groundbreaking employment conference and procurement trade fair combined! It optimizes the opportunity for

over 1,000 job seekers and entrepreneurs to engage with MLB's most influential leaders and decision makers. The commissioner, Rob Manfred, and other chief executives are in attendance. The DBS is transforming MLB's talent and procurement pipeline. Summit 2016 will be in Phoenix, Arizona. Our cohost club will be the Arizona Diamondbacks. They will be joined by our 29 other MLB franchises and 10 of our minor league clubs as well. Those looking for career and entrepreneurial opportunities should register at mlb.com/diversitysummit.

IN: Tell us about your greatest success story.

WL: Our 2015 All-Star Game with the Cincinnati Reds led us to support in a very profound way Cincinnati's activism of Black Lives Matter. Collaboratively with the Cincinnati Reds ownership, community activists and agencies, and of course the clergy, we produced "All Lives Matter: A Social Justice Dialogue of Faith, Community and Baseball." The town hall event was appropriately held at Cincinnati's Freedom Center. The dialogue covered the major factors of disparities within the most

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All Lives Matter: A Social Justice Dialogue of Faith, Community and Baseball



affected communities: education, employment, incarceration and criminal justice, health and wellness, and net assets.

IN: Obviously, a company like Major League Baseball is different from the typical Fortune 1000 company. What are some of the unique challenges MLB faces in regard to diversity and inclusion?

WL: Our brand creates a very public profile. We are constantly critiqued and micromanaged in regard to D&I. Our numbers in terms of diversity and inclusion are reported on a regular basis in sports media but also in business and social media. People are very passionate about sports and all aspects of the business. Major League Baseball is held to a high standard of social responsibility. This is a very good thing, of course, but challenging.

When part of your legacy is Jackie Robinson and Branch Rickey, there is an expectation that you will continue to push the envelope, move forward, and be inclusive.

As a result, we are commonly featured in many media outlets for our underrepresentation of US-born players of color. The number of African American players in baseball has been dropping dramatically for decades, while the number of Latino and international players has doubled. The current reality is that our player pipeline in regard to African American players has increased. There is greater representation than is evident within the 40-man roster [those on each Major League team plus 15 high-valued prospects].

We are committed to staying highly engaged with our diverse communities and becoming the game of choice for aspiring and talented athletes, as well as fans and the communities we serve.

IN: What steps is Major League Baseball now taking to increase D&I?

WL: Our new commissioner, Rob Manfred, is taking these initiatives to a higher level. Potentially over the next couple of years, more on-field positions may be available. The commissioner has made the statement that this is an important

priority for MLB and has authorized the development of additional pipeline support for our clubs.

IN: There's been an increase of women in leadership positions in professional sports just in the last year—female assistant coaches have been hired in both the NBA and the NFL, for example. When do you see this happening in baseball?

WL: We've already seen women come into scouting and our Umpire Development Program. Also, women are represented in other components of baseball operations, including the role of assistant general manager.

IN: How has your approach to D&I changed in the last 10 years? How have the field and best practices changed around D&I?

WL: The field has become more compelling, and the position charged with more authority. Organizations understand the relevancy of D&I work and that it has become part of the fabric and the success strategy of how people now must do business.

Case in point for us—one of our expanded areas has been in LGBT outreach. We appointed Billy Bean, a former player, as MLB's ambassador of inclusion. He walked away from the game years ago because he was closeted and didn't want to live in the shadows any longer. Now he is leading our advanced LGBT inclusion strategy.

Billy has been quietly meeting, behind the scenes, with players and club personnel to aid both the business side of the game as well as the baseball operations groups to create awareness. Players will now know that the resources are in place to support them if they choose to come out publicly. Milwaukee Brewers minor league player David Denson has made history by coming out. Dale Scott, an MLB umpire, came out last year. Several MLB employees have chosen to publicly share as well.

In short, recently I heard a great observation on the work and fulfillment of the D&I space. "It has gone from a conventional square to a sphere, multifaceted and complex." Today the work is more exciting, innovative, and rewarding than ever. **IN**