

June 7, 2020

Man in the Mirror

As an MWBE firm, we look at life through an activist lens. We serve as a beacon of support for other MWBE firms, a training ground for minority youth and a catalyst for social good. Because of this philosophy and the extraordinary events in our country today, I want to share some thoughts.

Many of us have seen the horrific video of George Floyd's murder. I highly recommend that everybody views it to understand the anger and frustration that we in the minority community feel. Because he is a Houstonian, the city held a large demonstration to celebrate his life, call for police reform and pray for peace. While some were afraid to attend, my partner and I marched with 75,000 strangers from Discovery Green Park to City Hall. The famous 1966 Buffalo Springfield song "For What It's Worth" came to my mind as we marched, especially the verse:



*"What a field-day
for the heat
A thousand people
in the street
Singing songs and
carrying signs
Mostly say, hooray
for our side"*

Walking peacefully with a mass of people of all ages, races, and religions, including our brave men and women in Blue; I felt many strong emotions and an incredible sense of unity, spirituality and hope.



That evening, my daughter asked why so many came out to support an individual they didn't even know. Our interaction reminded me of the time when I was a young boy and asked my father what a "wetback" meant, a word I heard my neighbor scream at my older brother. As the discussion got deeper, I shared with her the story when I met with a senior consultant and research staffer at

a large West Coast consulting firm just a few years ago. Among other inappropriate and highly offensive comments, they told us they would never hire our firm because we had a problem with white men since we did not have enough white male partners and white male portfolio managers in our firm. Now, we understand why we have never been in a new manager search with by their firm despite our numerous awards, firm stability, strong performance, and now (according to P & I Magazine)

being the largest investment management firm in Houston at almost \$16 billion in assets. I ended the conversation with my daughter that "change starts with you." That night, I was sadly reminded that not much has changed for the minority community since my neighbor screamed back in 1970.

Over the last few days, we have heard and read many leaders including corporate CEO's speak/write about their disdain for racism and inequality. Hopefully, their words will translate into more than token donations or "minority scholarships." We need leadership to move the needle by creating internships for minority/women high school students, focusing on minority/female middle management retention, mentoring and promoting minority/female senior executives and partners, increasing minority/female board members and dramatically increasing business opportunity for MWBE firms, especially in professional services.

Every day we must all attack the root of the problem-INCOME INEQUALITY. This income inequality has led to unequal access to education, justice, proper nutrition, adequate healthcare and business opportunity.



Despite some awful behavior at various demonstrations, I am hopeful that this is a defining moment. Let's not forget George Floyd, Rodney King, nor Jose Campos Torres. Likewise, let's applaud the brave men and women in blue

who keep us safe every day. Let this be the beginning of solving the real problems once and for all - income inequality and racism. As sung by Michael Jackson, the first step starts with looking in the mirror.

*"I'm starting with the man in the mirror
I'm asking him to change his ways
And no message could have been any clearer
If you want to make the world a better place
Take a look at yourself, then make a change"*

Gilbert Garcia
Managing Partner

A copy of our Form ADV, Part II is available upon request.

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