

PROMISE POSITION PURPOSE PERFORMANCE

**UPTOWN** **PROFESSIONAL**

SUPPLIER DIVERSITY ISSUE  
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**JOSET  
WRIGHT-  
LACY**

THE NATIONAL  
MINORITY SUPPLIER  
DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

**INTEL'S  
"NEXT"**  
PRACTICES IN  
SUPPLIER  
DIVERSITY

**HONOR AND  
RESPECT**  
THE 2015 UPTOWN  
PROFESSIONAL  
CATALYST  
HONOREES

**PAMELA  
ELLIS**  
THE EPITOME  
OF "SMAHRT"



\* Central to achieving NMSDC's mission are the primary competencies that the NMSDC network must demonstrate excellence in every day.

## Mission, Vision, Core Competencies

## Mission Statement

The National Minority Supplier Development Council advances business opportunities for certified minority business enterprises and connects them to corporate members.

## Vision

To be the leader in advancing minority business enterprises to help corporations meet their global needs.



# STRAIGHT, NO CHASER

— By Glenda Swain

**A** LAWYER BY TRADE AND NOW PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL MINORITY SUPPLIER DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL BY CHOICE, JOSET WRIGHT-LACY PRESIDES OVER THE LARGEST CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION IN THE WORLD DEDICATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF MINORITY BUSINESS.

WHEN I SPOKE WITH HER, I COULD IMMEDIATELY FEEL THE PASSION THAT SHE HAD FOR THIS BUSINESS AND HER ORGANIZATION. THAT PASSION CAN BE TRACED BACK TO HER DAYS AS A LAWYER WHEN SHE HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RESPONDING TO RFP FROM THE GOVERNMENT. EARLY ON SHE SAW THE VALUE IN INCLUDING MBE'S IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS AND SHE TOOK A PERSONAL INTEREST IN HELPING THEM GROW THEIR BUSINESS.

NOT ONE TO MINCE WORDS, I WAS NOT SURPRISED AT ALL AS OUR CONVERSATION DEEPENED AND I TOOK A LOOK INTO THE MIND OF A LEADER WHO TELLS IT LIKE IT IS!

**Swain:** What has been the biggest challenge as it relates to supplier diversity and working with the organization's corporate partners?

**Wright-Lacy:** I would say a lack of clarity around diversity and inclusion issues and the understanding that diversity and inclusion and supplier diversity are two totally separate things. Each one needs its own strategy but often companies refer to them interchangeably.

Most may not realize this, but supplier diversity actually came before diversity and inclusion. D&I became prominent in the early 90's—supplier diversity preceded that by decades! Somehow the two never linked up properly from a business perspective and that's where I feel there is a disconnect and lack of clarity, language and purpose behind each initiative.

**Swain:** What do you say to companies who want to become certified but are intimidated by the process?

**Wright-Lacy:** I am very straight forward with companies who would like to be certified. They have to be ready. Corporate members are not going to change their process to accommodate those who are not ready to compete.

The first thing I tell them is to make sure that they have their financial statements in order. You wouldn't believe the number of small businesses that want to be included in the procurement process who have no financials to speak of. Some feel that just because they are minority-owned that it automatically qualifies them to be considered for corporate business. I need to manage their expectations from the onset.

Our organization does quite a bit to prepare these businesses to respond to the needs of corporate America as it relates to supplier diversity but the reality is some just aren't ready. We offer pre-certification workshops and others methods to help guide them through the certification process. It's in our interest to see them get certified and we do everything we can do ensure that happens.

**Swain:** What do you see as an emerging trend in the supplier diversity space?

**IT'S UNFORTUNATE THAT SOME MBE'S WOULD EVEN ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BE USED THAT WAY, BUT THE REALITY IS THAT IS DOES HAPPEN AND WE ARE ALWAYS MINDFUL AND WATCHFUL AND POSITIONED TO DEAL WITH IT WHEN IT OCCURS.**



**Wright-Lacy:** I see a complete conversion of diversity and inclusion and supplier diversity. Corporate tends to put them both in one bucket because it's just easier to manage that way. Keeping

that in mind, I also believe there will be a bigger shift to include other diverse groups such as veterans, women, LGBT, and other groups in the supplier diversity equation.

We should be clear that while they are in fact diverse, they are not minority. From

our perspective minority means historically underrepresented, underutilized ethnic groups. But as I stated earlier, the tide is shifting and soon many other groups will be in play.

**Swain:** What do you say to people who feel that some businesses are getting certified under false pretenses – meaning that it's really a majority business but they find a minority as the “front” person for certification purposes?

**Wright-Lacy:** Believe it or not, that's not as big an issue as some would make you believe. When we do find out that this may have occurred, we do a thorough investigation and take corrective action such as decertifying the company.

Of course we have had some instances where this has happened and oftentimes it's other legitimately certified MBE's who come and tell us what's going on. You have to earn this certification—we take this process seriously.

It's unfortunate that some MBE's would even allow themselves to be used that way, but the reality is that is does happen and we are always mindful and watchful and positioned to deal with it when it occurs.

**Swain:** What is the growth strategy for the NMSDC?

**Wright-Lacy:** We are actually in the 4th year of a 5 year plan. First we want to build better programs. We want to make sure that we are engaging our corporate members and also helping to develop capabilities and help influence leadership.

Next we want to make sure that we continue to get the MBE's ready to meet the needs of our corporate members. Our members pay us to help them find qualified MBE's they can effectively plug into their supply chain system and they are counting on us to lead them in the right direction.

We also want to enhance the role of the NMSDC by proactively identifying strategic opportunities. We have a chance to be a catalyst just by getting a better sense of who we are as an organization as well as having a better understanding of our value proposition.