

I Am Global. I Am Digital. I Am Leading.

I Am AAF.

Celebrating 25 Years of the AAF



25 Years & Counting

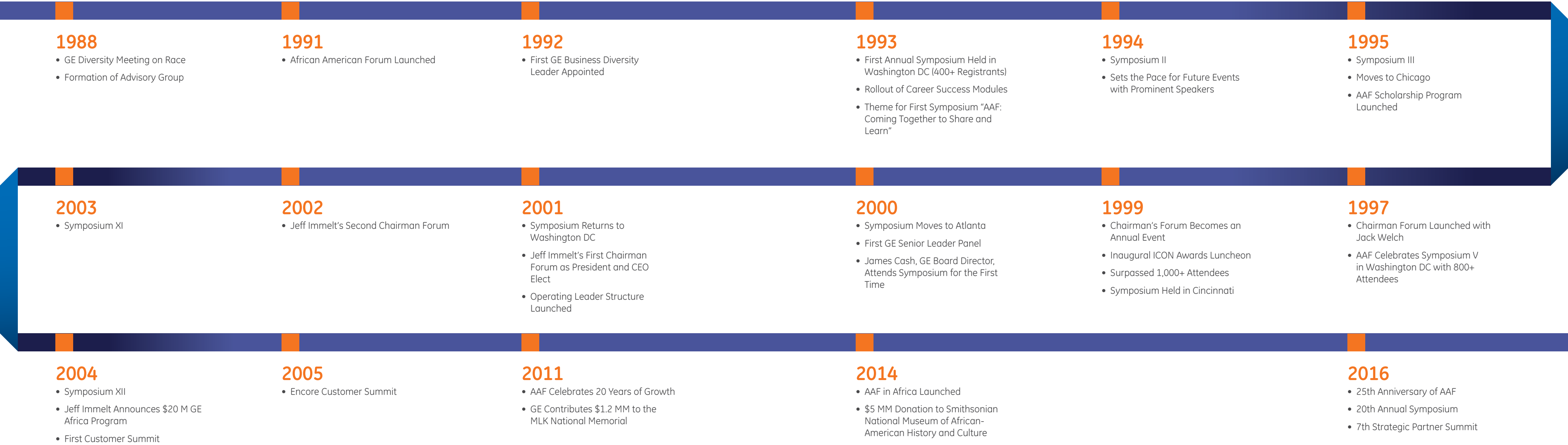




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I am thrilled to join the African American Forum in celebrating its 25th anniversary! As the Company's first and oldest affinity network, the AAF has led the way in ensuring a diverse and inclusive culture that is global, simple, digital, and dedicated to delivering better outcomes faster — for our customers and shareholders.

In reflecting on the past 25 years, I am immensely proud of how much the AAF has contributed to GE. This organization has accelerated careers and personal growth for some of the Company's finest leaders, enabled us to tap into huge market opportunities on the continent of Africa, created stronger connections with our customers and strategic partners, and has improved and cared for the communities in which we operate.

The efforts of its founding visionaries have built a tremendous legacy for the AAF over the past quarter century. I have tremendous admiration and gratitude for those who were around from the beginning, as well as for those who have contributed to lift the AAF as the years have gone by. Some have retired, some will be leaving us soon, and some have sadly passed away, but I remain encouraged and inspired by the passion and energy of the AAF's current and future leaders. The AAF remains a very relevant, vibrant part of our Company and I look forward to seeing even bolder steps and greater impact in the years to come.

Congratulations on marking this very significant milestone, AAF! Thank you for all you continue to do to make GE even better and stronger.



Jeff Immelt
Chairman & CEO
GE





Celebrating 25 Years

I am so proud to be part of the 25th anniversary of the African American Forum (AAF) and am thrilled to celebrate this landmark Symposium with you! I, like so many others in GE, am a product of the AAF's efforts, and it is upon the shoulders of our founders that I stand. It's because of the bold steps made by people like Lloyd Trotter, Mike Shinn, Dee Wood, Art Harper, Steve Thorne, and countless others that it's possible for us all to gather together to celebrate this very meaningful milestone.

The AAF laid the groundwork for the formation of GE's other affinity networks – the Hispanic Forum; Asian Pacific American Forum; Women's Network; Veterans Network; People with Disabilities Network; and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Alliance – all who play a critical role in GE's competitive advantage. These networks are a key part of GE's success and continue to write a rich history for this company - one of which we can all be proud.

The AAF makes a huge impact to GE by attracting, developing, and promoting exceptional talent and allowing so many great leaders to flourish. The strides we've made and well-deserved recognition that GE has received in the areas of philanthropy, diversity, and inclusion have been largely due to the work of the AAF.

The AAF will forever be a part of who I am. I will deeply miss my AAF family, but look forward to seeing the future leaders elevate our impactful work and carry forward our legacy. It gives me great comfort to know that your ongoing commitment to helping the AAF strengthen our Company and our communities will continue for decades to come.

I am immensely grateful for the role that each of you has played in getting us to where we are today. Thank you for all that you do to make the AAF and GE great.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah A. Elam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Deborah A. Elam
President, GE Foundation &
Chief Diversity Officer
GE

A Proud Past and An Exciting Future

A Message from the AAF Operating Leaders

What an honor it is to welcome you to the GE African American Forum Global Symposium, where we will be celebrating 25 years of AAF at GE! Our theme this year – “I Am AAF: I Am Digital. I Am Global. I Am Leading.” – will showcase how GE is building the world’s premier digital industrial company, and highlight the role our AAF talent is playing today and should continue to play in the future.

Celebrating our first 25 years is not only an opportunity to remember our past – our founding members whose legacy has resulted in the attraction, development and promotion of AAF talent around the world in addition to countless accomplishments, including being GE’s first affinity network – but also a chance to think about what our legacy will be for the next 25 years. The world is evolving, and GE evolves alongside with it. As we honor trailblazers who have played a critical role in the success of AAF, it is imperative for us to ensure that AAF continues to play a pertinent role in GE’s fabric.

Planning this Symposium alongside our Event Chairs, Janeen Uzzell and Shawn Warren, and our phenomenal planning committee, has been a privilege we will never forget. We have an exciting agenda this year with workshops aligned to our themes, functional breakouts, candid panel discussions and, of course, our 25th Anniversary Celebration. All of our events and programming are designed to offer insights into Company initiatives and provide professional development and networking opportunities.

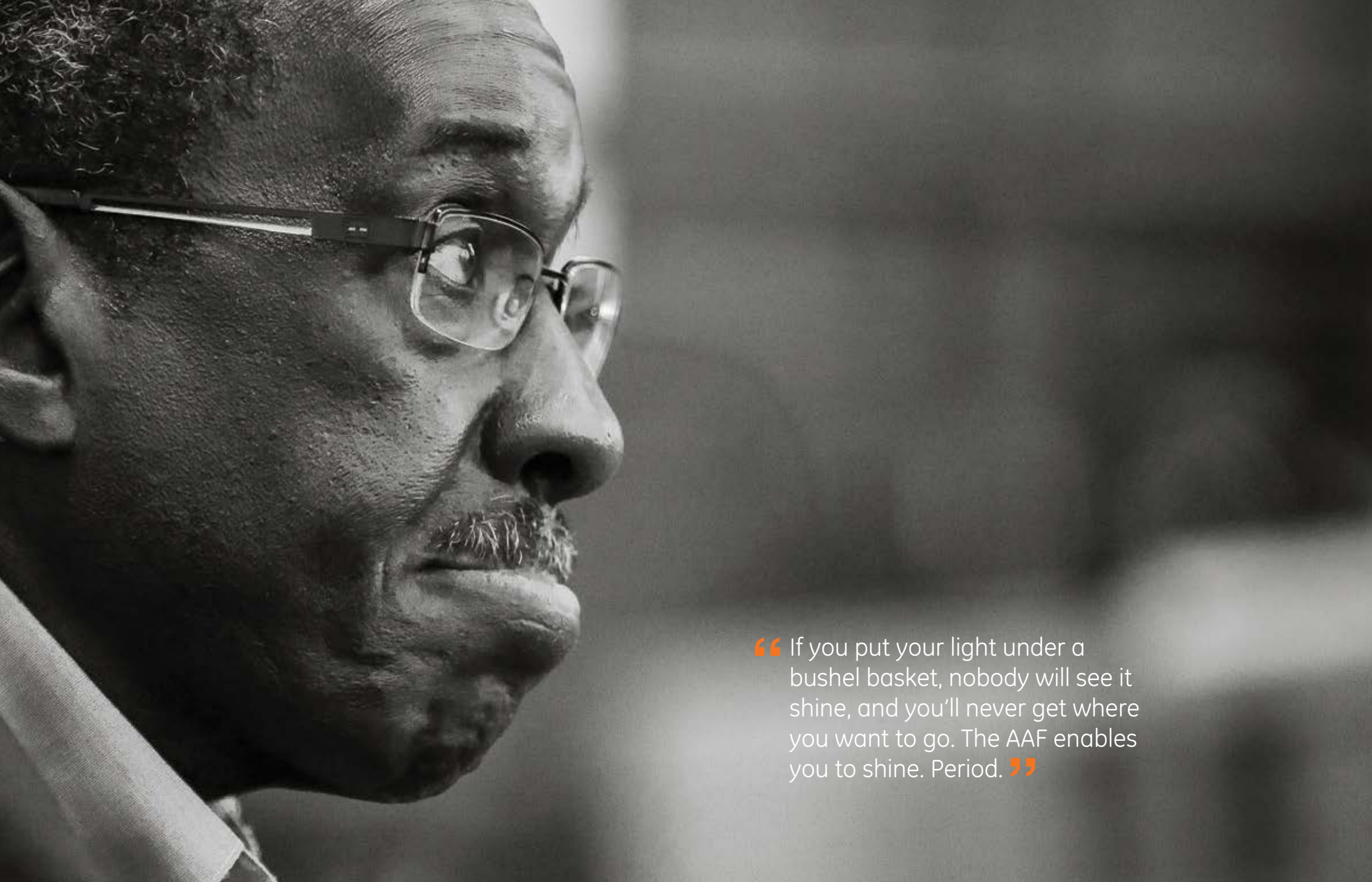
We are so excited to celebrate 25 years of AAF with all of you, and look forward to what the next 25 years will bring!



Mamar Gelaye, Welela Dawit, and Ty Jeffers
AAF Operating Leaders



GLO
BAL.



“If you put your light under a bushel basket, nobody will see it shine, and you’ll never get where you want to go. The AAF enables you to shine. Period.”

Lloyd Trotter

There Will Be Others

I happened to be in Puerto Rico when Jack Welch called and said, “We’re making you Vice President and General Manager of Manufacturing, and you’ll pick up the global responsibilities for your business.” At that time, new officers would typically be invited to a luncheon in Fairfield with the Corporate staff. It’s a big celebration, and they go around the table and ask you what you’re thinking, how you feel, and so on. There were three of us at that lunch, and I was the last to speak.

The comment that I made was, “Never have I felt so happy and so sad on the same day.”

You could have heard a pin drop.

Jack said, “First let’s deal with happy.” I said, “This is a defining moment in my life. I’m African American, I joined the company without a college degree, worked my way through this corporate culture, and I’m now one of the top 115 individuals in the company. What’s there not to be happy about?” Then Jack said, “Now, let’s deal with sad.” I said, “This company is 100 years old and you just got around to anointing your first African-American operating officer.”

And Jack said, “Be happy, because there will be others.”



The Wakeup Call

The collective wakeup call came when Mike Shinn in HR read an article in Black Enterprise that spotlighted *“Five African Americans Who Could Potentially Lead a Fortune 500 Company.”* Three of the five people mentioned in that article were ex-GE employees.

Mike wrote a note to Jack Welch asking, “Why is it that African Americans can succeed outside of GE, but not within it?” Jack responded by organizing a classic workout in Fairfield, where his executive staff, along with 15 African Americans and 15 women, spent a day with a consultant brainstorming how we could make diversity work and level the playing field at GE.

At that point, I was the highest-level African American in the company. So before the meeting, I invited our contingent to lunch to discuss what we would like the outcome of this meeting to be. We distilled it down to two components. One: Jack needed to show leadership around the issue. Two: There needed to be someone who was driving the diversity agenda – and not simply as part of a job in HR.

I was elected to deliver that message. So I said, “Jack, every time you get in front of a group, you talk about it being essential for the corporation to be global. Well, you’re going to have to do the same thing on diversity.

You’re going to have to talk about it, and take leadership around it.”

Jack stopped me in my tracks and said, “Lloyd, how many manufacturing plants do you have?”

I said, “43.”

He said, “How many are led by African Americans?”

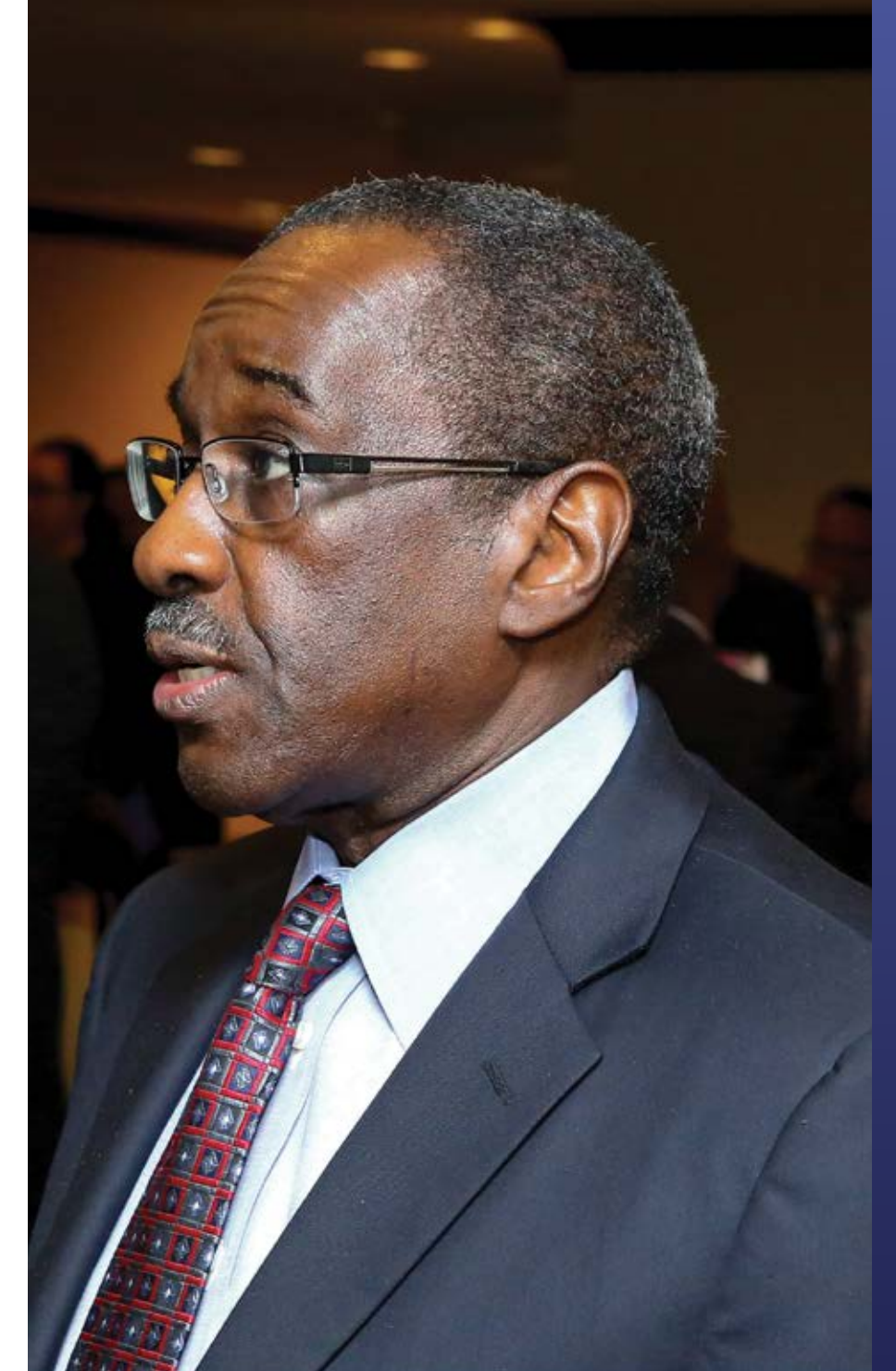
And my answer was, “Zero.”

He said, “You hire more people than I hire. What are you going to do?”

I said, “I could stand here and anecdotally talk about what I’ve done to mentor and support African Americans in the company, but I won’t. What I’m going to tell you is that everything I have done is not enough – and you will never have to ask me that question again. But, it won’t take you off the hook for showing leadership around diversity.”

He said, “You’re right. We’re going to do this together.”

And that, essentially, was the beginning of the AAF.





How Can I Help You If I Don't Know You?

Three or four of us got together to determine what we were going to do. We sent groups to other corporations to model what they were doing, and what we noticed was that their affinity groups were led by HR. They weren't process oriented, they were episodic. They'd meet once a year, with no clear agenda of what they were trying to do, and then have another meeting the next year. So we put a GE spin on it, and asked: How do we make this Operational, and how do we launch this across the company?

One of my observations from that very first AAF luncheon that I had was that there were 15 very carefully chosen African Americans there, and I only knew two of them. GE is big and scattered all over the world, so how do you build the network and build the camaraderie so that you can in fact coach, mentor and support? How can I help you if I don't know you?

That was it. We now had our theme: Self-Help. In learning the whole career cycle, understanding how the game was really played, and what your role was in that game – all the while bearing in mind that you have to put some numbers on the board. GE is a results-oriented culture, and that is not going to go away, no matter what.

When we launched the forum, we started with just regional meetings of the executive bands and above. We expanded those to include anyone who was interested, and after about three years we held our first annual symposium. From that initial energy, it grew exponentially. Everyone joined the bandwagon, no one stood on the sidelines. We got huge support, and a lot of help from all the CEOs. It was something we had a lot of passion around that was on everyone's play board. Though we had day jobs, we found time on weekends to make it work.

In 1990, I became the first African American operating officer of the company in its history. It was a sign that things could happen, and more would follow. But, the reality was that the AAF was on the map.



The Three Pieces of PIE

We have a lot to teach one another. One of the courses we used to teach in the annual meeting sessions was a course called PIE – Performance, Image and Exposure. Performance alone is not enough. Image and exposure play a tremendous part. The exposure piece comes to play in about 90% of situations where you’re interviewing candidates. Someone you know will pick up the phone and say, “This person is the real deal, you ought to take a hard look.” And that tilts the balance. If you haven’t been exposed to having those – I call them “invisible mentors” – who intercede on your behalf, you’re playing the game a little bit behind the eight ball.

So, forging a path to success means looking for opportunities to get the right kind of exposure. How many times, for example, do you go into a lunchroom and see all African Americans, or all women, sitting at a table? They’re missing an opportunity for exposure. Entertaining yourself can be done anytime. Choose a table where you feel a little bit uncomfortable, where you don’t know the individuals, and introduce yourself. You’ve got to get out of your comfort zone in order to meet people, network, and have people understand you. They just might be hiring. People like to talk about themselves; ask them how they got where they are. That exposure could work to your advantage.

More Work to Do

The African American Forum and what it has accomplished is truly second to none. In addition to being an incredible internal network of support and guidance, we’ve worked hard to make sure the pipeline for people in our communities is strong and robust. Ed Hood, one of our CEOs, helped found NACME, the National Action Council for Minority Engineers. Early on, we started the AAF Scholarship Program, and I was honored when they later named it after me. It’s raised over \$2 million to date, supporting mentees, interns and scholarships for young adults around the globe.

Unfortunately, there is still a lot of work to be done to value differences and make this a true meritocracy where it’s a level playing field. It’s evident every day in our own politics, as well as being one of the key things in Brexit when you really listen to some of the conversation. We have got to get past race, gender and color, and get to the values of people and what they contribute. Here in 2016, we still have a lot of work ahead of us. It’s easier to say than do, but it is groups like the AAF that make a difference.





I Am AAF...

I Am Global. Global isn't something new. It's something that generated a lot of passion in the mid to late 80s, and people started thinking, "How do I demonstrate having a global brain so I don't get warped out of being a participant?" It's that kind of global mindset that led AAF members to start asking, "When are we going to do more in Africa?" Just look at the result.

I Am Digital. The whole notion of big data, digital content and so on is something that a guy like myself, prior to 2008, didn't think about a lot. Back then, it was all the capabilities and potential of the Internet, etc. But, this is far beyond all that. So, the key for AAF is that you've got to be contemporary in every one of these statements: Global, Digital, Leading. You've got to look at yourself and say, "Am I, really?" And if you're not, what are you going to do about it?

I Am Leading. Again, this encompasses all of these components. You can't just say, "I'm going to be global, but I don't want to be digital." You've got to be on top of it all, you've got to be a leader. And, you've got to come out of your foxhole while doing it. If you put your light under a bushel basket, nobody will see it shine, and you'll never get where you want to go. The AAF enables you to shine. Period.

A hand is holding a tablet computer. The screen displays an app interface for the 'African American Forum'. The app shows a list of speakers and topics, including 'AGENDA' and 'DETAILS'. The text 'I AM' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

I AM

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TAL.

Lights, Camera, Action

Back in the early 90s when I worked at NBC, before it was NBC Universal, we became aware of the employee resource groups that already existed inside of GE. I was asked to come to one of the meetings, and we subsequently developed our own chapter. Whenever we came together with the larger membership, it was an interesting coming together. We were immersed in the business of news, entertainment and visual media, and found ourselves rubbing shoulders with our colleagues who were engineers, chemists, supply chain professionals and so on. In many ways, we were from different worlds and, one could argue, in many cases using different parts of our brains.

We lived in a world of lights, camera, action, and knew how to produce a show. So it would only follow that when it came time for the AAF symposium, it would usually be up to the NBC people to come up with the flash. That's what we did for a living. We had access to a world the rest of GE really did not – we were the ones who knew that sports figure, that movie or TV star, or that politician. I guess if we were brothers and sisters, we became the little group of the family that provided a lot of the dazzle. It was great fun. I was sad when the NBC division was sold, because these were our colleagues and our friends, and we would miss each other.

“It was the largest small family that I have ever seen inside of a corporation.”

Paula Madison

Executive Vice President for Diversity, NBC Universal
GE Company Officer, Retired



The Biggest Small Family in the World

The AAF brought a great richness to my personal and professional life. I worked for GE for 22 years. It was a company unlike companies that many of my friends and cohorts worked for, in that our employee resource groups, particularly AAF, were very strong, and very instrumental in helping us grow and thrive in our careers. We all were invested in each other. Through AAF you were no longer siloed by company or your division. You knew everybody everywhere in the company who was black. We sought each other out, we took care of each other. We did our best to make sure that opportunities were presented to us, and that we were fully positioned to take advantage of those opportunities.

It was the largest small family that I have ever seen inside of a corporation. And, it was global. I can go to Johannesburg, to Paris, to Belgium, or to Waukesha, Wisconsin and find colleagues with whom I had a relationship. I can still connect with people who I mentored or mentored me, regardless of what our rank in the company was – a circumstance I would say you would be hard-pressed to replicate anywhere else today.

Making It into “The Club”

The history of corporate America is such that many of the people who look like us have historically been excluded. Yet at GE we were sought after, we were encouraged, we were championed, we were mentored. We were told just how good we were, and what we needed to do to be better. And when we were at our best, we were acknowledged. Isn't that what everyone really wants?

For me, it made for a career that was based on my abilities. I never felt that because of my color, my gender or fill-in-the-blank, I'm not going to get into “the club.” I made it into the club, and so did other people. That said to me that my being black was a bonus, a cherry on top, as opposed to being an issue, which I felt it was when I worked for other corporations. In fact, I had friends who did not work for GE who, upon attending the symposium, hearing what our career paths were like and what we were doing, would say, “I want to work there.” There's no better compliment a company could have than to know that people external to the company are admiring its employees and saying, “I want to be in that group; those people are so satisfied, so stimulated.”

My vision for the company, and for AAF, is to have more female African Americans in the upper bands of the company. Deb Elam was the first black female officer, and then there was me. Tamla Oates-Forney just became

the third. In January Deb will retire, and Tamla will be the lone remaining black female officer. We made progress over the years, but it needs to be accelerated if we are to continue to fulfill the dream of the founders of AAF.



I Am AAF...

I Am Global. The global nature of AAF speaks to not only African Americans venturing out across the world to work in GE businesses, but also to finding opportunities to identify talent in the diaspora to lead the GE businesses in their home countries. GE has proven its global-centric commitment in that regard, and AAF has been at the vanguard of that effort. Our initiatives have taken us to educational institutions around the world, seeking, supporting, mentoring and hiring talent to come into GE.

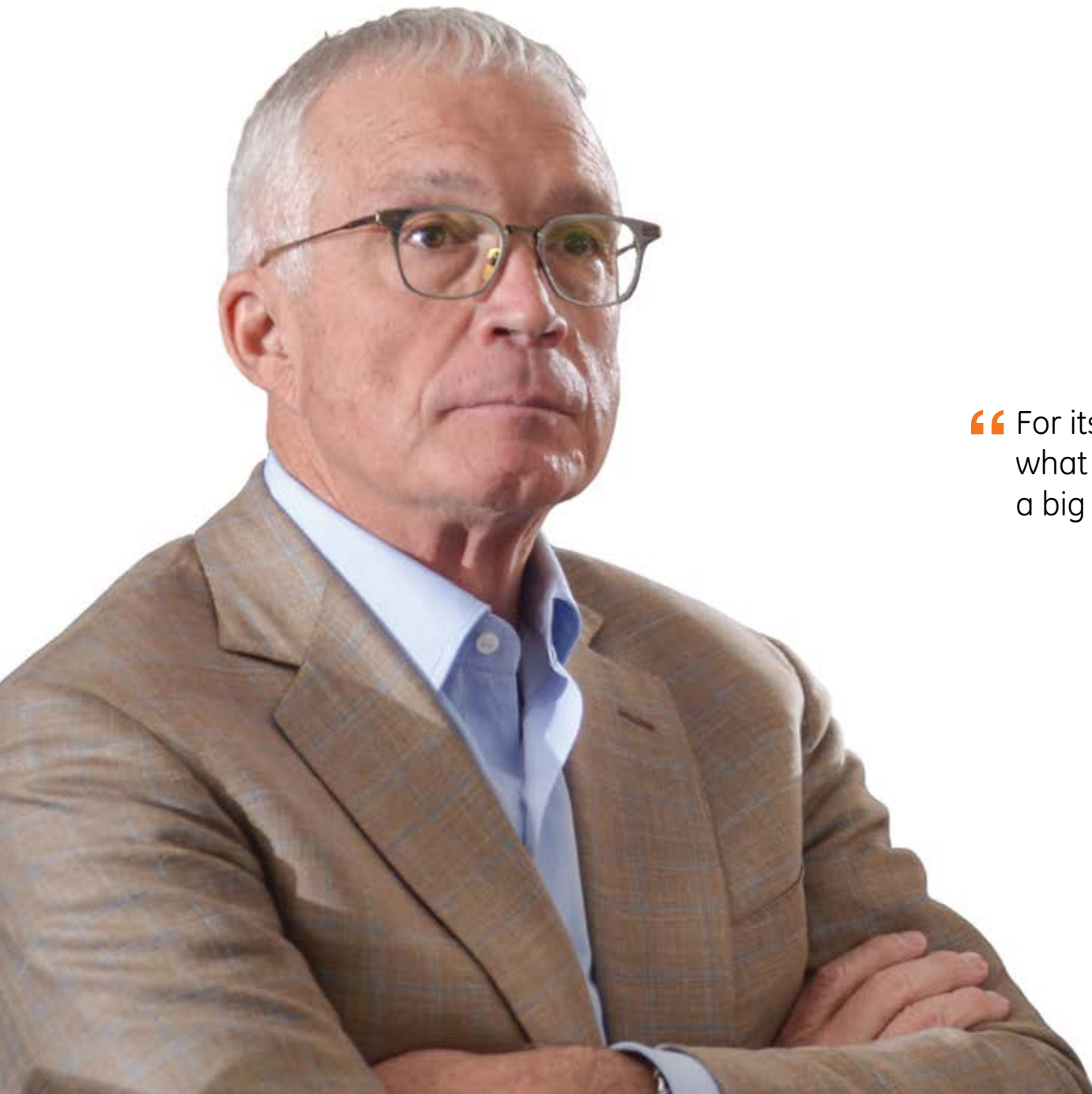
I Am Digital. Nowhere has GE technology made greater impact than in the availability of quality healthcare for people wherever they happen to be. In Africa, we identified areas in need of clean water, energy, and modern medical equipment, and dramatically changed lives. Even in rural areas of the U.S., where infant mortality rates can rival those of third-world countries, remote medical capabilities mean you no longer have to live in an urban area to have access to a higher level of care. As always, GE is in the forefront.

I Am Leading. Leadership has to go across the board – not only in your workplace, but in the community, among your people. Many of us come from circumstances where people have been historically disenfranchised. There are instances where we've demonstrated true leadership, going “back home” into parts of our cities and towns that are not necessarily on the right side of the tracks. Scholarships, tutoring, rebuilding and renovating – that, too, demonstrates great leadership. And it extends to our families, as well. Many of us are the first generation to have the kind of jobs that we have at GE. We need to pull each other up – inside the company, inside the community, and at home.



I AM

LEADING.



“ For its members, new and old, what the AAF does is make a big company small. ”

A Force for Change

Sometimes all it takes is a germ of an idea to set momentous change in motion. The question was raised at the AAF Global Symposium: *Shouldn't we be doing more in Africa?* Corporate concurred, and the AAF was asked to formulate a plan. The response was a classic example of an organization taking advantage of what they can do as a group. Soon, AAF and GE Board members were meeting with leaders of companies, corporations and communities across the continent. And in a true demonstration of AAF leadership, commitment and follow-through, the forum has played a continuous role in building GE Africa into what it is today.

The AAF really spawned all the affinity groups that have become a part of the GE culture. The difference is that, for us, in Africa, it's not a minority group. So in addition to leveraging the interactive aspects in finding great employees we want to recruit, it's a communication mechanism for those employees to keep me and my leadership team informed of what's going on in the marketplace and the issues we need to address.

Making a Big Company Small

For its members, new and old, what the AAF does is make a big company small. The networking capabilities, the interactions, the mentoring – the accessibility that enables employees to reach into anywhere in the company – are a hallmark of this amazing group. That accessibility reaches to the highest levels of GE itself. At the biannual symposium, Jeff Immelt meets with not only the leadership team, but the larger population – as Jack Welch did before him. Mingling. Taking questions. Demonstrating the company's commitment to communicate.

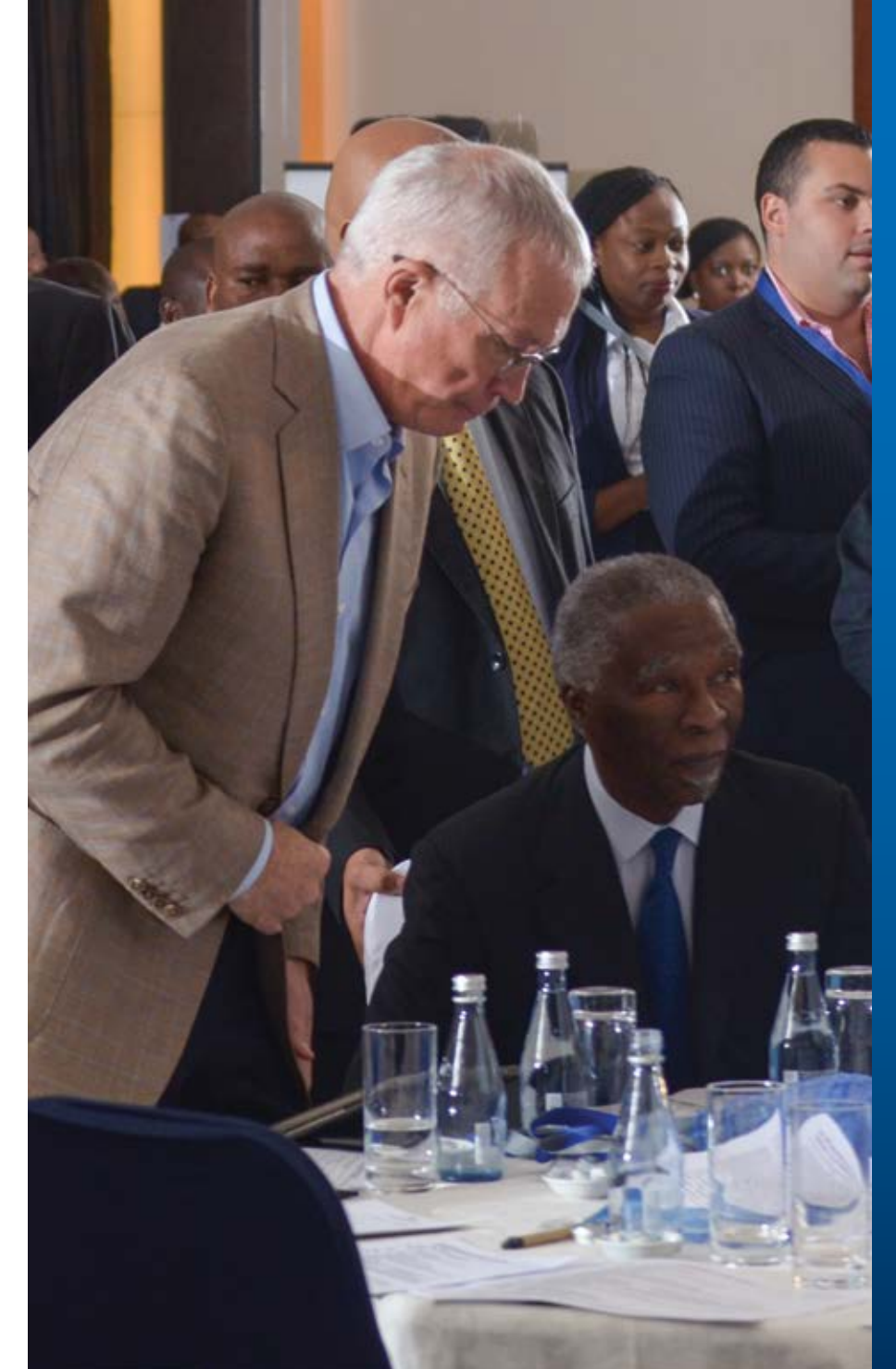
I've watched the group evolve over the last 25 years. The AAF and the other affinity networks are one of the key differentiating aspects of our company. Giving employees a voice. Making sure the leadership understands what the issues are. And then, most importantly, affording us the ability to help them grow their careers and become more and more successful. Which, in turn, makes the company more successful. I look forward to what the AAF will continue to contribute over the next 25 years.

I Am AAF...

I Am Global. There are AAF members around the world, with local networks from Johannesburg or Nairobi to Lagos or London, and beyond. They bring us international experience and perspective. As the company continues to get bigger, broader and more global, I think the AAF is going to be a linchpin in that growth.

I Am Digital. The AAF has been one of the major proponents of accelerating the implementation of every company initiative we've ever done. And I expect to see that as well on the digital side.

I Am Leading. The AAF opens up the company to the employees in so many ways. We've seen more and more leaders get developed over the last 25 years, and continue to move up. And they contribute to new leaders being developed, as well.





GLO
BAL.

The Pull – and the Power – of Connection

I've served on 15 boards over 30 years, and one of my strong beliefs is that large scale, geographically dispersed companies work best when they have very robust affinity groups. The stronger the affinity groups, the better the company is overall. These groups can be defined by gender, race, ethnicity, geography or function. But the idea is that we, as human beings, love to be connected and related to other human beings through common interests.

So it was very natural for me to seek out the affinity group that was most connected to my race, and I was just blown away by how well-developed and mature this particular group was versus other companies I have been exposed to. The GE affinity group, by the time I joined it, had a level of support and visibility in the company that was much more significant than I had seen elsewhere. That was a tribute to both the leadership of the affinity group and those who founded it, and to the support it received from the executive suite. At the time, the CEO would've been Jack Welch.

“ The idea is that we, as human beings, love to be connected and related to other human beings through common interests. ”

Dr. James Cash Jr.
Former Member, GE Board of Directors



It's Not All Boardroom and Bottom Line, Sometimes It's Basketball

I started doing consulting work with GE in 1978, and during my professorship at Harvard Business School developed a longstanding relationship with GE, before joining the board in 1997. My involvement was two-fold. First, it was to provide the perspective from the boardroom. There are many different roles that individuals play in a company the size of GE, but all with a common mission. The question becomes how do you, in complementary ways, reinforce the objective of the organization? I would often be asked to share my analyses with the group.

And then there were individual interactions. My particular area of functional interest is information technology, and I would make myself available to members of AAF in that community regarding their individual career development and ways they could enhance their personal improvement. I frequently interacted with folks who became AAF members when they were in the MBA program at Harvard and are now in leadership roles in the AAF and GE.

But the thing I remember most is the level of personal connection. For instance, I'm a huge sports fan and others in the company are, as well. So there is a continuing dialogue and what some might call male bonding with AAF officers that typically centers around sports. Darryl Wilson is a huge Cleveland Cavaliers fan, and for years I was able to keep my thumb on him when it came to basketball – until they won the championship this year. Getting to also know one other on an individual level is energizing and brings the community even closer.

Coming Together, the Key to Tomorrow

The key attribute of AAF that I think is important in any forum is that it is porous, it's not exclusive. I feel that the AAF has done that very well – not just on paper, but by behavior. The outreach has not been exclusively along race and ethnic lines. It has always welcomed members who were not African American, and involved other individuals and affinity groups in its symposium, events and activities.

It's critical to understand that this is not a cocoon or isolated group, that to be really effective requires integration with the rest of the company. And as the world gets far more integrated going forward, that will be something that will be increasingly important. The AAF put in place a template that is been emulated by other affinity groups in the company that I believe has helped strengthen those affinity groups and, in aggregate, makes the company a lot stronger.

Ultimately, what counts first and foremost is what's going to help the company be successful. The focus of the AAF going forward should be to fully understand the goals and direction of GE, and to attract the new generation of highly talented, highly motivated people that will someday lead the way. Showing them that the company and the other AAF members care, and are all on this journey together, fosters that common connection that leads to staying power and growth within the company.



Dr. James Cash Jr.



I Am AAF...

I Am Global. It is imperative today to really become a citizen of the world. You live and work in different locales, spend significant time in diverse places, and develop the more holistic and integrated view of the world that is required to actually contribute to a company that is positioned and trying to compete that way.

I Am Digital. Technology is such an important piece of being successful in this global arena. I encourage people to find ways to aggressively pursue their literacy level with respect to the evolving technology and the role that it plays not only at the individual level, but at the organizational level for a company like a GE.

I Am Leading. In today's world, leading is not something you get assigned or are appointed to. You end up leading only if people are willing to follow you. The days of being given a title or position and having that operate in strictly a hierarchical top-down way are gone. You need to demonstrate that you have the ability to look at the world and develop solutions in a unique and highly effective way.



I AM

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TAL.



“ Our goal going forward should be that we help GE become a leading Industrial Internet Company while continuing to support the expansion of the diversity of the organization. ”

Dmitri Stockton
Senior Vice President, GE
Chairman, President & CEO, GE Asset Management

An Insider's View

I've forever been a believer that you should cultivate your career, look to build relationships with a broad constituency of people, and leverage knowledge that is offered. The AAF embodies that philosophy.

I started in the Financial Management Program with GE. My decision to go from FMP to the audit staff came through the guidance of some of the founders of the AAF. When I made my next move in the company, again, there were people in the AAF who were mentoring me regarding that decision.

One factor I've seen in everyone who tends to progress in the company is that they've had mentors to give them an insider's view of what it takes to advance. That's been consistent throughout the course of my career, and one of those founding members who is no longer at GE has continued to be a guiding force for me in terms of my professional development. That is something equally unique about the AAF – that even after people have left the company, they want to see the members be successful, and they are willing to invest time to help them navigate their careers.

The AAF's biggest value proposition is to provide leadership development, to promote the retention of talent, and to shine a light on that talent to make sure they are getting the incremental exposure that increases their odds for success. Visibility is critical. Whether it's through a roundtable, a one-on-one meeting, or getting them in front of executive leadership at a symposium, relationships are born and opportunities result.



It's Not Just Connections, It's About Connecting to GE's Strategy

At its core, the goal of the AAF is to build the pipeline of future leaders for this company. Connecting the membership body to the strategy of the company is essential. Making sure they understand what that strategy is, and what their role is in that strategy is paramount. The AAF has understood that business imperative from the very beginning. It's not by accident that when we have our symposium and we wrap a theme around it, that theme is very much connected to what the company is trying to do to drive value for shareholders.

The AAF, and Myself, Moving Forward

When I look at the footprint of what the AAF and all of our networks have done to make us a more diverse company, our goal moving forward should be that we go deeper and help GE become a leading Industrial Internet Company while continuing to expand the diversity of the organization. This is very much on strategy with the mission we have outlined with our shareholders.

We should be the accelerator, leading in a way that will help the company get to its desired destination quicker. We're not in a world where slow wins. We're in a world where fast and agile wins, and one where people are bold about their ambitions. As we continue to advance our company, the AAF and all the other networks have to continue to help the company broaden its views – because organizations that build more diversity have demonstrated they generate more impactful results.

This will be my last AAF Symposium as a GE employee, as I am retiring in the first quarter of 2017. But I'll always be connected to General Electric, and I'm always available to the AAF and its members. Like many of the founders who have gone before me, I will continue to support this incredible organization.



Dimitri Stockton



I Am AAF...

I Am Global. I've lived in four different countries and moved twelve times for GE. I believe a big part of why I was able to advance in the organization is that I have a broadened view of the world as a result of the time I spent in emerging economies. This gave me a different lens on opportunities for GE and helped me diversify my viewpoints on markets. So I'm a big proponent that, in all of the Affinity Networks, we have to extend our engagement globally. We need to be building global leaders that can operate in every corner of the world.

I Am Digital. Becoming the world's leading Digital Industrial Company is the future for GE. In our Affinity Networks, our programming must be aligned with giving our members exposure to this strategy element so that we can help propel the company into the future and deliver maximum shareholder value.

I Am Leading. One of the biggest things about leadership is you never know what opportunity is going to come your way. You've got to be prepared to run the play the company needs you to run, even if it's not the play that you had in mind. Leadership is about stepping up and making things happen.




I AM

LEADING.

A Powerful Role, a Powerful Role Model

I'm one of the two champions for the AAF on the Corporate Executive Council, along with Jay Ireland, who leads GE Africa. The prospect of having a place to turn for personal career guidance, and even personal advice, from a network of your peers has played a vital part in helping us to recruit, develop, promote and retain African American leadership inside of General Electric.

I've watched the AAF continuously expand, from one centralized national group to dozens of regional networks that provide a connection among individuals, other leaders, and the communities we work in. It's one of the most powerful organizations I've ever been involved with – the energy, the electricity, the enthusiasm and the networking that goes on is just fantastic. From the start, it has been a powerful role model for our Affinity Networks within GE.

A photograph of Keith Sherin, a man in a dark suit, speaking at a podium. He is gesturing with his hands as he speaks. The background is a blurred audience in a large hall.

“ It’s one of the most powerful organizations I’ve ever been involved with – the energy, the electricity, the enthusiasm and the networking that goes on is just fantastic. ”

Keith Sherin

Vice Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, GE Capital



The Bridge that Goes On Forever

What a unique advantage the AAF presents for the young professionals we are looking to attract! Coming into a big company like this can be daunting in many ways. The AAF is the perfect bridge, offering insights, connections, and a sounding board. How do I make an impact in the company? How do I get ahead? What are my choices on my career, and how should I think about different choices? You can always find people who have gone through similar questions along the way, plug in and get advice. By connecting to the AAF network, you connect to the entire breadth of GE, developing mentoring relationships with AAF leaders who will help you throughout your career.

So I think it's critical for new recruits into the company to get involved in the AAF to get access to all that expertise, advice and support, in a very non-threatening way. It's not your boss you're talking to, it's a network of people who have the same objectives you do, have different experiences, and can provide great support.



Taking the Wheel

Here is just one outstanding example of the mindset of the AAF. I'd been trying to improve the diversity at leadership levels in Finance for several years, but we weren't making enough of an impact on the numbers. The AAF Finance leadership came to me and said, "We'll take responsibility for increasing African American recruitment, retention and promotion at the top of the Finance leadership team."

Over a two to three-year period, they completely changed the engagement of our leadership team and improved the representation. Instead of complaining that maybe there wasn't enough opportunity or people weren't getting a chance, they took the initiative and developed programs that were incredibly effective. It turned out to be a best practice for how other functions are interfacing with the AAF now.

The Challenge of Change

It's taken tremendous leadership to create and build the AAF, to continue to enhance it, and make it a global organization. In its next 25 years, the challenge will be that of ongoing change – in initiatives, in focus, and in making the African American opportunity within GE the very best it can be. I'm confident the AAF will continue to drive that change, rejuvenating itself as it always has, and owning the responsibility to force the company to be more contemporary year after year.

A lot of companies have diversity initiatives. We haven't found another company that has anything like the African American forum and the incredible network capability it brings to our employees.



I Am AAF...

I Am Global. Obviously, the initiative in Africa has been a terrific success for GE globally. The amount of business we're doing in Africa, the number of executives we've promoted who have helped us build our business in Africa, the people who've come back from Africa to take other jobs in the company – that is an absolute home run.

I Am Digital. We have a massive initiative within the company to build the world's best digital industrial enterprise. We need software engineers. We need sales managers who can sell digital offerings to our customers. We need service leaders. We need supply chain leadership to digitize our processes. And, specifically, we need more African Americans involved in the biggest initiative in the company today.

I Am Leading. We want to make sure we have the best talent come to GE, and for African American talent to know that this is the best company in the world for them to work. The AAF is the glue. They are the network, the training and development, and the leadership partnership that will enable us to do that.





I AM

GLO
BAL.



“ I am a better me because of AAF. ”

Professional Development, a Personal Touch

I first learned about the African American Forum when I joined GE in High Point, North Carolina in 1998. There wasn't a chapter in High Point, so it wasn't until a little over a year later, when I joined GE Power Systems in Atlanta, that I got to experience the power of AAF firsthand. The chapter immediately embraced me and made sure I felt welcomed. The welcome involved more than just professional networking, AAF members were instrumental in my family's assimilation to the Atlanta area, advising me on everything from great ethnic restaurants, social groups, where to have my hair done, and places of worship.

Having joined GE from smaller, less diverse companies, this personal touch was something I had never experienced in my career. I immediately became actively involved, having the opportunity to not only leverage my professional experience, but to practice my leadership and influencing skills in a very safe environment, with people who understood me culturally. It was very refreshing and totally new to me ... one of the major reasons GE has and continues to be my employer of choice.

Tamla Oates-Forney

Vice President, Human Resources, GE Energy Connections

A Role Model, a Role, and Unforgettable Rewards

I am a first generation college graduate and had limited exposure to corporate America prior to attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Deb Elam, a mentor and sponsor, was the first African American female executive I had ever been exposed to. When I met her, it confirmed what was possible for me. She has been, and will always be, instrumental in my life. When she and the other AAF officers, like Steve Thorne, also a mentor of mine, returned from the 2010 epic trip to Africa, they said, "The continent needs more from us," and I wanted to be a part of it. My husband agreed, and we moved to Lagos, Nigeria. This move, albeit risky, was the turning point in my career.

When I arrived in Nigeria, I launched an initiative in conjunction with AAF called "Back to Africa", leveraging the network and symposium to inspire African American talent interested in returning to the continent. We marketed those opportunities first to African employees that were in GE, and then also opened it up externally to people that they knew in the diaspora that might be interested in returning home. The AAF was very instrumental in getting talent to the region. I spent almost five of the most rewarding years of my life on the continent between Nigeria and Kenya.





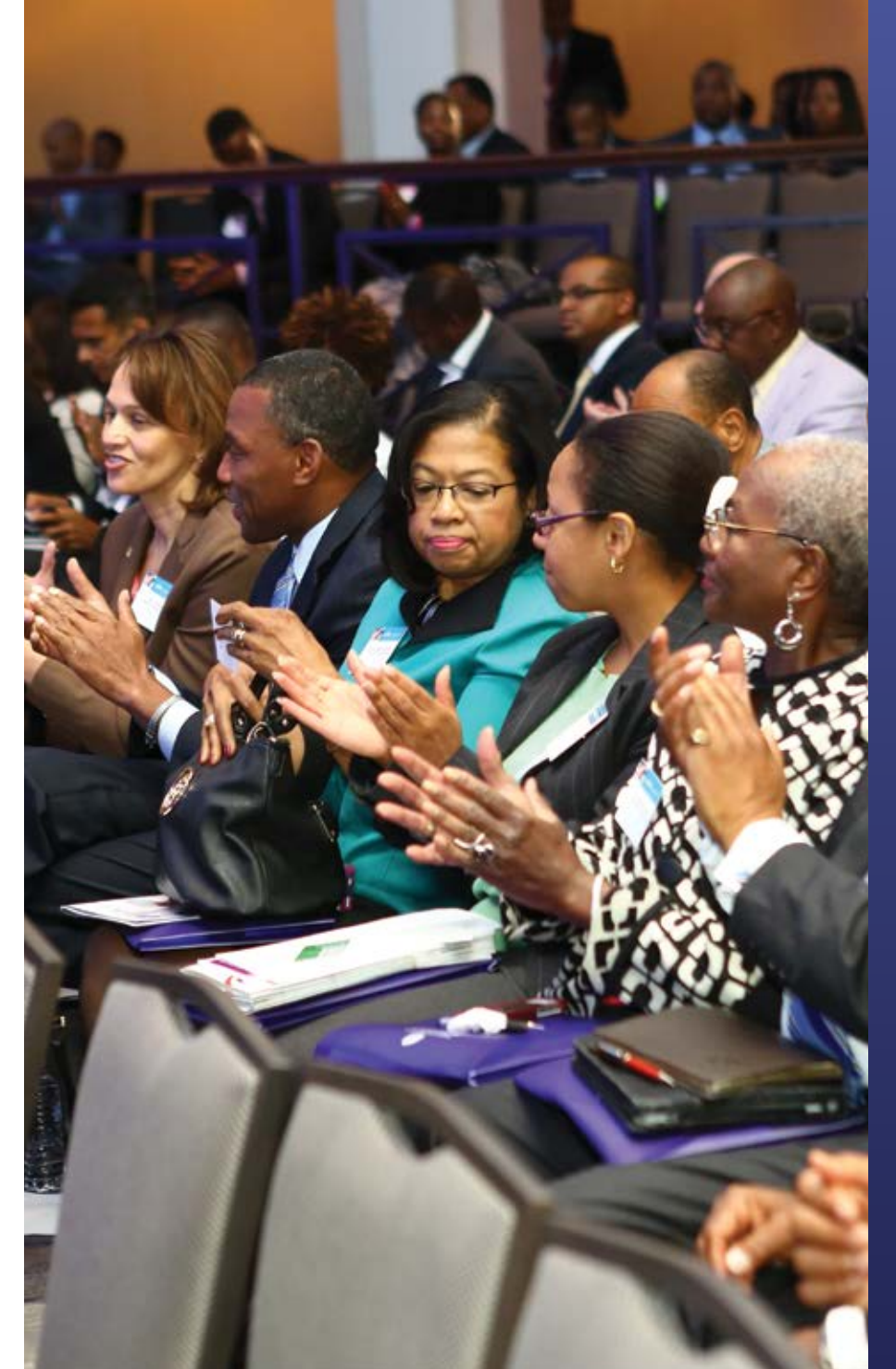
“When I Hire People, I’m hiring for Careers, Not Jobs.”

During my 18 years with GE, I have had African Americans ask me, “What is it really like being African American and working at GE? Is this a place where I can contribute, succeed, and truly be who I am?” I’ve had the opportunity to leverage the AAF in my recruiting efforts to show people of color that GE is a place where you can come and live your dreams, irrespective of your gender or ethnicity. It’s not just what we say, it’s what you see.

The AAF is just as powerful a tool in recruiting, retaining, and developing talent. If you’re going through something and thinking about leaving GE, it’s highly probable that there are others who have been down that same road you’re traveling and can give insight in terms of how to navigate through your challenge and not give up. GE is a big company, with more than 300,000 people in over 150+ countries, yet AAF has made the company small and intimate.

A Better “Me”

To put it very simply, I am a better me because of AAF. Having recently been promoted to vice president, the 3rd African American female in GE’s history, I am truly proud of what I have achieved and I attribute several accomplishments to my connection to AAF. What began as business relationships have become long term, everlasting friendships that now transcend GE. My life has been forever changed because of my involvement in AAF.



I Am AAF...

I Am Global. The partnership with Africa has been very advantageous in creating a global lens. If you look at the construct of my business, for example, I have employees in 90+ countries, and over 75% of them are outside the U.S. The company and the opportunities are becoming more global, and understanding AAF's relevance in that global landscape is critically important.

I Am Digital. You have to become more digitally savvy, because that's the world in which we live. I look at trends in the world and how technology is going to impact the way we work, and that in turn impacts my role as an HR professional in terms of how I attract, develop and retain talent. A lot of the things in life are now e-enabled – banking, shopping. It's who we are becoming. So we have to transition and pivot to this digital world if we are going to be relevant, professionally and personally.

I Am Leading. There's a scripture that says, "To whom much is given, much is required." I lead the HR function for a \$11 billion business of over 45,000 people, a role I take very seriously. As one of the few minority female executives in the company, another role I take seriously is that of a role model for other women of color within GE. I want to be seen as a leader who is not only competent in my job, but committed to others. One who cares and is approachable, and represents the paths that are attainable if you have the talent and the drive to succeed ... as a wife, mother, daughter, sister, and friend.



I AM

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From Day One, Open Arms and Open Doors

I joined GE Lighting in Cleveland in 1997, and the AAF put their arms around me the moment I walked in the door. I've made great friends and have had wonderful coaches, mentors and sponsors. To this very day, there are mentors who have retired who I remain close to, who always answer the phone when I need to bounce something off them. This organization means a lot to me, not just professionally, but personally as well.

Authenticity and Staying Strong

I can think of numerous great role models in my time with AAF, but to me, Steve Thorne (former HR VP) was special. I can still see Steve opening up the AAF symposiums. I was simply in awe at how energetic and passionate he was about what the AAF meant, about being a leader, and just being who you are. We should all strive to stay authentic like Steve. I've never seen anyone who could do that the way he did it. He modeled being genuine and comfortable in your own skin. I've taken those lessons with me throughout my career.

If you were going through something tough, there was nothing like getting an email from Steve that ended with the same phrase he would use to close his AAF sessions: "Stay strong." Even now, if someone in the senior leadership team is going through a difficult time, in the business or personally, we'll encourage each other with, "As Steve would say, 'Stay Strong.' " He epitomizes what the AAF represents to me.



“Many who came before us led through equally challenging times. We need to step back and ask ourselves, ‘Are we really leading at the level of those who came before us?’”

Russell Stokes

President and CEO, GE Energy Connections
Senior Vice President, GE



The “GE Store” – Not Just a Concept, a Commitment

One of the things we talk about in a big way is the “GE Store.” What makes GE special versus other companies out there is that we have a common culture and so many things that are shared across the company. Though you’re working in businesses that are in different industries, you’re able to tap into things that are common – culture, leadership, technologies – and leverage them across these different businesses.

For example, this is the fourth GE business that I’ve been in. I’ve lived in five different cities and was able to move from the lighting industry to aviation, to locomotive and mining, and now to Energy Connections – never having to leave GE. I was able to take the skill sets, relationships and talents learned in one place and deploy them in other businesses.

I view the breadth and depth of AAF talent as a vital part of the GE Store, contributing diverse leadership, experience, and capabilities to the company. If we’re doing this right, the company should be able to say, “I want a diverse leader to take on a new role or to do a specific job, and I know I can tap someone who is a member of the AAF – because I know what they’ve been taught, how they’ve grown up inside the company.”



Passing the Baton

This is a company that has continuously evolved, and reinvented itself to remain relevant. We have to make sure that, with each new generation, the value proposition for the AAF is one that continues to contribute to this formula that has made GE successful for 130 years. The millennial members of my team – I prefer to call them ‘contemporary’ members – play an integral role, challenging us to look at new and different ways of doing things versus the way that we had always done them in the past.

That’s my vision, that we continue to be relevant. That I, and those that come after me, continue the legacy that Lloyd Trotter, former Vice Chair of GE and founding member of the AAF – and so many others – have created. That’s what it’s all about, handing the baton to the next generation, helping them realize the kind of amazing career GE can provide them – and seeing that legacy grow in scale and in meaningful ways. That’s the journey we’re on, and I’m confident we can continue down that path.

I am AAF...

I Am Global. We need to ensure that we continue to be relevant in the things that are the major themes of the company, and globalization continues to be increasingly important. In the business I have the privilege of leading, we have more and more employees and revenues outside the U.S. Though the AAF was African American when it started, it’s amazing to see all the different cultures that are now at play, all sharing the common thread of wanting to live out their careers contributing to a company like GE. I find this incredibly energizing.

I Am Digital. Digital disruption and enablement, if you will, is something that we believe in, in a big way, as we start to think about GE in the new digital industrial age. The world is continuously being transformed through new waves of digital technology and capabilities, so people everywhere within this company are going to have to make sure they are investing in innovation with our assets, services and customer solutions to drive a productivity revolution for our customers and GE.

I Am Leading. The company has been known for developing great leaders through a number of different means and mechanisms, and I view the AAF as a crucial piece of that development in GE. Many who came before us led through equally challenging times. We need to step back and ask ourselves, “Are we really leading at the level of those who came before us?” If not, we are not holding up the end of our bargain. Because, at the end of the day, this is an organization committed to the molding and development of the next generation of GE leaders.



I AM

LEADING.



“ The AAF will play an increasingly critical role in the company’s vision to become the preeminent development partner for Africa. ”

Lazarus Angbazo
President and CEO, GE Nigeria

Synergy and Support, From the Very Start

I joined GE Capital in 2004 as Chief Marketing Officer for GE Commercial & Industrial Finance. Three months in GE I had the good fortune of being invited to the AAF Symposium, where I met with several AAF leaders, including the legendary Steve Thorne.

That unexpected but pivotal meeting with Steve turned out to be a critical starting point for my GE career. Steve methodically worked to connect me to my initial network among AAF (and non-AAF) colleagues who became pivotal in advising me what GE was all about, the operating rhythm, compliance culture of the company, the leadership development resources available to me, and the importance of leveraging those resources. Although I had worked on GE-related transactions during my previous employment at JP Morgan Chase, having the AAF platform available to me during my first six months in the company helped me build a virtual team of coaches and experts from different businesses, different regions of the world, and different functional capabilities that enabled me to launch my GE journey fairly smoothly as a mid-career hire.



The Impetus for a Powerful Presence in Africa

In 2010, I had the great honor (along with Deo Onyango and Leslie Nelson) to host a historic trip taken by a delegation of ten GE Officers and GE Board Members Dr. James Cash and Ann Fudge. This senior AAF delegation travelled across Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Rwanda and South Africa with the sole aim of seeing and understanding the scale and importance of African market opportunities for GE. I believe that trip became a major strategic inflection point for GE's commitment to Africa, notwithstanding the company's previous 100+ years' history operating in the continent. The delegation met with presidents, cabinet ministers, business and community leaders, and the lessons and recommendations they reported back to the Chairman and CEC influenced the investments and intensive leadership focus we have all witnessed over the last several years. Specifically, that AAF senior expedition to Africa helped the company better understand what Africa could be for GE – and what GE could mean for Africa. One example of the result was the dramatic change in the relationship between GE and Africa at the business level, where we were no longer simply an equipment vendor; we became a true development partner, signing “company-to-country” agreements across the continent. The trip was an important foundation for the tremendous growth that GE has benefited from the African marketplace.

I joined the AAF forum at the midpoint of its life, when it was still largely an American focus. Today, it is truly a global organization, providing the platform for employee coaching and mentorship, advocacy on behalf of African customers, partners and governments within GE, and positive competitive differentiation for GE among multinationals operating in the African markets. Outside the U.S., we call AAF the Africa “Affinity” Forum, to emphasize inclusion of all people of African descent as well as non-Africans who share a passion for diversity and inclusivity. The organization has allowed GE to provide its employees in Africa with a phenomenal support base to help build the company deeply into the fabric of our countries, markets and local communities



through scholarships, volunteer opportunities, CSR, SME development and localization.

Those of us in Africa believe the AAF has been a fantastic and indispensable bridge for making Africa an important market for GE. The AAF vehicle has helped promote localization of GE capabilities in terms of our employees, indigenous African partners, as well as indigenous African supply-chain partners who are integrated into GE global supply chain. All of these have helped GE to offer a stronger value proposition to our customers, to our governments, and to our communities. GE has not only grown financially as a result, but is winning hearts and minds and awards across the region, such as its recognition in 2016 by President Buhari as Nigeria's most strategic multinational investor in the country.

I am really proud of AAF, and of all our colleagues working in Africa to build the relationships that I believe GE will be able to leverage for another 100 years, doing wonderful things for the development of African countries.



Lazarus Angbazo



With Challenge Comes Reward

AAF has become best-in-class among GE affinity groups because of the great vision of its founding leaders, the incredible support of the Chairman and successive CEC sponsors, and the operating leaders. As a self-help organization, the rank-and-file members of AAF have also been extremely important to the progress and success in overcoming all the challenges in our first quarter-century. In our next phase, we need to think about how we can be more central to the ongoing transformation of the company as a digital industrial company. I still believe GE's current level of success in Africa is only scratching the surface. AAF must help evolve the incremental value proposition of GE to our customers and our markets. For example, just ten years ago we probably supported only 10 to 20 customers to the Global Customer Summit. This year with the sponsorship and support of Jay Ireland in his dual capacity as President and CEO of GE Africa and as CEC sponsor of AAF across the company, we will have about 100 senior government, business and community leaders attending. This is progress now, but even more importantly developing the leaders and decision makers of Africa. This will pay off for years to come.

At the same time, we all have a personal commitment to give back what we've learned. We all stand on the shoulders of those who preceded us. They certainly have taught me a lot. Shame on me if I don't find opportunities to pass it on to the next generation of leaders. And shame on me if I don't leverage what I've learned to really become an effective bridging function between a global company like GE and my community and people in Africa in a manner that ensures a true win-win relationship. This is part of my calling now. And also part of my reward for the privilege of working in GE and being a part of AAF.

I Am AAF...

I Am Global. The AAF will play an increasingly critical role in the company's vision to become the preeminent development partner for Africa – not only continuing to develop African employees in GE, but helping integrate Africa and African suppliers into the GE global supply chain and the global marketplace.

I Am Digital. GE Africa is Digital. We've already invested in it, we are exploring it, and working with customers regarding how they can leverage GE's digital solutions. Digital is going to be hugely successful in Africa because it is the leapfrogging vehicle for Africa to experience even faster growth at lower cost, greater efficiency, and be much more quickly integrated into the global systems and communities.

I Am Leading. Through the AAF, GE is breeding global leaders. Leveraging the lessons and experiences they've taken out of GE, they are leading not just in the company, but in their neighborhoods, churches and communities. They are providing thought leadership on issues of development across the industries in which we operate, across the infrastructure, across the public and private sectors. And we are replicating that leadership in others as well, as we foster innovation, develop small/medium enterprises, and offer formal training opportunities.





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Giving What You Get

My most vivid memories from when I was an intern at GE in 2007 in Erie, Pennsylvania are related to the AAF, and are ultimately the reason I joined GE. Ahmad Zakari was leading the AAF intern program and I was impressed by the amount of time he spent with us. Ahmad helped me prepare for the OMLP interviews, and many of us were invited to attend the symposium. The symposium allowed me to see how large GE's impact is on the world. Because of these experiences, when I got the offer to join GE full-time, I accepted immediately.

I'm now the Transportation Business Champion for the AAF. My goal is to be bold with how we manage our great AAF talent – pushing the limits, getting top talent in front of the senior leadership team and helping to make sure there are plans for career progression. The power of the AAF is the people, and it is our responsibility, as we succeed, to facilitate the progression of others' careers. Each of us needs to reach back and pull others along, giving them the same opportunities we got along the way. This commitment is what embodies the AAF.

“ The AAF connection
has no bounds. ”



Marisa Jo Kozachenok
Services Executive, GE Transportation



Loyalty Is a Two-Way Street

The AAF is a family. I experienced that from the moment I started working at GE. In Erie there were AAF leaders, some not even with the company anymore, who would have events at their homes, which enabled those of us who were new to the community to meet people and make new friends. Being part of a community like that within GE builds your confidence and enables you to accomplish more, personally and professionally.

I knew I wanted to have a long-term career at GE, yet there was a point when I realized I needed a broader external experience. At the time, I was working in Russell Stokes' organization and was nervous to share that I wanted to leave for two years to go to business school. Russell was very supportive and said "What would be best for Marisa? What would make you most happy at this time in your life?" It was a very human moment that built trust and loyalty.

At the end of my two year leave, I was exploring future career opportunities. Yet, the prospect of coming back to GE trumped all alternatives because of the relationships I had built in the company and within the AAF. Since then, it has been extremely rewarding to contribute to the evolution of AAF, and I am enthusiastic about continuing to shape its future.



Be Unapologetic

As we enter our next 25 years, there's an important message we need to impart to the next generation of talent entering GE and the AAF. "Be unapologetic about your ambition. Be unapologetic about your desire to have an ever increasing impact on the company and on the world. You can have that spirit and thrive at GE." We want to attract and retain the best of the best. Part of the beauty of GE is that we have so many different industries and opportunities. You are able to push boundaries, try different things, and get comfortable being uncomfortable, with the support of your GE and AAF family.

I love the theme that was created for the 25th anniversary symposium. Global, digital, leading – these are the three pillars of the AAF and why this organization will play such a crucial role in helping GE grow and evolve.

I Am AAF ...

I Am Global. We are redefining what it means to be global. The power of having a global mindset is not just countries, borders and time zones but also thinking about our impact in terms of our communities, workplaces, homes, cities and each other. And in that broader, more encompassing mindset, that's how we move the world forward.

I Am Digital. The digital journey is what fuels GE's future growth. We need to focus on continuously deepening our understanding of digital and the many ways we can use new technology to add value to the company. The AAF is at the forefront of this and should continue to lead going forward.

I Am Leading. As we shift the way we work, the definition of great leadership is evolving. The future of leadership relies on understanding and inspiring others, motivating people to lead, and creating trust-based environments. We are all leaders, regardless of our formal position. Even the most senior leaders have something to learn from the newest faces. All of us need to be open to coaching and learning at the same time. Within the AAF, we should passionately continue to learn from and support each other's growth and development.





DIGI
TAL.



“ In my mind, I really didn’t think GE was the place for me. That was almost 15 years ago. And now when people ask me, I always tell them I’m a GE lifer. I’m going to be here until they kick me out. ”

Shawn Warren

Executive Product Manager, Bombardier Programs
Regional Engines and Services

Building Connections, Confidence and Commitment

I had no idea what the AAF was my entire first year at GE, until one of my African American buddies invited me to a meeting. The AAF Symposium was my first AAF experience. From there on, I was hooked, both professionally and personally.

From a professional standpoint, it’s helped me build a lot of confidence in myself as a leader, and given me the opportunities to go show my leadership skills in ways that I would not naturally get. From a personal standpoint, it has really helped me both in identifying role models and in being a role model myself – focusing on how I can help the broader African American community, whether it’s helping GE people navigate through their careers and challenges or being a positive influence outside of where we work.

AAF has afforded me the opportunity to interact with a wide array of people, both inside and outside the group. One of the key things I learned is how to build a network, and bring people together toward a common cause. As my career progressed, I began to take larger and larger roles in extracurricular activities, be it the AAF or community service projects. I’m currently the Business Champion for GE Aviation, representing AAF to Corporate as well as providing mentorship and guidance to all the different local chapters within the Aviation business. I’m also one of the two event chairs for planning this year’s symposium.



Taking the Dread Out of Dreadlocks

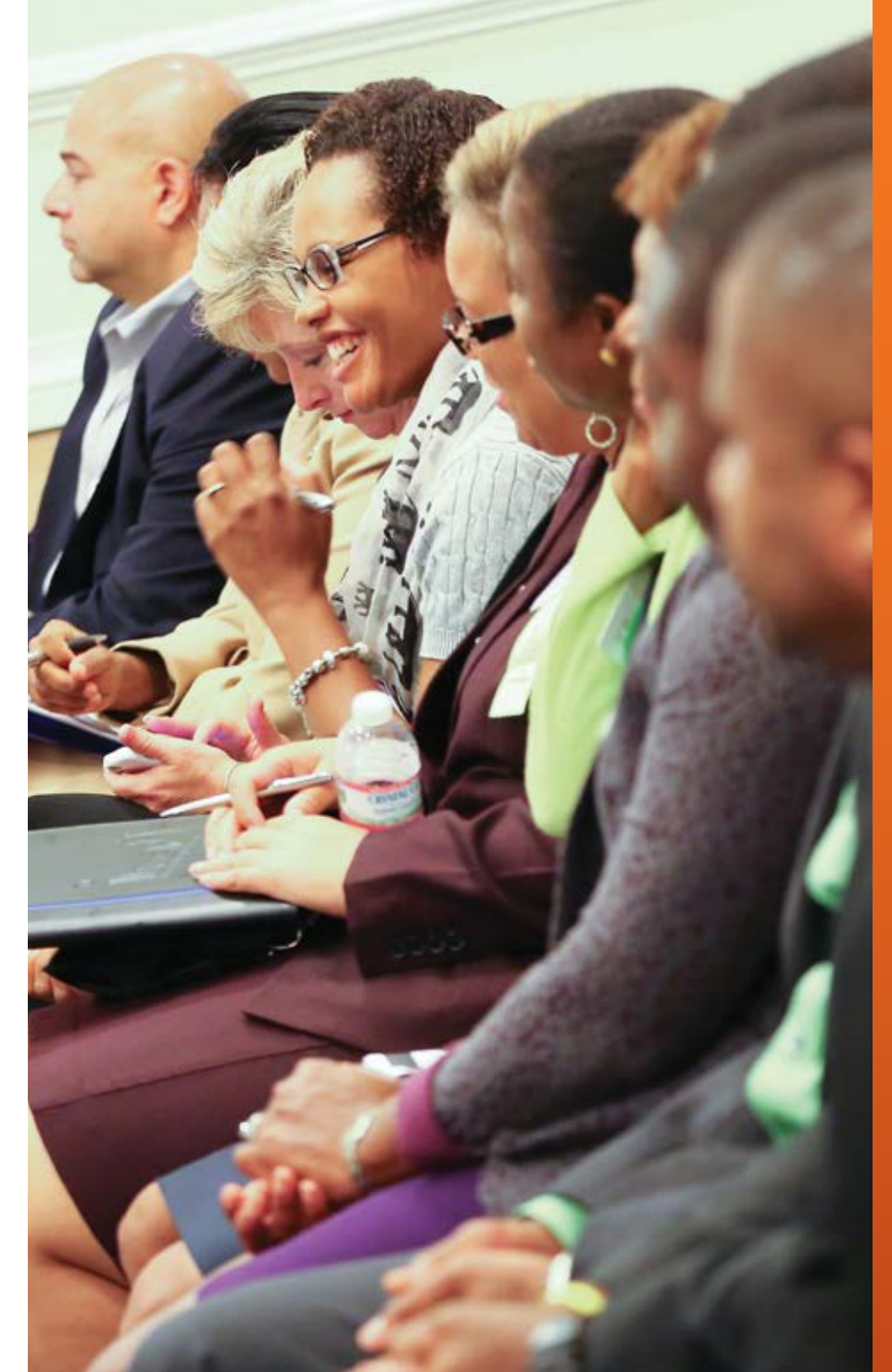
In any organization, if you don't see people who look like you, it can be demotivating. I remember when I first got dreadlocks, getting a few looks from people around the office, and thinking, "I'm a different cat from a lot of these people – will I ever really have a shot to grow my career at the company and be an executive?" In 2012, I had the honor of introducing Jeff Immelt at the AAF Global Symposium. I had so many people come up to me afterward and say, "It's so amazing to me that I work at a company that would have a guy with dreadlocks introduce the CEO. I know I'm going to be ok, and that this is the place where I can be my authentic self and still be successful in my career."

When I was offered the chance to interview, right out of college, I was close to cancelling that interview. In my mind, I really didn't think GE was the place for me. That was almost 15 years ago. And now when people ask me, I always tell them I'm a GE lifer. I'm going to be here until they kick me out.

The Next Frontier for AAF

As we move forward in our next 25 years, we will continue to find new ways to help people achieve their career goals, and help improve the communities we live and work in. We'll continue to be innovators on the forefront of technology. But, I also believe the next frontier for AAF is going to be around driving the dialogue of what's going on in the country today.

I remember back when Barack Obama was first elected, some people asked, "Is the AAF really relevant anymore, now that we have an African American President?" Sitting here eight years later and seeing the divide in this country today, I would say it absolutely is. I think one of the key contributions the AAF can make is to tell our stories as African Americans and as professionals, finding ways to help bridge those gaps to bring the community – and the entire world – back together.





I Am AAF...

I Am Global. We take a lot of pride in the fact that the Africa Initiative grew from a question someone asked Jeff Immelt at the AAF symposium one year, and that simple question has grown into a multibillion-dollar enterprise – from a business standpoint as well as philanthropic activities. We were able to leverage our feelings and expertise and turn them into something that's not just great for the company financially, but also does really good work.

I Am Digital. When I think of AAF, I think of being first, of being innovators. The VP in charge of the digital work for the entire company is an African American. We really get to be on the cutting edge of understanding how GE is transforming from a digital standpoint, and finding innovative ways to drive this initiative forward.

I Am Leading. We've always been leading the way when it comes to diversity initiatives, especially when it comes to community service activities. We're always pushing the envelope to open up the company to the employees in so many ways – fast-tracking their professional development, getting people promoted into powerful positions, and pulling other people through the pipeline. We've seen more and more leaders get developed over the last 25 years and continue to move up. And they contribute to new leaders being developed, as well.



I AM

LEAD
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In the AAF, You're Never Strangers for Too Long

While I was in business school in 1993, I did a summer internship with the Corporate Audit Staff in Ohio, with what is now GE Aviation. Within the first week, three auditors senior to me, who were African American, came up to me and said, "Hey, welcome to the team. Let us know what we can do for you." It struck me a little strange that these three people, who didn't know me, would reach out and welcome me. And then they told me, "We have this small organization called the *African American Forum* that started a couple of years ago. We just want to look out for each other." I immediately had the feeling that GE was a special place.

When I joined the audit staff the following year, AAF was bigger and stronger. It was pretty clear to me it was an organization I wanted to be part of. We didn't know exactly how it was going to play out for us, or even for the company, because you still had people wondering, "Do we really want to highlight ourselves as African Americans, go off together into a room, and have people ask us why we're meeting?"

It soon became clear that we were friends and supporters, interested in learning from each other, teaching each other, and furthering our careers. And that, in turn, would be good for the company. So good, in fact, that at the AAF conferences, while I was touting the wonders of the AAF, I would be trying to get people to join the audit staff – playing ambassador on both fronts.

“ There's a confidence that comes with the support and encouragement of AAF that enables you to lead, wherever you are. ”



Thomas Konditi
President & CEO, Africa, GE Transportation



A Powerful Pull in the Right Direction

There's a world outside GE. I've managed to visit it - twice! After six years at GE, I had just gotten my EB, when I was presented with an opportunity to join a startup company doing something that was super exciting to me in the technology space. This was the roaring 90's of Internet startups, and I made the jump. Of course, my AAF friends kept in constant touch, asking how I was doing and giving great advice. We eventually successfully sold the startup, and I was looking for the next great thing to do. It turned out to be ... GE. Wayne Hewitt contacted me about a role he felt I was right for, and there I was, back home again. It would not have happened if it were not for our friendship through the AAF.

The second time was different. After 14 years of commuting globally to be with my family, my wife was offered an opportunity in Serbia where commuting was no longer an option for me. The company was very good about it, giving me a leave of absence and committing to find something for me if I wanted to come back. I did, they did, and it was a seamless return. I remember starting at 9 a.m. on my first day back and being totally up and running by noon, as if I'd never left. Maintaining my relationship with a lot of the AAF folks had kept me in touch with the company, and that - again - played a huge part in my success at GE.

We Must Never Lose What We've Gained

My vision for AAF is to not let complacency creep in. When you talk about great AAF talent in the company today, you have so many people who are superstars that you are spoiled for choice. But we can't rest on our laurels. We must connect to the current incoming generation - make sure we're growing them, inspiring them and bringing out the best in them. We've made great progress, but we can't lose that momentum. We've got to keep measuring the numbers. Do we have the same ratio of officers that we used to have? Do we have the same ratio of SEBs? Are our functional strong points still the same? Are we still focused on AAF talent at the senior leadership levels?

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that things can go backwards if you don't pay attention. You look at the rhetoric around the politics today and the last year of *Black Lives Matter*, and it's a wakeup call. If it's happening on the streets of our cities, I wouldn't be naïve enough to think that it couldn't happen in our corporations. In our boardrooms, *professional lives matter*. If we take a lesson from the early AAF days, it's that no one else is going to write our story. It's up to us to maintain that edge and engagement to make sure that we don't go backwards.

I Am AAF...

I Am Global. By my third year with the Corporate Audit Staff, I had already worked in 31 countries. I went on to have full-time roles in South America, the U.S., Kenya, and now South Africa. And I've spent time in upwards of another 50 countries, so I'm probably up to around #86. While there are still vast parts of the globe I haven't visited, I've seen a lot of where GE operates, where it has grown, where it has suffered. That has given me the confidence to be able to get on a plane and deal with GE teams, opportunities and challenges anywhere. Today you need to be just as global as you are local.

I Am Digital. I'm not as digital as I would love to be, but getting rid of paper was one of the first things I did in my professional life. Even before it was the fad, I've always looked for the digital solution. Digital offers up a whole new sector of business that folks in Africa, where I'm from, can take advantage of. You don't have to do a lot of heavy infrastructure investment to be a great software programmer, or coder, or analyst. It opens the door for fellow Africans, if you will, to get in on the game in an exciting space.

I Am Leading. Since day one at GE, I've believed that I should be a leader in whatever environment I'm in. I may not know all the answers, I may not have gone through every situation – but I feel that I should be leading myself, the team and the business through whatever it is we are facing. It's been extremely rewarding to watch Africa go from a continent where we had two African execs, to more than 50 – where we've grown 3x in our business and our people. That took leadership, on my part, on the part of other AAF and African leadership, and on the part of people like Jay Ireland, who has been a mentor for me over the decades. There's a confidence that comes with the support and encouragement of AAF that enables you to lead, wherever you are.





I AM

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“ I now know what it’s like to set an almost unimaginable goal, to hold myself accountable and, with the support of other people, be able to achieve it. ”



The Importance of Having Champions – and Being One

I became engaged with AAF when I entered the Financial Management Program. But, it was when I joined GE’s Corporate Audit Staff that my involvement really intensified. For the first time at GE, I felt like I really stood out. It was a 400+ person organization, and there were less than 10 Africans or African Americans. At that moment in time, I truly understood the importance of diversity.

The Corporate Audit Staff is a key career accelerator. We needed to see more diverse talent there, and I wanted to be part of the solution; so I became very passionate about recruitment. As diverse talents came in to interview and pilot, we were actively coaching them, monitoring their performance, and aligning them with mentors, and we took an active role in the recruitment process. We also held our leadership accountable to this mission by involving them in the process.

The company was becoming more global and there was increased focus on Africa. Because I’m originally from the region, I eventually became more active in recruitment, especially through my work in launching the GE Africa FMP program. Today there are over forty people of color in the CAS, more than half of them from Africa. My hope is that those who are benefiting from GE’s leadership programs such as CAS will understand the importance and benefit of paying it forward. Someone else helped you get to where you are, and you have an obligation to help those who come after you.

In my fourth year of CAS, I was promoted to Senior Audit Manager – the first African American in that position in over five years. I was determined to break that streak and get myself there, because once you’ve done that, others see that it is not just aspirational, it is realistic. I didn’t get there on my own; I had champions and leaders who were looking out for me, and I worked very hard to earn the promotion. Since then, we have had a number of men and women of color who have taken on those leadership positions and exceeded my own accomplishments, which is the goal.

With Perseverance and Support, You Can Climb Mountains

When I moved to Africa in 2011, I gave myself the challenge of climbing Kilimanjaro within a year. I was prediabetic and generally very unhealthy. I told myself, I'm moving to Kenya, making a fresh start; I need to put myself first.

I ended up climbing with two very good friends of mine at GE. And I did something I had never done: I put myself out there and made the challenge very, very public. So if I didn't get my workout in, or was eating something I shouldn't, someone could call me out on it. My entire office was behind me. Their support was something I never previously allowed myself to accept.

The training was rough, but nothing compared to getting to the top. Ascending to the summit, you're so oxygen-deprived due to the altitude that you take two steps and you're completely out of breath, ready to collapse, tempted to give up. But it's hard to do that when others are holding you accountable. I completed the climb, and it was a life-changing experience. I've embraced a healthier lifestyle and reversed my prediabetes.

But, that's not all. I have a confidence I previously didn't have – the feeling that, if I can do this, I can do anything. Again, I didn't do it on my own. I now know what it's like to set an almost unimaginable goal, to hold myself accountable and, with the support of other people, be able to achieve it. The AAF and GE family in sub-Saharan Africa is that kind of community.



We Are Stronger Together

The next 25 years? As the world evolves, so must the AAF. As time goes on, we need to ensure that we continue to remain relevant, and connect with people all across the globe – because there is power in that voice. Wherever we are, we are stronger together. We focus a lot internally on our talent, our people, our employees. But, we can also leverage AAF as a tool to enable GE to be part of the thought leadership around other, broader issues.

Jeff Immelt, our Chairman and CEO, was willing to put himself out there on discussions concerning social justice, eloquently articulating his views around the Black Lives Matter movement and his commitment for GE to be engaged in terms of what's happening in our communities. I think this is a place where we can leverage the AAF as a means of bringing people together, making our voice – and the message – that much more powerful.





I Am AAF...

I Am Global. I was born in Ethiopia and originally from Eritrea. My parents were diplomats, so we ended up moving to New York when I was about three years old. Growing up in the U.S., I would spend the summers in Africa, but never in a million years did I expect I would eventually move back and live here. I thought I would get a job in New York City and live my life in the suburbs. GE changed all that for me. I had the chance to do my last assignment for the Corporate Audit Staff by leading the first full-blown audit of Africa for GE, and once I completed that review, I was asked to stay. It's been an important call, and I'm very humbled to be a part of it.

I Am Digital. This is where millennials can play an important role. The new wave of AAF members are quick to grab onto things like social media platforms and the many new tools of the trade that are going to be the norm for us. We need to embrace that capability and learn from them, encouraging them to engage with leaders in reverse-mentoring where they can coach us on these topics and skills.

I Am Leading. We are defining the legacy of what GE is going to be in the years to come in Africa. It's rare that you can immediately see the impact of your efforts, clearly and directly. But here, in the context of an environment where there is so much transformational change happening and so much to be done, it is incredible. In my case, we're delivering power. It's not a luxury, it's a necessity for hospitals to function, schools to operate, for businesses and manufacturers to be able to do their work. You wake up very passionate and energized, feeling good about what you're doing, and also delivering for our shareholders.



I AM

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My First Impression: Amazement

I joined GE in 1997 and shortly thereafter attended my first symposium. I was introduced to the company through the National Black MBA conference, and the first person I met when I approached the GE table was Deb Elam. So Deb and I talked, she liked my background and experience and literally dragged me upstairs to the interview room. The rest is history. My very first impression of the AAF was amazement – that there was an organization based on self-help, and at the same time had a sense of energy, passion and activity around things that mattered to the African American community.

My first real experience with a local AAF Chapter happened when I first arrived at Healthcare in '99. This was my first senior professional role. Attendance at the AAF meetings had fallen off to some extent, and because we were starting to attract more African Americans in the business, we knew that we had an incredible opportunity to rejuvenate the Chapter. We had a workout and decided that, in order to make the group vibrant again, we needed to have someone lead AAF for Healthcare. I got a call from Jim Shepard and Mike Barber asking me to be the president of the AAF.

"Why?" I asked. "There are a lot of people who've been here longer with more experience leading." And they said, "We just think you have the passion, energy and creativity we need to get this chapter moving again." I was in my first role, fresh from the HRLP program. Again I was amazed – that there was an organization that would put that kind of faith and trust in a person so early in his career. To take that responsibility and have that kind of support from the senior leaders of the business was immensely helpful – in becoming a better leader, a better person, and connecting to people in the African American community that I had heard about but never really met. It simply did wonders for me.

“People before me in this company sacrificed a great deal for me to be here where I am today. That’s a legacy, and the story that we need to continue to tell.”



Ernest Marshall

Vice President, Human Resources, GE Aviation



Paving the Way, and Often Saving the Day

Everyone has those crossroads moments in a career where you have a situation that's not going well, or you may be thinking, "Is this the place for me?" The AAF has saved me many times. At those moments, being able to pick up the phone, call someone who has also been there, and talk it through – I don't know that I can find that anywhere else. And when you build those professional relationships, they always seem to bleed over into personal relationships; you develop those bonds of trust and admiration. Some of my closet friends, I met through the AAF.

At Healthcare, we committed to have a few sessions a year on something we called Straight Talk. You come in, no holds barred. Everything that's talked about stays in the room. These were powerful sessions. I remember one person stood up in the back and said, "You know, I was going to resign tomorrow, but I'm going to stay. Because I see us having this kind of dialogue and I understand that other people are going through what I'm going through, and I know that if I can find someone to talk to, I can make it." We saved a person literally right there in the meeting. But for the AAF, this individual would have been gone.

"It's Not About You"

A few years ago, Lloyd Trotter got all of the AAF chapter leaders together in a room in Plainfield, and had each of us each give a presentation on our respective businesses. I'll never forget what Lloyd said in wrapping up that meeting. It sticks with me even now. He said, "Never forget that the AAF is not about you as an individual. It's never about you. It's always about how we, as a collective group of people, can help one another."

Sometimes the question is posed, "Wouldn't it be great if we didn't need affinity networks?" And I always say that you're missing the point. It's not just about the *need*. It's about the opportunity and ability for a group of like individuals to come together and have a network of people they can call on. It's about keeping alive the spirit of the AAF. People before me in this company sacrificed a great deal for me to be here where I am today. We get 1,200 people at a symposium today; the AAF started with ~10 (kind of like the Little Rock Nine of GE). They paved the way for the successes that many of us are able to achieve right now. That's a legacy, and the story that we need to continue to tell.



Ernest Marshall

I Am AAF...

I Am Global. As an Operating Leader, we went to Africa and asked, “How can we help you?” And our minds were opened to a unique and different perspective from people who were African, not African American. Experiencing and learning the cultural aspects, and gaining a better understanding of issues they faced, helped us fully appreciate the role the AAF should play. The richness of opening that continent was just miraculous, and we have literally created a new business, infrastructure and community of talent we were light years away from a mere 10 years ago.

I Am Digital. It’s not just GE. Everyone everywhere is being transformed by the digital changes happening in the world. It’s one of those things where you’ve got to be contemporary and fast, but also smart in terms of how you use it. You need to have a heightened awareness of what we mean when we say the word ‘digital,’ because even if you’re not in a part of the business that is immersed in it, you will still be definitely be affected by it. This is transformational for the Company – so engage!

I Am Leading. When people of color come into this company, I tell them to get connected to AAF right away, and find a way to lead. Recognize that you have a responsibility inside this organization to continue the spirit around the mission. That’s the challenge. Every generation coming in has to have that commitment to ensure the vibrancy of the organization in the future. We must continue to be relevant and drive the change that needs to happen for the organization and in our communities. With everything happening today, we couldn’t be more relevant and needed.





I AM

LEADING.



“ To see an African American woman as an officer of the company is an inspiration, because that’s where I aspire to be one day. ”

Pride and Inspiration, in Equal Parts

I was recruited to GE through a program called Leadership Delta, sponsored by the AAF in partnership with my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta. The mission of the program is to inspire young women who are interested in STEM and pair them with AAF mentors to support their growth and career development, while creating a pipeline of diverse leaders for GE. Upon graduation with an Electrical Engineering degree, I entered the Operations Management Leadership Program in 2006 and have been a part of the AAF ever since.

The AAF has been an amazing connector for my career and I’m truly humbled by my experience. I’ve been honored to be mentored by some of the most influential AAF leaders, who have been by my side, coaching me and advocating on my behalf since my days in college. Anytime I’m going through a critical decision personally or professionally, negotiating a business deal or moving on to my next stretch role, having the AAF to support me has been extremely instrumental. It’s been a sense of pride from the start to see people who look like me, taking risks, reaching new heights in the company and truly excelling in their careers.

To see an African American woman as an officer of the company is an inspiration, because that’s where I aspire to be one day.



Confidence for the Road Ahead

I'm getting ready to start my first international assignment, heading to Aberdeen, UK. If it were not for the AAF, I honestly don't know that I would be prepared to take on such a large role, all while moving my family to a completely new environment. But because of the coaching, unyielding support, skillset and relationships I've built while leading in the AAF, I know when trials come up, there are other AAF mentors I've witnessed go through the same and will guide me through to triumph.

At the same time, I've always felt the need to give back, to the company and to the community. One way I've been able to do this is by leading the national scholarship program for the AAF, where we've been able to raise over \$2 million to help get scholars into college. I also have a passion for the next generation of GE. Today's millennials are tomorrow's leaders. The call is out for them to take leadership roles in their AAF chapters. Not only to help define what the next wave of professionals wants to see in the company, but how we can impact our communities in these tumultuous times. The AAF has really taken the lead to allow millennials to lead in a safe space, giving them the opportunity to try different things to build their confidence and, ultimately, their careers.

A New Era for AAF

The AAF has achieved tremendous success in creating an extraordinary network that supports the diversity initiative of the company. We've seen promotions in the company from senior professional to executive, to senior executive, and then to officer. In the next 25 years, I believe we'll see ourselves shift from an affinity network, where people recognize others like themselves, to a strategic diversity network that uniquely delivers to the bottom line of GE.

Because, ultimately, that's why we are here: to deliver for the company. Our success lies in not only advancing minorities and leveraging our individual talents, but in capitalizing on that diversity to help the company focus on strategies that solve business problems and contribute to the business growth. I see the AAF becoming a vital strategic partner with developing countries we want to enter, and in our digital industrial transformation.

So I think the AAF will reframe a bit and really become a strategic arm that not only delivers to the bottom line of the company, but also becomes measurable on what we deliver. My call to colleagues not yet active in the AAF is ... Get involved, learn to see the big picture, take the initiative! For those who are in the AAF, continue to be up front, to lead, be willing to risk and to uniquely deliver – not just for the network, but for GE.





I Am AAF...

I Am Global. I'm in the middle of moving to Aberdeen, Scotland, and one of the very first connections was to the AAF in Scotland. Just think about that. The AAF is everywhere. A network of like-minded people who want to deliver for the business and also create a sense of community. Of course, another piece about AAF being global is addressing global concerns, like the bubble assignments dedicated to help the company address some of the healthcare challenges in Africa. Being intentional about what our mission is and where we can provide strategic direction for the company in a global sense, that's AAF global.

I Am Digital. Our company is quickly evolving into a digital industrial powerhouse. So digital will be a focus of this year's AAF Global Symposium. That's another benefit of affinity networks; you've got a very engaged population of employees who want to help the company and are supporting the mission. AAF is up in front on the digital initiative – engaging and educating people on what this means, and what their role is in this transformation.

I Am Leading. You can't think about the AAF without thinking "leadership." We all have very demanding roles the company is paying us for. But in addition, there is a strong sense of purpose within the AAF community, so we take on additional leadership roles – whether it's my role in leading the scholarships we give to students, or our AAF operating leaders who support the development of a large population of employees. There is a strong sense of leadership, and a strong sense of purpose to serve this community and to deliver for GE.



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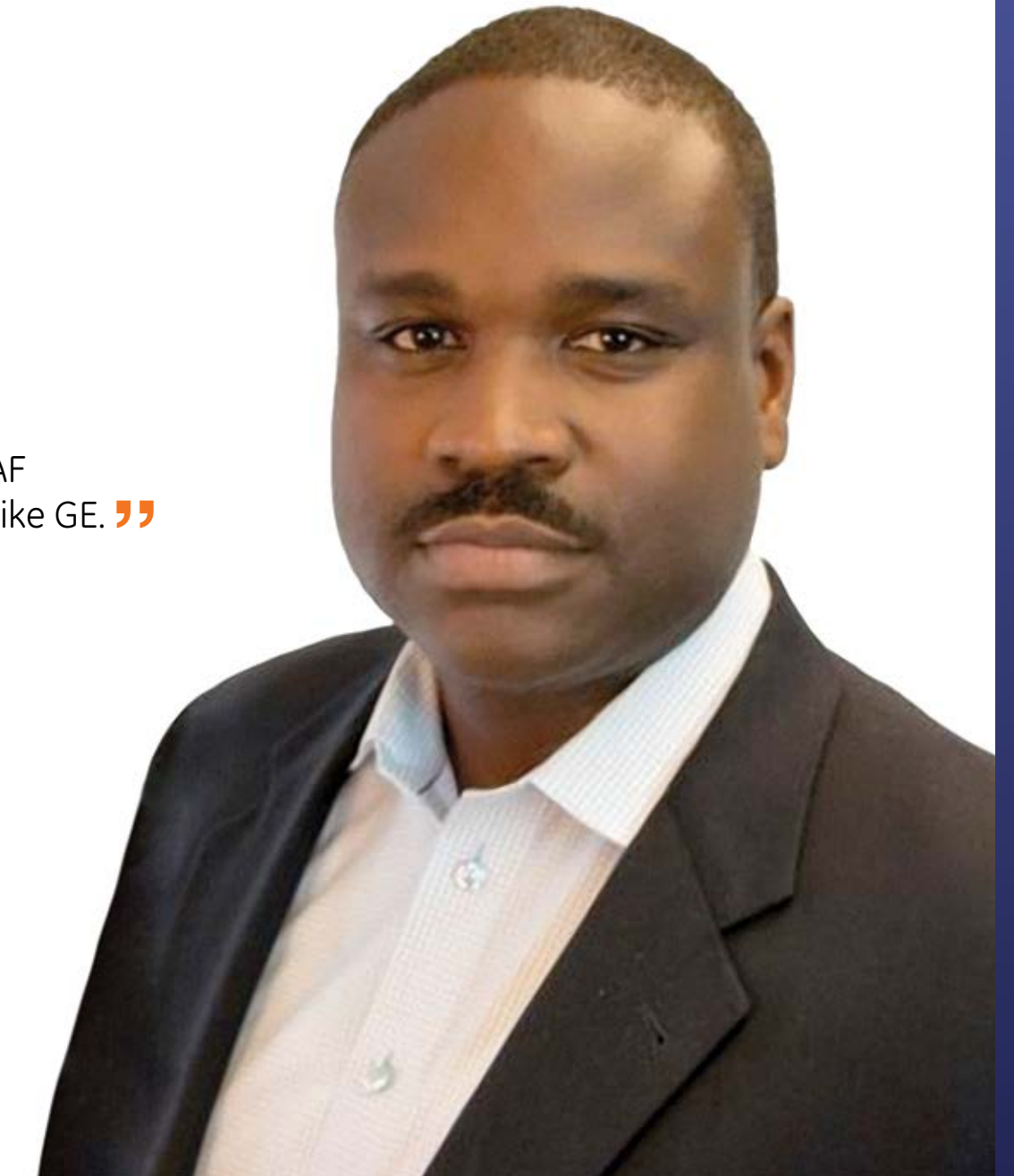
GLO
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The Momentum of a Mission of Passion

I started with GE just about 25 years ago at Appliance Park in Louisville, where a lot of the leadership, the strategic thought, the arms and legs that helped to stand up AAF across the company were based at that time. So I got to be a part of the grass roots, and was naturally pulled in and became an active member. It's amazing to me how much the AAF is a part of the fabric of a company like GE. Especially when I think back to the early days when African Americans would bump into each other in the hallways and whisper, "Hey, are you going to this AAF meeting?" To be honest, we were a little bit concerned about how it would be viewed by majority members of the company, and the appearance of what AAF could be.

The energy and commitment was obvious from the start. I remember our first symposium. At that time, the businesses didn't provide funds for members to attend, and one of my assignments was to collect the money from the members. It was a mission of passion for the senior leaders and employees to write their own personal checks for registration and to pay their own expenses to D.C. The AAF Symposium was more than a business meeting, and it still is to this day.

“It's amazing to me how much the AAF is a part of the fabric of a company like GE.”



Bill Lacey
President and CEO, GE Lighting



When Someone at the Top Takes the Time... That's AAF

In 2000, I was given the privilege of introducing Jeff Immelt at the symposium, a nerve-wracking responsibility. I somehow did not get booked into the hotel where it was being held, but at a satellite hotel. Yet, the day before the event, my room phone rings. It's Keith Sherin. And he says, "Hey, Bill, I know you're introducing Jeff tomorrow, and I just want make sure you're going to do very well." He asked me to read my speech. And when I was through, he said, "You know, that's perfect. I wouldn't change a word." But he didn't stop there. He went on, advising me on how to present. "Get to the stage early and stick your speech in the podium. Try not to read your remarks, memorize them so you're not looking down." And so on.

I thanked him and hung up the phone in amazement that the CFO of the entire company would have his assistant call around to the local hotels and track me down, to ensure that I would make the best of this opportunity given to me by the AAF. That's something that has always stuck with me. He did not have to take his time to do that, but he felt vested in Bill Lacey, as an individual. That personifies to me what the AAF is all about.

A Company-Wide Comfort Zone

It's a huge advantage for the members to have this safety spot, this place where folks are invested in their development. But from the beginning, we've made it clear that everyone is welcome, not just African Americans. Jack Welch made it nonnegotiable that his staff – and most of his staff's staff – attend the AAF symposiums. This created interaction many of them otherwise would not have experienced, because at that time they maybe would not have a person of color that was one level, or even two levels, down. And here you were, having conversations about work, about assignments, about goals, about ... life. And you realized, we're all pretty much alike.

In the end, just like any other GE initiative, when the company gets behind something, the GE culture takes over. The AAF was a clear call for folks to get out of their comfort zone, a signal that diversity was not a flash-in-the-pan initiative but a part of GE, and something we were going to focus on.

Twenty-Five Years and Still in Tune

Relevance has really always been our byword. Twenty-five years in, the mission is still the same. We at the AAF need to be in tune with what the business is trying to do, and the business must be in tune with the employees. As the company directs its forward-thinking initiatives, we will continue to direct people into these new areas so that they can have the greatest opportunity to grow within the company. We will work together to be relevant to each other.





I Am AAF...

I Am Global. In my mind, being global is about being local. It's not about having people in one place who understand what's going on around the world. It's having people around the world who understand what's going on in their piece of the world, and can make the entire body of this company aware of what's important there.


I Am Digital. This will change the topography of the Industrial business. It's one of these big, seismic activities that don't come along all that often that will transform not only GE itself, but the way business everywhere is done. I would liken it to the advent of assembly lines back in Henry Ford's day. Jeff Immelt and his team had the foresight to take us in this direction very early, when it wasn't "cool" or even necessarily being talked about, and I think it's going to be one of the biggest factors in our future success.

I Am Leading. Leading is, more than ever, about getting to know people at an individual level, being able to meet them where they are and then taking them along. It's a partnership with the generation coming up. You need to be able to speak to them, and them to you – and journey together to the goals and visions that the company has laid out.

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a smartphone. The person is wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored shirt, and a red tie with a subtle pattern. A green tag is visible on the right side of the frame. The background is dark and out of focus.

I AM

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TAL.



“ There is always going to be a need for people to have a safe place professionally, linked to their personal backgrounds, where they can engage with people in a nonthreatening environment. ”

Ahmad Zakari
Chief Operating Officer, GE Nigeria

First Impressions, Lasting Relationships

I was a summer intern at Transportation when I attended my first AAF symposium in 2005. Being in the midst of 1,500 professional African Americans, meeting leaders like Lloyd Trotter, and seeing Jeff Immelt and all the other VPs and business leaders taking time out of their schedules to support the affinity group was immensely inspiring. Having the opportunity to meet the Chairman and hear him speak was impressive for all of the interns, and a bit mind-blowing to have that kind of access at that early stage in our careers. It's one of the reasons I ended up deciding that GE was the right place for me, and 11 years later I still feel that way.

In a big, broad company like GE, being able to find a place where you can relate with people who genuinely care about your success and can serve as a sounding board on your career is invaluable. I was in the Corporate Audit Staff in Cincinnati, working on the Aviation business, and was fortunate to find Joe Allen there. Any time I had a problem, I could go to Joe or other AAF leaders for coaching and words of encouragement. I became a Senior Audit Manager, and eventually an Executive Audit Manager. Thomas Konditi started coaching me when I was an intern. Eleven years later, he's the CEO for Transportation in sub-Saharan Africa and I still interface with him. Those are the kind of career-long relationships that are critical to your success, and that the AAF enables you to build.



A Moment in the Spotlight – A Pivotal Point in a Career

At my second symposium, I asked the Chairman a question about how we in the company should feel about all the dispositions that were going on and people that had to leave GE unwillingly. The Chairman thought it was a great question, and he acknowledged that. I had introduced myself as being from the Transportation business, so that made our CEO perk up his ears. When he saw me later, he remarked, “Hey, that was a great question.” That one moment in the spotlight helped me build a relationship with John Dineen, the CEO for Transportation and later on for Healthcare. He sponsored me to go on to the Corporate Audit Staff from Transportation, and I was able to rise through the ranks to become an executive in six years. My going to the symposium and asking that one question was a pivotal point in my career – instrumental in my getting onto CAS and climbing to the height I’m at now.

AAF – Continuing to Create a World of Opportunities

The Africa project really opened up doors for some of us that were from the subcontinent to be able to get great roles back home. There are certain considerations that I can see better and understand better because of the AAF experience. The values around inclusiveness, working as a team, and giving opportunities to others who may not readily have an opportunity in the corporate world are applicable across the globe. For example, the sub-Saharan African continent is very diverse; although everyone is African, there are certain regional nuances you need to account for to make sure that you are creating a vibrant and open work environment. My experience with the AAF has cultured and honed those sensibilities, and I continue to leverage that to improve myself and the opportunities for others.

There is always going to be a need for people to have a safe place professionally, linked to their personal backgrounds, where they can engage with people in a nonthreatening environment. We all hope that some of the societal challenges in terms of diversification and inclusion will someday be a thing of the past. But, we always need to remember why it was necessary to establish these organizations in the first place. Although we’ve overcome some of the challenges, we don’t want to forget where we came from. That’s going to be our challenge in the next 25 years in the life of this organization – to be grounded in the past but looking forward into the future.

I Am AAF...

I Am Global. It's a fast-paced world, and we need to be able to connect to people in different ways – not just on a professional level, but in ways that appeal to them on a personal and sometimes geographical level, as well. AAF is helping us to do that around the world. I'm proud to have been involved in a lot of activities in the company and in the community that exemplify that global mindset.

I Am Digital. We have to move from, for lack of a better word, “dumb iron” to “smart iron.” The only way to do that is to not only join the digital revolution, but to be out in front of it. Everyone needs to be onboard, and the AAF is helping to lead the charge. In Nigeria, we're building Africa's first multimodal factory, and leapfrogging some of the older technology to jump right into brilliant manufacturing.

I Am Leading. The 'I Am Leading' mantra is evident in the things we've been able to do in recruiting and really pushing up against the grain to work as a group to diversify. Having the backing and support of the AAF enables you to be bold and courageous, and that in itself is the personification of leadership.



2016 AAF Global Symposium Planning Committee Leads

Event Chairs



**Janeen
Uzzell**
Corporate

**Shawn
Warren**
Aviation

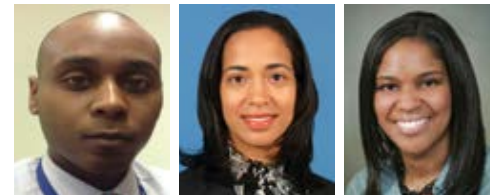
Fiance



**Elias
Ellis**
Global Ops

**Ken
Etheredge**
Aviation

Community Outreach / Recruiting Event

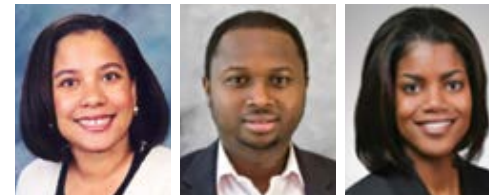


**Jason
Jenkins**
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Strategic Partner Summit



**Kim
Bankston**
Power

**Ahmad
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Gaines**
Aviation

New in 2016

Communications / Marketing



**Tammy
Pollock**
Corporate

**Thulisile
Phiri**
GGO

**Anita
Martin**
Corporate

**Erin
Jones**
Power

**Connie
Higgins**
Digital

Post-Symposium



**Carl
Shaw**
Healthcare

**Rodney
Wall**
O&G

Workshops



**Ava
Drayton-Elder**
Power

**Tanya
Spencer**
O&G

ICON / Future Leaders



**Melvyn
Heard**
Aviation

**Jimmie
Finister**
O&G

**Marisa Jo
Kozachenok**
Transportation

**Kimberly
Mingo**
Healthcare

**Kimberly
Scott**
Aviation

Closing Social Event



**Barbara
Rhoden**
Healthcare

**Shawn
Warren**
Aviation

Functional Breakouts



**Dalric
Webb**
Aviation

**Pam
Battle**
Aviation

Logistics



**Grady
Broadnax**
O&G

**Brian
Wayman**
Healthcare

**Carlos
Miller**
Aviation

**Magnolia
Barnes**
Corporate

eventPower



**Sommer
Jackson**
Project Mgt

**Sharla
Warren**
Project Mgt

Program Management



**Jorge
Florez**
Corporate

We extend our deepest appreciation to the AAF's founding leaders. Cheers to our 25th anniversary and the bright future that lies ahead for AAF.

