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2022 BLSA Alumni Spring Weekend: Fireside Chat with Jackie Wilson II, '07 J.D.

Black Law Students Association

Notre Dame Law School

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2022 BLSA Alumni Spring Weekend: Fireside Chat with Jackie Wilson II, '07 J.D.

March 25, 2022

Location: The Patrick F. McCartan Courtroom, Eck Hall of Law, Notre Dame Law School

Host: Max H. Gaston, Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

On March 25, 2022, the Black Law Students Association hosted a fireside chat featuring Jackie Wilson II, '07 J.D. Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer for the Brooklyn Nets, who was interviewed by BLSA President Monica Bell and Fitness Connection USA General Counsel Mauri Miller '13 J.D. This event was part of the larger 2022 BLSA Alumni Spring Weekend celebration.

KEY MOMENTS

- [Imposter Syndrome 14:20](#)
- [Transitioning out of Firm Life and into a New Career 22:48](#)
- [What Exactly is D.E.I. and What does D.E.I. look like in the Role 28:53](#)
- [How Can You Break into Sports Law 47:18](#)
- [Owen Ferguson 54:20](#)

English (auto-generated)

0:00

hello everybody hello everyone welcome to alumni spring

0:05

weekend i can't even begin to tell you how

0:10

excited i am to see all of y'all here i'm seeing some really familiar faces which just warms my heart i'm seeing

0:16

some new faces which i'm very excited about too and i'm seeing all of our current students who are out here to support the bosa

0:22

this is beautiful i've only been here for five months in this position but as many of y'all already know i graduated

0:27

from the law school in 2013 so to see this right now to see how strong we are right now i'm not going to take up too

0:34

much time talking because i know i like to talk but i just want to say it's such a pleasure

0:39

to see all of you here um and so a few of y'all came to the uh cocktail hour that just happened this is the fire side

0:46

that we're gonna do this evening and then after this we're gonna have a march madness game watch uh it's the sweet 16

0:52

tonight so we've got a bunch of good games we're gonna have three different screens playing so it'll be really really exciting we've got food for you

0:58

you know we're taking care of you so it's gonna be a good night and i think this is gonna be a really interesting discussion

1:04

i'm pleased to introduce the three of our um of our speakers here we've got

1:09

mari miller to my right mari and i graduated the same year 2013 he's on the ndla board we have our balsa president

1:17

monica bell very excited about her and to my left is jackie wilson

1:23

jackie wilson oversees bsc global's diversity and inclusion strategies and initiatives he's also a 2007 graduate

1:29

from the law school he's helped to develop and execute the company's overall social justice vision

1:36

he spearheads bse's diversity council employee resource groups and collaborates to provide a dni lens with

1:43

departments across the company jackie also developed bsc global's supplier

1:48

diversity program which creates opportunities for local minority and women-owned businesses to become

1:54

suppliers of goods and services for the organization jackie joined bsc global in 2020 with

2:01

tremendous experience focused on the recruitment and growth of diverse talent as well as establishing corporate and

2:08

community programs related to diversity and inclusion jackie began his career as a litigator

2:13

and a few years later his love of sports led him to become the general counsel of

2:19

all pro sports and entertainment a sports agency based in new york city where he served as a certified player

2:26

agent at all pro he was charged with spearheading the social responsibility efforts of

2:32

professional athletes helping them identify areas of need in their communities and establishing charitable

2:38

foundations that address those issues while also overseeing the implementation of community programming after more than

2:45

five years at all pro jackie followed his entrepreneurial dreams and his passion for fitness into health and

2:52

wellness spaces by becoming the founder and ceo of nova fitness innovation

2:57

as a black entrepreneur jackie not only focused on diversity and inclusion within his own company but also

3:04

participated in efforts to help other minority entrepreneurs break the barriers he and his professional athlete

3:11

clients have faced jackie is a proud graduate of duke university and even proud a graduate of

3:17

notre dame law school where he earned a bachelor of arts in public policy with a minor degree in african-american studies uh he holds his

3:24

juris from the law school here thank you so much to our participants please give them a big round of applause

3:31

[Applause] so to kick us off um jackie we're gonna

3:36

dive really deep into the extremely kind of full-bodied bio that we just heard

3:43

one of the things though is you know this is a fireside chat and as you can see

3:48

uh we've jack in our war meetings this morning we've changed out of our jackets we've come in more casual

3:55

and very friendly we are rocking the new balsa sweaters that we were able to buy today

4:01

so thank you to the boston leadership and executive board on making sure that we have these uh really nice sweaters

4:08

but this is a conversation we are here to learn more about jackie learn about what jackie's doing kind of

4:14

how he got to where he is but we really invite you all to participate in this conversation okay so

4:20

with that said i will turn it over to your esteemed esteemed leader uh michael

4:25

bell and monica will kick us off for today thank you mori we just got a really

4:30

great vibe about jackie from max so jackie do you have anything else you like to tell us about you before we get

4:36

started max made me sound better than i am

4:42

awesome well let's start at the beginning of your notre dame journey then how did you come to the uh i understand that you're going to start

4:47

law school so me wanting to be a lawyer is interesting because i didn't know any lawyers

4:54

growing up the lawyers that i knew were on tv um so i was in love with shows like law and

5:00

order um but the thing that really drew me to law school was a hbo show called

5:05

artless and arliss was a super agent on that show and so i knew that i wanted

5:12

to get in sports in some way shape or fashion and so watching marlis on that show watching

5:19

his command with professional athletes made me want to to pursue a career in law and eventually

5:26

um go in to go into sports but i didn't again didn't know any lawyers at all and so i was really modeling that

5:34

off off of what i saw on tv in that process did you have anybody that really pushed you in that direction

5:40

or were you kind of just self-driven um more self-driven i mean my parents

5:45

always instilled in me to you know if you you have a dream say it out loud and

5:51

do whatever it takes um to go get it and so you know i told them i wanted to go to law school they were fully supportive

5:57

of that they simply asked how could they how could they help and so you know they put me in programs and

6:04

encouraged me to you know do public speaking and and do more reading and writing uh to get prepared um but they

6:11

simply you know just said that like we'll support you in whatever it is that that you want to do they didn't know

6:19

so jackie you south journal going to law

6:24

and where's duke and how did you come to decide that you

6:31

wanted to come to notre dame i've been in love with notre dame since i was like a young kid

6:37

and that's primarily due to rocky ishmael and tim brown um watching them on on tv razzle and dazzle

6:44

you know they were the the one team that you could watch throughout the nation so i grew up grew up in atlanta so you

6:50

could watch the georgia bulldogs which we did but you could always watch notre dame on on saturdays and so i i grew up

6:58

a fan i knew i wanted to to be here um and so when i was applying for for law

7:04

school this was this was at the top of the top of my list um but i never stepped foot on notre dame's campus

7:09

until my first day of orientation that's how much i loved the idea of of going to notre dame

7:17

that i didn't i didn't need to be here um to to confirm that so what was the you never set foot on campus until your

7:23

orientation we have admitted students here who are doing the exact opposite right

7:31

to get a feel for what it is it wasn't anything that in your research

7:37

what drove you to say you know what i don't even need to see this place in person to decide i want to go here

7:45

i would say the sense of community and how much the people that i knew went to notre

7:51

dame love notre dame charlotte who's who's sitting up here now was was my mentor at notre dame when

7:58

i got into notre dame she called me um and and talked to me about about coming to notre dame bobby brown who was

8:06

the uh balsa president at the time called me and i knew from bobby being on the football team
yeah and bobby called

8:12

me and said hey man like you want to be here um trust me yeah um and i and i did and

8:19

the fact that people were calling they didn't do that when i when i applied to do nobody
nobody called so it was just

8:24

you know come here if you want to uh but the fact that people were taking time out of their
schedules to to call

8:30

me and then direct me to other people and introduce me to duke along who were

8:35

at another game it was just the sense of community that i was looking for that's awesome
what's funny is anybody in the

8:42

room who knows bobby knows that the way he just said bobby called him

8:47

is exactly how bobby called him and talked to him when he first met him so

8:54

you get to know your name how was it i mean

8:59

obviously the climate changes i'm very curious as to what it was like when you were here

9:04

so you know again i had never set foot on notre dame's campus before before i got here so it
was a a different experience

9:12

um for me but i will say that coming to notre dame is or was one of the best things that that

9:18

i've ever done um my closest friends my network all came out of notre dame my

9:23

wife um i met uh the first day of orientation at notre dame and that sense of community

9:30

that i described before you know that i got from charlotte and i got from from bobby brown
that's something that has

9:36

continued with me my core group of notre dame friends i speak to every single day

9:42

the godmother of my my kids you know was was in our class at notre dame so like

9:47

my family by choice we're all classmates of mine from from notre dame so i couldn't be happier
with

9:54

having come here now this is a balsa event that we're hosting right now what was it like being here as a black

9:59

student not as deep as it is now

10:06

again it was it was different you know i i grew up you know in atlanta georgia to

10:11

where you know my my high school class there were

10:17

about 1100 people and maybe 10 of them did not look like me um so this is this was a totally

10:24

different different experience but i would say that the smaller group of us

10:31

allowed for tighter connections allowed for connections with professor dwight king

10:37

and allowed for us to connect with judge shambly um and

10:43

you know now i'd love to see how big balsa has gotten but for us you know

10:49

balsa and hulsa were essentially one organization um because we were we were all together so

10:55

i went to all also meetings everybody else came up to meetings um but again that sense of

11:02

community that network that bond you know still exists now and i graduated you know 15

years ago

11:09

but but that's that's my village how does it how does it make you feel to

11:14

to utter those words i heard you say the first time today when we were just at the reception

you know i graduated 15

11:20

years ago what is that what does that mean how does it make you feel i feel younger

11:28

but yeah 15 years ago is a is a long time and it's it's a long time of of

11:34

change the one i see in the law school now when i come back and you know have conversations

i don't know where he is

11:40

now with with max or our talk to dean kohler have conversations with with you

11:46

um i love the direction that the university is going i love the talent

11:51

that the university is bringing in and and hopefully you guys know that

11:56

that you have a a network that is like actively willing to to help you in in

12:02

any way that that we can so i i like where we're going i like the fact that we're about to have a you know di

12:09

conversation you know following these these board meetings i mean that's that's a space that you know i can't say

12:15

it readily existed you know when i first stepped on campus in 2004

12:20

you know jack you mentioned networks and networking and one thing that i feel a lot of

12:26

people undervalue here at notre dame sometimes is that network what was your experience with it like while you were here at the

12:33

law school and how has it helped you after you left i got my first job out of law school um

12:41

during like a weekend like this um i met with a fellow board member uh

12:47

tonker and um got a chance to to connect with him and at that time i did not know that

12:53

i was going to be going you know to the east coast i didn't i thought i was going back home to atlanta my wife had

12:59

other ideas and so but i had the opportunity to meet

13:04

tom develop that that relationship um i then you know was a summer associate at

13:10

his law firm and then spent three years at his law firm you know coming out of school and that opportunity presented

13:16

itself like i met him in the dining hall um and so like it's just that strong and

13:21

we talked earlier today i get more emails than than i can count with

13:27

with people you know reaching out either reaching out for jobs reaching out to be connected to up to other folks and i get

13:33

more emails than i can respond to i respond to every single notre dame email that that comes in

13:39

because notre dame alumni responded to my emails when i was coming out of school and they still respond to my

13:47

find emails let's be honest like if you've got you know chief diversity officer brooklyn

13:54

little shirt there's a lot of responses now that's awesome you know so one of the things monica and

14:00

i talked about as we prepare for this is you know jackie you talked about you never set foot on here you don't from

14:06

this campus and in your high school class and your

14:11

college class like you you look like everybody else but when you came here with it

14:20

talk to us about any type of imposter syndrome that you may have faced or talk to us about an

14:24

experience that you had when you first got to campus where you said oh i'm no longer in there i'm in south bend

14:30

indiana yeah i mean i i think that it's it's

14:35

natural when you are in a space that is you know not filled with people that

14:42

look like you to question whether or not this is where you should be

14:47

and so i remember my first you know reading assignment in law

14:53

school it was seven pages and it probably took me like three hours to read those sand pages and understand and

14:59

i'm just sitting there like there's no way it's taking these other by my other classmates this long

15:05

um and like i was embarrassed to ask that question had i asked that question i would have found out that it took them three hours

15:11

or are longer with that but instead of looking around and saying like this is

15:16

good this is hard for everybody i just assumed that it was hard for me yeah um

15:21

and so it took a while to to overcome that but that was a a self-doubt that

15:28

probably would have been alleviated by having open and honest conversations and i and

15:33

i think that in 2022 people are more vulnerable people are living their lives on the internet like they're more more

15:39

likely to have these conversations um that we weren't having and so it took a while for me to like gain that

15:46

confidence you know to to know that like yes i belong and so if you ask me

15:52

what would i tell my one else self now the only thing that i would say is you belong

15:58

like you were here because you were supposed to be here you are talented you are smart and you are just as capable if

16:04

not more capable than your than your classmates but that is not something that i just intuitively knew you know

16:11

when when i got here yeah i think it's important right we have again a bunch of admitted students here we have

16:18

one else we have folks who've been practicing for 25 years and folks who

16:24

just started practicing and it's important to to reiterate that you do belong

16:32

you are here for a reason you are not here because of some box that you checked on your application

16:39

and don't be afraid to be vulnerable don't be afraid to

16:44

[Music] to ask questions that you may think nobody else is asking

16:51

everybody else in the classroom is asking those same questions they're afraid to ask the questions as well

16:58

sticking kind of with this topic as well i'm curious what what was the process of overcoming that

17:03

imposter syndrome life for you um

17:08

i i think it was i think a turning point for me was boston weekend to be honest it was like my first time

17:16

being able to to interact with alumni who were you know super successful

17:23

had similar upbringings um that that i had and like couldn't map out this is

17:29

how you get here and i was able to ask them questions like was this hard for you how would you

17:35

overcome that and then just like i'm telling you guys an attitude to reach out you know and you have a network they

17:41

did the same thing um for me and so being able to have those those conversations and

17:48

listen to stories of you know failure is probably the wrong

17:54

word but listen to stories where they were less successful than they

17:59

wanted to be and i'm looking at them like you are at the pinnacle of success i was like oh

18:05

okay cool like i can i can i can stumble now i can learn i can you know build some confidence build some experience

18:12

and i can get here too yeah do you think it's something you ever that you have overcome or is it

18:17

something you still experience in your life today oh yeah i'm overcoming

18:27

so so we'll talk about you we're going to dive into some dei topics that are really passionate and

18:34

and that you that you really have deep feelings for but

18:39

so you go to this law firm so you meet tom you go to this law firm you're a young black associate

18:45

in a law firm where i presume not many people who look like you it was me that's what i thought i didn't want

18:51

to make that assumption i wanted you to make that uh so to talk about some of the stories we had very early on

18:58

um i didn't have any mentors um in in that space and like there was

19:04

just little day-to-day things that that happen when you are you know seemingly

19:09

isolated in the space i played on um our law firm's basketball team and so

19:15

and we played in a lawyer's league against other law firms and every time we go place you know

19:23

somebody on another lawyer on a different team would ask me if i worked in the mail room i'm like dude this is the lawyer's link

19:30

like why is your assumption that you're not a lawyer yeah and so like there were challenges like that and then like

19:36

little little challenges that i think people had just not thought about because there hadn't been black

19:43

attorneys there before so like martin luther king day was a floating holiday and along with columbus day and so due

19:52

to the you know school schedule all the lawyers took off columbus day and then came to work on martin luther

19:58

king day and i'm the black associate who's there and it's like i mean i'm also from atlanta too like this is a

20:04

different thing for me like i'm not going to come to work but then it's like the one black guy's not at work right

20:10

now and so um you know thankfully like my friend was was receptive to

20:16

to my my conversations with them and so i explained to them how that's isolating and puts me in a in a different position

20:22

and so for the next year like martin luther king day became like an actual company holiday so that people

20:28

were not deciding between between the two but it's those little things that you don't have to think about

20:34

when there is no diversity you know in that in that space you know the company i met

20:40

now like six years ago we didn't have you know a maternity leave policy we didn't have we didn't have

20:47

women that were having having kids and then all of a sudden you started having women that had kids at all we need a maternity policy we need a

20:54

paternity belief policy but it's like unless you have diversity within your organization

21:01

within your school you're not thinking about all of these things that may not affect you

21:07

personally yeah so so in that lawyerly how many points did you average that

21:12

money [Music]

21:25

uh so all right so you you you wake up you went firm

21:31

you immediately made an impact in changing things like making martin's became an

21:36

actual third holiday right as you see those changes happen

21:43

how does that make you feel in the workplace

21:49

um probably a mix of emotions like

21:55

i feel happy that you know the firm or the company

22:00

that i'm that i'm with now is is receptive to these to these changes um

22:05

but i also feel burned that like i have to go have this conversation for

22:11

those changes you know to happen and so i know we'll we'll get to this we'll get to this later within that but that's

22:17

that's how i end up in a a dei role because so many times you end up

22:23

doing dei work to make it an inclusive place for yourself you're just not

22:28

getting paid for it yeah it's the extra work yeah that's happening within that and so now you know i'm blessed we're

22:35

like that's that's all i did yeah all i do is think about this you think about that you think about that

22:41

guess i'm working for this yeah yeah yeah so you obviously left that firm at some

22:48

point um what was that like transitioning out of firm life and into a new career

22:52

um it was well good i mean it was it was a happy time for me like i went to that law firm

23:00

one i wanted to work for for tom curtin but two i wanted to learn how to be a lawyer before entering into into sports

23:07

like notre dame did a great job of teaching me how to learn the law but i wanted to go out and like get some

23:13

practical skills um with this so i always had the plan of as i you know started like wanting to

23:19

be a sports agent um and so after a few years in the law firm my best friend from from undergrad and i

23:27

uh decided to leave our firms together and we were going to start our own agency

23:33

and in the process of us looking to start our own agency a few

23:38

agencies were interested in us um and so that's how we ended up joining uh the agency that we went with all pro

23:44

sports what was that transition like going from just busy crazy bustling

23:51

law firm life into something completely different i traded one

23:57

busy career for another um except you know i wasn't sitting behind

24:03

a desk as as much and so still using the skill set that i got from from notre

24:08

dame and practicing law so now i'm you know drafting negotiating and reviewing

24:14

you know contracts both on you know negotiating with teams negotiating you know marketing deals but then also

24:21

setting up the charitable foundations of of all of our players and so i was still

24:26

you know doing law i just like was not doing it at a at a law firm um anymore and my

24:32

boss you know went from you know older than me to 19 20 and and

24:39

21 year old uh fickle mind of athletes

24:44

so sticking with this a little bit something maury and i were talking about is sports law is typically something that's just really glamorous super sexy

24:52

what does it actually look like in practice um it's still pretty sexy

25:00

um you know it's fun to to be out with with players it's fun to be at games and

25:07

in events um but you know i'll answer it in two different ways so on the on the player's

25:13

side it is extremely time consuming you are on the

25:18

road so i i miss thanksgiving christmas new year's my wife's birthday

25:24

anniversaries because you are always traveling if i was the agent i'd be in march madness right now i wouldn't be

25:29

i wouldn't be here um but on the team side it's you know less travel and so you are

25:36

in any one location but you're still you know negotiating different different contracts and in different deals the

25:44

names on the on the paper just just changed but it but it is fun to to be

25:49

out and about in those spaces so you have this like really cool job right

25:56

and you're at all pro sports i mean like i can't lost them because i

26:02

wanted to be an agent and then i was like these fickle like 19 year olds i don't have patience for that right so

26:10

your general counsel for all pro sports right and

26:16

now you have a leadership role how did dei change at all pro sports in

26:23

comparison to the firm so i would say that that

26:28

that was actually a place where everybody looked like me i worked for the first black super agent uh lamont

26:34

smith and and so he's the one that challenged the junior junior rule for

26:40

players to be able to come out with with barry sanders uh we had jerome bettis um

26:45

as as a client and so what lamont instilled in me was we need

26:52

to be doing something beyond making sure that our players are set up

26:57

on the field it was every player that we represented had to

27:02

establish a charitable foundation either in the city where they currently play the city where they were from or the city that they that they went to school

27:09

okay um and so my job with them was to sit down and figure out what could we do

27:15

to uplift the community in which you were from and so that's why i got my initial experience in like access

27:21

programming and so like with jerome bettis we established a foundation that was

27:26

addressing the digital divide in in detroit because like they they're

27:31

just they weren't internet it wasn't there wasn't computers and so i would say that the dei

27:37

experience there was all about creating access programming to underserved

27:43

communities and so you know when people think about dei in 2022 everybody

27:49

assumes it is you know this hr position yeah um but it's you know it's it's much

27:54

broader um than that and i know we'll get into that when we talk about my current role now

um

27:59

but but yeah access programming was what's the big big key there and then making sure that

28:06

we were giving people an opportunity for for employment um agent world is not it's not diverse

28:14

and it is tough to break into sports in general it is

28:19

even tougher to break in on the agency side and so it was very

28:25

intentional in our hiring very intentional in our in our internship um programming and

28:32

intentional with making sure that people who you know worked with us and became part of

our network had opportunities you

28:39

know well beyond us we wanted you to be successful with us but like if you're not going to be with us like we want to make sure that you have access to go be

28:46

somewhere else so kind of a weird question coming from me since i am the president of the black law

28:53

students association but what exactly is dei and what does dei look like in the role that you

serve

28:58

in so dei is diversity equity um and inclusion and so again a lot of people

29:05

think about dei through the lens of of higher and that's definitely an important part so i review every hiring

29:13

slate you know that we have so taking a step back you know we you know i tell everybody i work for the brooklyn nets i

29:18

actually work for the parent company of the brooklyn nets we have five companies within that so it's the nets barclays

29:24

center new york liberty long island nets and nets gc and so all of our hiring that

29:30

takes place within those five five entities like i review our slates i review our

29:35

our policies i oversee our employee resource groups which are our um

29:40

infinity group affinity groups and so that's when i run our diversity council that's what i do on on the

29:46

internal but then you know i'm gonna steal masses line from earlier today you know he he

29:53

used a great analogy from from the lion king to where he said that you know everything that you see that the the

29:59

light touches is your is your kingdom and that's the way the dei is within our

30:05

organizations so i'm in every single department like dei

30:10

uh influences you know everything that we do it influences how we grow our fan

30:16

base so are our tickets accessible to all of the communities that we're that we're

30:22

looking to reach are we inclusive in our marketing are we doing more than just marketing on

30:28

you know the fan which is you know one one network like are we also on on hot 97 like as we're going up are

30:35

merchandise you know do we have dad hats but like do we also have snapbacks in

30:40

there too to continue to go and then like evacuating our partners uh there's a saying you know down south

30:47

of domino's like all money and good money and so i review our partners to make sure that their values align with

30:54

the values that we set out as a as an organization and then if you tell me you

31:00

know i use verizon as an example verizon is very intentional in uplifting hispanic youth

31:06

so brittany during our note latino celebration i want you to underwrite tickets for these local hispanic

31:13

community groups i want you to sit on these panels that we're gonna have so that people

31:18

um like are able to look at people that look like them and see sweet roles within within

31:25

organizations and so i do all of that for like within the organization but then i also create access programming

31:32

outside and so i've created our supplier supplier diversity program so where we are actively looking to work with

31:39

minority-owned businesses um throughout throughout brooklyn and so we do that in two ways like one

31:45

every one of our departments accesses this diversity database but two

31:51

we have a separate food and beverage component for barclay center so where i'm bringing in diverse vendors into

31:58

barclays center so i run what we call a brooklyn market which is a smorgasbord so we have four

32:04

four stands that are just a rotating um stance for minority owned vendors that

32:10

we have and so we give it to them for one to two months at a time because getting a full-time stand is oftentimes

32:15

too heavy of a lift um to get started and so what this program does is it gives them

32:21

an opportunity to have a proof of concept within barclays center and so you know best case scenario

32:28

they do well then we'll help them get this full-time stand for for the next season worst case

32:34

scenario they've interacted with 17 000 fans on a nightly basis from from one

32:40

month to two months who are now being driven back to their their brick and mortar you're so cool all right so

32:47

that's so cool you do a lot of stuff right so let's unpack let's unpack some of that a little bit

32:53

but before we do that so you talked about all the things that you've been

32:58

successful at getting leadership team ownership to buy into and and

33:05

and allow you to pursue there's got to be something that

33:12

some idea you had and you you presented it to the leadership you presented it to

33:17

uh to team ownership and you had to fight for it it wasn't

33:23

immediately accepted talk to us about an example of of an idea

33:29

that you had to fight for and you had to you have to yield some power and use

33:34

some way to get that idea across the board um i would say

33:40

incorporating dei metrics into our performance reviews

33:46

and fight four is probably the wrong word but i had to

33:51

do a lot of explaining um because again you know my mandate is is

33:56

pretty broad like i look at dni well beyond it just being the right

34:02

thing to do it's the right thing to be inclusive and equitable that's that's fantastic but i also look at it as

34:08

essential to driving our bottom line like it's essential to the success of

34:13

our company in the diverse borough that is fedes brooklyn and so i have to

34:19

explain to our stakeholders why dei is essential to your department

34:25

and why this is why this is important why is it important that you are inclusive in your hiring

why is it

34:32

important that you are utilizing our supplier diversity program but why is it important that you are also continuing

34:38

to educate yourself not just the mandatory trainings that are taking place but going through and taking

34:44

optional trainings you know within that and why that makes us better as a as an

34:49

organization so so when you talk about incorporating it

34:55

into reviews and what level are you talking about to make sure that kind of we're all on the
35:02
same page are you talking about mid-level managers or how high in the organization are you
35:08
saying no we are going to incorporate dei metrics into your performance reviews everybody
35:15
and why is that why is it important to you um again beyond it just being the right
35:22
thing to do like what i'm trying to like what i'm ultimately trying to do is
35:27
change behavior um within this like we we are we have not been an inclusive society
35:35
and so there's two ways you can go about it you can like go out go live by changing hearts
35:40
and and that's cool but like i'd rather change behavior first because changing behavior is is
35:46
immediate um within that it takes longer to change to change hearts i mean we've seen all
types of movies to where folks were like
35:53
oh man i didn't even know that this was possible now i love you and this is like
36:18
that you saw after this policy was implemented that that sticks out in your mind
36:26
um all of the the ideas are no longer coming from my
36:32
department they are they're coming from from everywhere and so our merchandise
department is
36:39
coming to me with hey you know these are some black designers that are
36:45
from brooklyn that we can highlight during black history month to where we can sell their
merchandise in the in the
36:51
team store our entertainment team is saying like hey these are you know the women-owned
36:57
businesses that we are using for our our outfits in our in our hair
37:02
um and so like like people are hoping to source we're i'm getting our marketing
37:08
department that is that is sending us you know different minority-owned restaurants that we
should be
37:14
highlighting and considering for for brooklyn market and so it is less of a hey let me come up
with

37:21

something and talk to y'all about it to where it's more more collaborative and like now we're all working together because like we're seeing what those

37:27

what those benefits are we're seeing the change in in our in our families and in

37:32

demand for for tickets i mean for us we are still a startup for you know in in brooklyn

37:39

this is our this is our ninth season and so coming to a a new place

37:45

a place that was you know a lot of those were less than excited to see us to see us move in as

37:52

some people have to to move out um and so like again

37:57

i think that we owe it to our to our community to to use our platform to

38:02

uplift and create these create these opportunities and i'm seeing my teammates within the organization

38:09

you know start to feel that as well you have a question i can keep going

38:20

before we go i'm going to take a break right now um are there any questions in the audience

38:26

because what happens is i can keep going monica can keep going we got about 20 minutes left and so i

38:33

want to make sure that we have time for students admitted students parents

38:38

um alumni anybody anybody have any questions that you want to fire at jackie right now

38:47

yes okay before you do it though okay you got to stand up

38:52

you're not okay so now now you want to raise your hand if i want to say that at first

38:58

so

39:10

is

39:18

[Music] not much

39:24

i would say that my my attitude probably would have changed about some of the things that that were

39:31

that were happening i would have been more confident um earlier i would have i would have asked

39:37

more more questions um and i would have and i would have asked for more for more help

39:44

but i am like happy with the path that that i took um but it didn't have to be

39:51

as hard as it as it was because i was operating you know thinking that i was

39:57

when i was by myself when i didn't have to be

40:03

any other questions because i'm my name is deacon um

40:14

welcome

40:20

i had a question sir you talked about how you were all self-driven [Music]

40:54

[Music] you're in law school and

41:00

you just accepted the law school's offer to come to school you can't back out of

41:05

this anymore man go ahead go ahead

41:14

okay so so deacon's question was jackie where how did you know did you always know

41:20

that you were driven and wanted to be in sports yeah uh so a quick clarification i'm the

41:28

chief diversity officer not not general counsel i was a general counsel book before i don't i don't want uh jeff

41:33

gortz to confine but um yeah i only i knew that i wanted to be

41:40

in sports i didn't i didn't always know what that would that look like um the role that i have now didn't exist

41:48

when i when i was in school it didn't exist five years ago um and so i knew i wanted to be in

41:54

sports i knew i wanted to be around around athletes and knew i wanted to make a make a difference but i wasn't

42:01

sure what that was going to be um but to me the first question about being you know self-driven and motivated

42:07

like yes i've always been uh you know again say the goal out loud and and find a way to go to go get it

42:14

and yeah that path isn't always straight can can look like this as you've seen i've had a few different um you know

42:21

stops along the way in various industries but like being in sports was my was my

42:28

north star but when i left les forts and i was running a fit tech company

42:34

i didn't know that i was going to get back into back into sports um but i did

42:39

feel you know after a few years i did feel a calling to get back in there and and i plan to

42:45

stay for a while any other questions yes

42:52

sure uh balcony occurred too well in law school um i guess my question is kind of you know especially given in the past

42:58

two years of code and stuff um we haven't seen maybe the continuity in terms of having a lot like these types

43:03

of events um providing maybe the experience that we might have been left out of um you know as a current tool i'm

43:09

sure monica and i've kind of talked about this before as well um you know it's important for us to

43:14

kind of bring this back and you know have things like this so i'm kind of here to see your perspective on what

43:20

foundational aspects you know people like us two wells the grills are kind of on their way up um like for us

43:28

we're gonna be in those positions to kind of be able to look back and give you know the younger ones advice and show them around what kind of

43:34

foundational aspect really helps to create that community or uh the structure that you know helps

43:41

create success and the support that no minorities might need so i'll repeat the question and malcolm

43:48

correct me if i'm wrong but his question jackie is what foundational aspects

43:55

did you find did you experience at notre dame that that created that community that

44:01

brought you back here to speak today even in your careers in general and

44:08

you're expanding expand it upon in your career as well

44:14

i mean i i think that it goes back to the sense of community that is that is here

44:20

like i i wouldn't go back just just anywhere this is this is a a difficult

44:25

trick to make but it's a trip that i would that i would make you know any time that i'm

44:32

asked you know when maura and i were talking about even you know having this fireside
fireside chat like all he said

44:39

in the text message was we need a speaker and i said save us um because when notre dame
calls i will

44:46

i will be here and so when you know a boss a student you know reaches out like i am i am there
and i

44:53

and i speak for for my wife who is also uh class of 2007. like she's there she's

44:59

there as well she may not be here physically but you know anything that we can do to help

45:05

and make your burden a little a little lighter we are we are happy to do so

45:11

because we have people who have done that and continue to do that for us and so it is
important

45:18

that you know once people show up for you that you pass that back and make sure

45:23

that you show up for for the next group and i'll i'll reiterate what he said

45:31

uh you know i met jackie fall of last year at our first board

45:37

meeting tom curtis called and said hey i'm nominating jackie to the board he's

45:42

somebody you need to meet so what did tom do he set up a call for jackie and i and and
anybody who knows tom

45:49

that call was about 20 minutes tom talked for 19.

45:55

uh but he definitely said he said okay now i'm already jackie you two have another number
46:01

connect and that's what we did and monica and i talked and we said we
46:06

want to have this fireside chat and max and i were looking for speakers
46:12

and we both kind of like on the car said max jackie's gonna be there
46:18

why not just reach out to jackie and it was that it was just that one message and
46:24

it was legit stay less tell me what time i didn't be
46:34

right you know jackie jackie did us a favor took his hat off today
46:39

but the snapback is right [Music]
46:50

and we have students in here and one of the things you said earlier was
46:56

sports is tough to break into right and i imagine that there are
47:03

students here i happen to know there's a student sitting to my left who wants to break into
sports law
47:10

so tell monica what tips you have besides reaching out
47:18

to you and staying in contact with you how can you break into sports law i actually think that
that's the best
47:23

way it's like going through like any time that i was looking to change
47:28

careers or or get opportunities or meet folks like my first stop was linkedin and i would just go
through and i put in
47:35

notre dame and then i look to see who from notre dame is operating in the industry that i that i
want to want to
47:42

be in um and so monica we should have a conversation after this i will call you tonight
47:48

um but but that's how that's how it happens and so um sports is a very
47:55

um it's a small circle but it is a close-knit circle and so
48:01

you know similarly to what i was talking about before about opportunities you know within my
my former organization

48:06

you know maybe there's not an opportunity that fits you within you know one of our our entities but i know

48:12

somebody at every other team in the in the nba i know folks at most teams in

48:18

the nfl and you know at the league office so there's an opportunity somewhere we'll find it oh we will yeah

48:24

we'll find it when i first got here this weekend monica said hey like

48:30

i still want to work at the raiders okay like that's the goal is to go work at the raiders and so we're going to make

48:35

sure monica amazing to the raiders but the funny thing is

48:41

they're executives with the raiders and guess what school they happen to go

48:57

so another question so

49:02

you mentioned that ddi didn't exist with the brooklyn next five years ago frankly ddi didn't exist at a lot of companies

49:09

prior to may of 2020 right

49:14

and you're you're creating and trailblazing a path

49:21

every single day you make decisions or you come up with the programs and you collectively come

49:26

up with programs um across the uh across the organization how has your

49:33

training and experience as a lawyer positioned you to take on that challenge

49:41

um i think i trained as a lawyer like taught me to

49:46

you know really be detail oriented and a lot of the work that i do in terms

49:52

of creating programs and policies like the details matter the details matter when we are

50:00

crafting a statement in the wake of the murder of george floyd details matter when we are addressing you know the

50:08

asian hate crimes that are that are happening almost daily in in new york city details matter when you are having

50:15

conversations with our employee resource groups our affinity groups and coming up with different policies that are going

50:20

to you know impact impact them um and i would say that my training also taught

50:26

me how to communicate those those details and communicate it in a manner

50:32

in which it is um direct but digestible

50:38

um within that and so like those are skills that i you know learned here

50:43

in trial advocacy class and and taking you know the um public defender

50:48

externship at the with rudy and so like those are those are skills that that are definitely transferable i

50:54

think that being you know taught at a university like notre dame prepares you for

51:01

really anything that you that you want to do um and so like again like use these your

51:08

professors use your students i've learned just as much from my my classmates as i have from from my my

51:15

professors so keep this keep this network and and keep it tight and and learn and educate each

51:22

other now jackie just for the sake of you know the students that we have in this room

51:28

when it comes to networking and reaching out to different alumni what just advice do you have about going

51:34

through that process putting notre dame law in the subject line

51:41

really yeah i would say i was talking to a student earlier today

51:47

and it's it's not being afraid to to ask like the worst case scenario is somebody

51:53

doesn't respond or or doesn't give you the answer that you're looking for but you're right back where where you started best case scenarios they really

52:00

help you within that and so i would like i was serious about like putting notre dame

52:05

law in that in that subject line um because again you know folks are folks are busy and so when they are you know

52:12

skimming through you know the hundreds of emails that they that they may get like that's something that's going to to

52:18

grab there grab their attention um and you know i i would say

52:24

using that that style of communication to set up a different conversation is probably

52:30

better than writing an essay in that in that email um but seriously like reach

52:36

out to folks and and ask ask for help so i'll add that and certainly put notre

52:42

dame law but football yeah

52:48

i mean the community that jackie talked about

52:53

is a direct connection to notre dame

52:58

balsa and we respond to those emails

53:04

just a little faster than other emails that hit the inbox because we recognize the struggle

53:12

and the difficulty and the courage it takes to send on that message

53:20

and so reach out connect with us

53:26

stay in contact with us don't be afraid to just say hi right

53:31

i know that over christmas break i reached out to some of the one else that i met and i

53:38

was just like yo congrats on the end of the first semester hope you're i hope you're

53:43

enjoying some of the i hope you're enjoying christmas break right and those messages that connection that's

53:50

how you build genuine relationships with people and those genuine relationships are what

53:57

get you further or what are what puts you top of mind when jackie has an opportunity that comes up

54:03

that may be at the next or maybe somewhere else and he happens to know that you're interested in a sports law position

54:10

so stay connected with us okay uh we got five minutes

54:15

five minutes yes uh my name is owen ferguson i'm a 11

54:22

from the bahamas so you made a good point that just a lot of dei work is um

54:29

honestly starting with your own needs and your bears and articulating that on the job um so i'm wondering what you do

54:35

when you get tired of that um and what you recommend for us like not to burn

54:40

out in those efforts once i got repeated for the camera max

54:50

question is what do you do when you get tired of being the

54:57

the person pushing dei out and how can they apply those same uh those same tactics

55:04

as students i think it's always important to to know your why

55:10

um and then to take a step back and look at the impact that it that it's that it's

55:15

happening like i'll be honest with you like it is it is difficult at times um

55:22

it is it's bursting and and annoying yeah but

55:27

you know i i look at the impact that we're having like within the organization i look at the impact

55:34

that we're having in the community i look at our our fan base and i look at you know we're having well you know 12 i

55:40

mean 1200 students coming to the game on on tuesday and a lot of those students have never been

55:45

to barclays center like now they get to come and and watch you know great great

55:51

basketball i look at how this type of

55:56

programming didn't exist when i was young and i'm helping to create those programs

56:02

to where like my kids don't know a time when these when these programs did didn't exist you know i have two sons

56:08

that are seven and four years old and like all they know is like this this stuff exists this
56:15

access to opportunity it exists and so taking the step back and and

56:20

noticing the why and you know patting yourself on the back sometimes you're like oh that's pretty dope

56:26

uh like it will give you that fuel um to keep going

56:34

yes sorry this is veering in a different direction but i really like a terrible missed opportunity not to ask this question so

56:41

your career is at the intersection of law sports and dei and you know we're at

56:48

the law school of the university at a time where we just appointed the head coach of our football team marcus

56:53

spurgeon only the second black man to pull that office um what do you think about that and what

56:59

are your thoughts on something like that already happening at a time where we're also seeing a clear draw attention to

57:05

the fact that there's virtually no black head coaches in the nfl so i'll repeat the question uh what are

57:12

your thoughts on marcus freeman being the second black head coach named at notre dame

57:18

and how you react to the fact that that's

57:24

happening at a time that there's only one black head coach in the nfl

57:30

yeah that's that's a great question um and and max when i got to notre dame when we had the first black head coach

57:37

yeah you know when we were all like charles's dealer he was all over the w

57:42

for ty william um and you know to answer your question

57:47

directly i am i'm proud that that coach freeman was was hired i think

57:54

that um after um you know dismissal of of ty

58:00

i was not confident that we would ever have a black head coach again um and as and i don't know if you you

58:08

remember but you know he's one of if not the only head coach that like was not afforded his you know full

58:14

first contract and so i was part of those campus conversations that were that were taking

58:19

place and so whether or not you you know agree with his performance you know on

58:25

on the field he is unique and that he was the only black head coach at that time

58:31

and then unique in that he was not given that same opportunity that is that his peers were given and so

58:37

i look at the university now and hiring coach freeman and

58:42

and hope that that's that's something that that changes um there were you know as you know they

58:48

could have gone in a number of different directions and and they went internal with a young blackhead coach who had

58:56

never been a head coach before which is oftentimes used as a demerit for for

59:01

black coaches in a way that is not used for for white head coaches and so i i think that

59:06

um again like the word that i would use is is proud and proud of the courage i think that

59:13

university showed in making that making that decision in a decision that they would not have

59:20

made you know previously great well we're almost out of time so i

59:27

got one question for you i got two questions okay

59:38

so nba playoffs are coming up and

59:44

anybody who follows the nba and follows the brooklyn nets i see a

59:49

couple smiles people a little excited yo yo kyrie playing

59:56

[Music] vaccine mandates in new york city have

1:00:02

been relaxed the playoffs will be fun

1:00:07

we will be at full full state that's good that's good

1:00:13

okay so just two quick questions for you one i'm curious as to what the most rewarding part of your job is and then

1:00:20

two what comes next from you where are you going from here where are you looking to go any new goals or any directions you're looking to go in

1:00:27

um i i'd say that like my like my biggest sense of product at work

1:00:33

is is our supply diversity program um as as a you know former black black

1:00:39

entrepreneur like i understand these these struggles all too well of

1:00:45

you know struggling for access to capital struggling for you know mentors struck struggling for

1:00:52

you know guidance around around marketing but also just like struggling for

1:00:58

a shop you know someone to taking that that shot and so in my role now having the

1:01:04

opportunity to you know provide a very large platform

1:01:10

for minority-owned owned companies within within brooklyn is is a very

1:01:16

happy place for me for me to be and then taking that a step further and leveraging the relationships that we

1:01:22

have with our our partners and allowing them to do business it's one thing for

1:01:27

for us to do business with the company and and provide them you know with with money that's another thing for us to

1:01:34

hire them but then get other people to hire them as well and so

1:01:40

that is like probably like i mean that that's my baby at work um and

1:01:46

what's next um i don't know like as we've talked about

1:01:52

i've done a whole lot of different things so i don't know i may be an astronaut

1:01:59

will you go to space now so

1:02:08

before before we end uh i think that

1:02:13

everybody who's been a part of balsa or balsa benson this year

1:02:18

would agree that monica has done

1:02:23

a fantastic job

1:02:41

we appreciate you and we are excited uh with the status of balsa that you

1:02:48

were going to pass on we would not be here without your leadership

1:02:55

without your dedication to restoring the community that jackie

1:03:01

talked about today and so from from all of us

1:03:06

thank you we appreciate you uh and and please please please

1:03:12

make sure you continue to instill this community within balsa thank you

1:03:26

yo we appreciate it it's been a great talk uh and

1:03:31

you know we look forward to more uh and you know anybody who has any questions

1:03:37

jackie's here all weekend anybody who's coming to the events tomorrow the and law

1:03:43

symposium tomorrow night the boss alumni dinner uh max is telling me that you know black

1:03:50

tie black tie it up he wants us to look good um y'all come looking nice come clean we

1:03:57

want to see it um jackie thanks and thanks everybody who's able to make it today

1:04:03

[Applause]