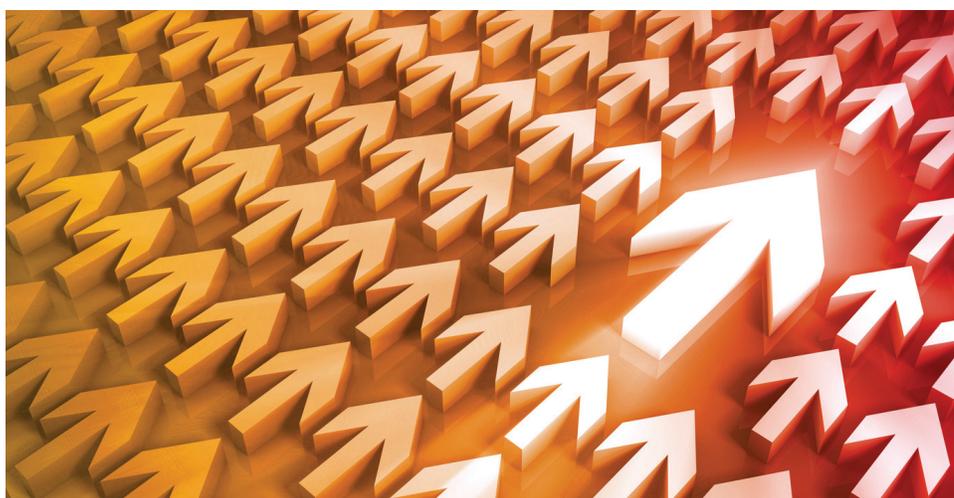


A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP



The African-American business leaders we recognize today could easily be considered trailblazers—blacks are still severely underrepresented in American corporate leadership. But because these individuals are also known as mentors, philanthropists, and role models, their impact on the future will truly be significant. They are, in effect, building a legacy of leadership.

During Black Heritage Month, we invited a select group of individuals to share their perspectives on leadership, giving back, and the challenges facing the African-American community today. From vice presidents and board members to community activists, these talented leaders have pushed the limits of their chosen fields, both in the spotlight and behind the scenes. See how they are shaping the future; read their full interviews online at diversityjournal.com/bhm



Vernon L. Francis
Partner

OUR GREATEST CHALLENGE

We need to work on getting every child the kind of education needed to succeed in this knowledge-based economy. More funding needs to go to urban public schools. As long as Brown's promise remains unfulfilled, there will never be true equality in this country.

GIVING BACK

I try to stay involved in efforts that will increase opportunity for the next generation of diverse young people—especially those aimed at increasing the number of diverse lawyers. For example, I've been heavily involved in the Philadelphia Diversity Law Group, a group of law firms and corporate in-house legal offices dedicated to increasing diversity in Philadelphia area law offices. We have sponsored programs for lawyers and law students.

LESSONS LEARNED

Stand up for the things you believe in and don't be afraid to question the prevailing wisdom. Know when to follow the script and when to do rewrites. Also, every experience can teach you something if you're open to it.