

**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**  
HALL OF FAME

THE CASE FOR DEI  
INITIATIVES IN **LAW FIRMS**

**NATIVE AMERICAN**  
EMPLOYEES WANT TO BE SEEN

# INCLUSION

WINTER 2023  
+ ISSUE 8

*Creating Globally  
Inclusive &  
Culturally  
Competent  
Workplaces*

**ZIMMER  
BIOMET'S**

**Willard  
McCloud III**

Leading the Charge on  
Implementing Inclusive  
and Equitable Practices





# Willard McCloud III

Vice President, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Environmental, Social, and Governance, **Zimmer Biomet**

Willard McCloud, a member of the global HR leadership team at Zimmer Biomet (ZB), is responsible for developing and executing the company's enterprisewide strategies for DEI, embedding its principles in leadership development, talent acquisition and management, and culture. In addition to that portfolio at ZB, he is in charge of its ESG (environmental, social, and governance) initiatives. Prior to joining ZB, McCloud was a vice president in human resources and global head of diversity and inclusion for Pfizer. Before Pfizer, he spent 14 years in a number of functional and business leadership roles with Cargill. McCloud's approach to leadership in human-capital management focuses on wholesale systemic change and transformation to drive value creation and enable business strategies by leveraging best practices in diversity, equity, inclusion, and talent management.

A banker and strategist by training, McCloud uses his experience in leading businesses to implement human-capital strategies for maximum impact, return on investment, and sustainability. He is a member of the Executive Leadership Council and sits on the Business Advisory Council for the Human Rights Campaign, the United States' largest civil rights organization working to achieve LGBTQ equality. He holds a bachelor's degree in economics, magna cum laude, from Morehouse

College, where he was an Oprah Winfrey and Merrill Scholar. He received his master of business administration degree from the University of Virginia's Darden School, where he was a Consortium fellow.

**Inclusion:** As offices return to the traditional in-person model, how can organizations best balance the differing needs of employees while at the same time maximizing camaraderie and effectiveness?

**Willard McCloud:** It starts with embracing a mindset that balancing the needs of employees and maximizing camaraderie and effectiveness are not mutually exclusive. The most flexible and agile organizations, able to do all that simultaneously, are going to be the winners in a continually evolving workplace. The pandemic has proven the capacity for companies to deliver results and maintain productivity without adhering to traditional in-person models. Face-to-face meetings and larger in-person team gatherings will continue to be an important part of how we work in the future, but relying solely on an "in-office" model to build the necessary engagement, effectiveness, and connection of team members will most certainly fail. The key to successfully navigating the future of work is recognizing that everyone's home, family, and lifestyle are different. What we value, what we do with our time, and how we get our work done are all different. So the organizations positioned to win in the future will understand that the social contract between workers and companies has significantly changed. Companies that embrace a more fluid and flexible approach to work that acknowledges differences in lifestyle and personal needs, while focusing on clearly defined, objective measures of performance and productivity, will be the most successful and sought-after destinations of work. No doubt this will require a refreshed leadership mindset that welcomes different ways of working and delivering results. This mindset, key for managers charged with leading their companies through these uncharted waters, is guided by strong principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**"At Zimmer Biomet, we have begun to strategically connect our DEI work with our ESG work to stake out a position of leadership on the critical issues of sustainability and inclusion that underpin being a Best and Preferred Place to Work."**

**IN:** In 2021, many companies began to put more energy and priority on belonging, equity, and, in some cases, the support of social change and social justice in the community. What are some of the changes you have witnessed, and do you see that energy continuing?

**WM:** The immediate aftermath of George Floyd's death forced a reckoning with the lack of progress toward building fair and equitable environments for Black and Brown communities, inside and outside of companies. Many corporate leaders realized that sitting on the sidelines was no longer an option, and commitments to DEI and significant resources were channeled to organizations focused on finding real solutions to the social and cultural ills plaguing society. My own company, Zimmer Biomet, committed to giving over \$5 million to nonprofit organizations dedicated to anti-racism efforts and diversity, equity, and inclusion; \$2 million of that went to the NAACP to support its public health work and provide the inaugural funding for establishment of NAACP's Black Assets Index. These types of investments in organizations that focus on social change and social justice help us get at the roots of society's failure to uplift all its people. Leading companies realize the need to be part of the solution by investing in the communities from which they hope to draw talent and where they intend to sell their products, and I do not see that changing in the foreseeable future.

**IN:** What brought you to this work? Is there a personal motivation, a story from your childhood or past that inspired you in this direction?

**WM:** I was born into a prominent family in the South, the third generation to attend college and graduate school. My passion for diversity and inclusion was born out of a unique journey in life that has taken me to many parts of the world and has culminated in an intersection of privilege and distinct visible—and invisible—identities.

My life clearly offered advantages: a loving family who were able to provide me with a first-class education; access to professional experiences that have afforded me the opportunity to live, work, and become close friends with people of all races, religions, and backgrounds, from many nations around the world; and the positive and indelible sense of self-worth that comes from living with, growing up around, and being educated by successful Black people—all of these have shaped my work.

My identities offered me a unique set of perspectives: a Black person with fairer skin; a cisgender, gay man who can easily “pass” in many environments; and a business leader whose hearing loss informs where I can sit and who I can hear in meetings—these have also shaped my work.

The confluence of my upbringing, professional experiences, and connection to multiple identities shapes and inspires the work that I do. I was raised in my family to believe that to whom much is given, much will be required. With that in mind, I’ve tried to use my life, identities, insights, and perspectives to bridge different communities in ways that help others see the strength and commonality we all share, through embracing diversity and being more inclusive.

**IN: What ideas and trends in the world of DEI are organizations learning about and implementing?**

**WM:** The connections between DEI and environmental, social, and governance concerns are taking center stage in boardrooms around the world. At Zimmer Biomet, we have begun to strategically connect our DEI work with our ESG work to stake out a position of leadership on the critical issues of sustainability and inclusion that underpin being a Best and Preferred Place to Work [per IDG/Computerworld and Great Place to Work]. The current political and economic uncertainty, not only in the United States but throughout much of the world, is going to continue to create a need for companies to step forward and fill a void of leadership. Companies are being called upon to bring voice to issues of equality and fairness while creating the inclusive and sustainable platforms upon which much of society’s future rests. We cannot be good business

**“The key to successfully navigating the future of work is recognizing that everyone’s home, family, and lifestyle are different.”**

leaders if we do so while destroying the environment. We cannot be good business leaders if we do not create corporate cultures that are diverse, inclusive, and equitable. And we cannot be good business leaders if our stakeholders—internal and external—don’t believe we have sound, reasonable, and transparent policies and procedures that provide a clear and accurate view of a company’s health. Leaders of companies are being called upon to do more now than ever to ensure that we not only meet the goals of increasing value for the shareholders [but that] we do so in a sustainable way that includes other populations that are affected.

**IN: How do you use data and metrics to measure DEI success?**

**WM:** All good and sustainable progress in DEI is anchored in data and metrics. At Zimmer Biomet, we have developed a very thorough, in-depth DEI Scorecard, which provides

meaningful and actionable data and insights for HR and business leaders to make thoughtful goals about leadership representation and diversity, equity, and inclusion in our businesses. Our goals are based on rigorous external benchmarking and market analysis to identify areas of opportunity and put in place action plans to position Zimmer Biomet as a Best and Preferred Place to Work for diverse team members.

**IN: In the last year, with so much happening in the world and country that impacted all of us, how have you helped your company and team deal with the sense of being overwhelmed by the scope of the work required to increase equity in your organization?**

**WM:** This is a challenge not just for Zimmer Biomet but for all companies as they manage through increasingly uncertain economic and geopolitical times. At Zimmer Biomet, we have prioritized and focused our attention on team member wellness, engaging them in focus groups and identifying opportunities to make sure we are all taking care of each other. We have involved our employee resource groups in wellness efforts to understand the nuances of wellness faced by specific ethnic and racial groups. We have focused on building flexibility into our work culture—something we actually began before COVID-19 but doubled down on because we believe it gives us a cultural advantage in a very tight employment market. We were excited to have recently been certified as A Great Place to Work, with its acknowledgment of the effort our teams make to champion DEI and wellness as we build a leading med-tech company with a winning culture. We know that the work landscape will continue to be challenging, but also strongly believe that if we get our culture right—if we construct a culture that creates a sense of belonging for all—we are better positioned to support and retain the talent we need for success in the future. **IN**