

**Handy Lindsey, Jr.**  
**12<sup>th</sup> James A. Joseph Lecture on Philanthropy**  
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**Dallas, Texas**

**Philanthropy's Record on Diversity and Inclusiveness: An Inconvenient Truth**

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President  
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I've been a member of the Association of Black Foundation Executives (ABFE) for 22 consecutive years. In that span of time I have served the organization in many ways. As a matter of fact, I was vice chairman of ABFE when the James Joseph Award Lecture was created. We chose to celebrate ABFE's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary by honoring James Joseph for his distinguished leadership and contributions in the field of philanthropy. We believed that he set a standard to which all professionals of color should aspire.

That first lecture was triumphant. We considered it one of ABFE's finest moments. That moment has been repeated annually a dozen times and each time we have recognized a truly distinguished African American leader. I cannot speculate by what calculus the board of ABFE determined that I should be brought into such exceptional company as James Joseph, Franklin Thomas, Jean Fairfax, Emmett Carson, Bernard Watson, Reatha Clark King, and all the other recipients. To be asked by ABFE to give this address tonight is a great honor and an awesome responsibility.

Thank you.

As I said, I have served ABFE for many years. I have also been served by ABFE. As a Black professional grant-maker, ABFE has been both home and school for me. It has been a place of support, validation and comfort. What we shared in common was an experience of "otherness" in a field where people of color remain relative newcomers. Within this group, the opportunity for fellowship was enthusiastically offered. Most importantly, ABFE has been a place where I could learn from those trailblazers who came before me. I am the grant-maker that I am today because -- through ABFE -- I had the good fortune to associate with many remarkable individuals like Jim Joseph, Jean Fairfax, Jim Gibson, Lynn Walker Huntley, Hugh Price, and

the late Bernie MacDonald. To these individuals and others I am deeply indebted for my education as a grant-maker and my refinement as a professional.

There are three others whose influence critically shaped the development of my career. First, there is Dr. Adrienne Bailey, a trustee of the Southern Education Foundation, who is singularly responsible for my entry into philanthropy. Adrienne has been my friend and role model for more years than either of us care to admit.

Next, there is Earl Durham, a trustee of the Hazen Foundation and a former professor of social work at both the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago. Earl has been my mentor for 25 years. He is the author of my critical thinking and problem-solving skills. He taught me everything I know about community.

Finally there is Jacqui Burton, former director of the Lilly Endowment's program on religion. She is my sister in spirit and personal hero. In my life as a grant-maker, if I have done my work with integrity, with compassion, without thought of recognition, and with grace, I have only aspired to be like Jacqui.

Please indulge me one last thing. In preparing for this evening's address I had the assistance of two astonishingly talented women. They are my lovely wife, Kristin Lindsey, and the Field Foundation's program director, Mae Hong. Please join me in acknowledging and thanking them for their support.

Let's turn to this evening's address which I have entitled "Philanthropy's Record on Diversity and Inclusiveness: An Inconvenient Truth." I hope to cover a few key topics with this lecture:

- I want to talk about what it means to have people of color in this field, and why that matters to philanthropy and our communities.
- I want to review the trends of our participation as Black foundation executives.
- I want to offer some observations on the broad array of initiatives that were intended to advance diversity and inclusiveness.
- I will talk about diversity and inclusiveness, but also about power and race.
- And finally, I'd like to explore opportunities for African Americans and those of the majority to act boldly in the pursuit of greater inclusion.

It is difficult to wrap your arms around this topic. It is multifaceted, and each facet raises a fresh set of hard questions. But as Jim Joseph has reminded us so many times over the past three decades, "Someone has to ask the difficult questions that too easily go unasked, and if asked, unanswered." As colleagues and champions of progress for people of all colors, it is appropriate that we seek answers to these difficult and sometimes "inconvenient" questions at gatherings such as this.

Our first question looks back and asks: What is the History of the Relationship between African Americans and Professional Philanthropy? This question considers both Blacks as professionals in the field and Black communities as beneficiaries of philanthropic giving. I would also note that while African Americans are the focus of this discussion, most of the information and the conclusions can be legitimately extended to other communities of color.

There were a handful of African American professionals working in philanthropy during the early 1970s, at least as evidenced by the fact that Jim Joseph was able to recruit co-founders for ABFE and that in 1971, eight African Americans stood up at the Council's Annual Conference in Montreal to demand the inclusion of Blacks on the slate of board nominations.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, African Americans, as well as other people of color did indeed begin to gain access to the field as professional staff and trustees. This progress was due, in large measure, to ABFE's effective advocacy. By 1985 ABFE could claim more than 200 members and speculate that its membership potential could be as high as twice that. But if we were exuberant over the expanding presence of African Americans in philanthropy, we also watched with concern as our presence diminished in some sectors. Corporate philanthropic professionals were among some of the casualties of the 1980's frenzy of mergers and downsizing. In Chicago, between 1985 and 1988, we saw the number of Black professionals decline **by 60** percent.

The second major contributor to Black attrition in the field was the glass ceiling. Corporate giving jobs yielded few opportunities for advancement that were not blocked by a glass ceiling. In organizations as structurally flat as most foundations, staff positions were, by definition, dead-end. There were also voluntary departures. We must acknowledge that it is likely that frustration in response to overt and subtle discrimination played a role as Black program officers realized that the glass ceiling which prevented their professional advancement could be color-

coded. Still, the overall affect of the 1980's was one of net growth and advancement when measured by the number of professionals in the field.

In the 1990's, we experienced a period of unprecedented growth in the number of foundations and their wealth. A report by the Foundation Center notes that in the decade since 1992, the number of professional staff at foundations more than doubled. In terms of Black staff numbers, a look at the Council on Foundations and Joint Affinity Group data reveals a trend line that can best be described as flat.

A final aspect of participation relates to African Americans on the governing bodies of grantmaking institutions. Here is a description offered by John Mason, former president of the Monsanto Fund, of a typical foundation trustee circa 1930:

*He is a man well past middle age... his social position in the community is that of a person who belongs to the highest income receiving class of the population, he is presumably respectable, and he associates with men of prestige, power and affluence."*

*From this description at least two things are obvious: this man is white and he has never nor will he ever experience the life of those who seek to benefit from his institution's grantmaking. More than 70 years later the description still fits. Today across all foundations, trustees are 65% male, 89% white and 70% are over the age of 51. Of nonwhite trustees, African Americans are approximately half. An African American presence among foundation trustees of only 6% suggests that progress on this dimension of diversity has left much to be desired.*

What about philanthropy's commitment to diversity as demonstrated by its record of grantmaking. How has philanthropy responded to communities of color as beneficiaries? It's hard to say. Consider this: Funding designated for African Americans has fluctuated substantially over the last 20 years, reaching a peak of 4.2 percent of foundation giving in 1988. It stood at around 2.5 percent through most of the 1990s, and it currently hovers at 1.4 percent. I should note that this is the lowest level in 15 years. Total giving to all people of color reached a record height of 9.6 percent in '92, but has steadily declined since then. Today it stands at about 7.7 percent.

Now, these figures are misleading. Giving to African Americans and other racial or ethnic minorities is actually much higher because these grants are captured in other categories: "economically disadvantaged;" "arts;" "at-risk youth;" "education," etc.

To be sure, these grants probably do increase the proportion of grant dollars that go to African Americans and communities of color. The unfortunate fact is that there are fundamental gaps in reporting, classification, analysis and statistical integrity that make it nearly impossible to make meaningful statements about who benefits from our grants. The exception is corporate philanthropy, which quantifies and demonstrates where its dollars go as a part of its business practice. The most recent figures indicate 17% of corporate giving reaches African American communities. As a field, we could do more to develop new tools, to ask different questions and to build consensus on how to improve our record keeping. What does not get counted, you cannot be held accountable for.

Factoring into the trends of the last three decades are a remarkable array of activities intended to advance the field's embrace and demonstration of the values of diversity and inclusiveness.

These efforts have taken many forms including research, advocacy, special initiatives, organizing, public relations, fellowships, internships, and action by diverse grantmaker affinity groups.

There are the contributions of countless scholars: Pablo Isenberg, Wally Nielsen, King Davis, Elizabeth Boris, Lynn Burbridge, Emmett Carson, Bob Bothwell, Rick Cohen, Louis Delgado, and the late Paul Ylversacker and Bill Diaz.

The individual and collective voices of multiple affinity groups have also focused on raising consciousness on diversity and inclusiveness – starting with ABFE in 1971 through the release, thirty years later, of the Joint Affinity Group study.

The research and advocacy of the affinity groups have been amplified and reinforced by regional associations of grantmakers. Four of these associations, in New York, Minnesota, Northern California and Chicago created a diversity toolkit replete with best practices and examples.

Also deserving of recognition is the multi-dimensional strategy of the Council on Foundations.

Noteworthy among the Council's many efforts are:

- the 1983 Fellowship Program for Emerging Young Leaders in Community Foundations (a program from which I personally benefited);
- its 1989 Pluralism in Philanthropy project;

- its 1992 Donors of Color Initiative with Community Foundations;
- its 1993 Task Force on Inclusiveness and subsequent recommendations to the Council's Board;
- its 2002 launch of the Emerging Philanthropic Leaders Fellowship program to provide mentoring opportunities for current minority staff or trustees;
- the recent revision of the Statement of Principles and Practices which strengthened the language on diversity and inclusive practices;
- and finally, the Council's demonstrated commitment to the ongoing work of its Inclusiveness Committee.

Many individual foundations, too, have demonstrated exemplary efforts to directly recruit minority staff members. The Ford Foundation's two year fellowship for Program Associates, the Summer Internship in Philanthropy jointly supported by the Hazen, Gould and Durst foundations, and the 23-year-old Chicago Community Trust Minority Fellowship program are just a few examples.

Stellar examples are abundant among foundations that have acted along various dimensions to advance inclusive practices in their structures or grantmaking. These include: Rockefeller, Kellogg, Gerbode, The Joyce Foundation, The Woods Charitable Fund, the Mott Foundation, the San Francisco Foundation, Hyams Foundation, Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, The Boston Foundation, The Ford Foundation, The California Endowment, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Foundation, ... and many, many more, including a host of community foundations which endeavor to demonstrate what the word "community" means in their names by reaching out to communities

of color not only as beneficiaries but as potential sources of donors as well. Corporate grantmakers through adoption of specific internal programming and setting discrete goals have moved steadily forward on the inclusiveness agenda. The principles of diversity and inclusion in grantmaking and in professional staff are notable in this part of our field.

There are many other individual acts of deliberation and courage – too numerous to mention. Please understand that I cannot name them all.

All of the examples given represent efforts to address diversity and inclusiveness in multiple dimensions. I have not given you specific descriptions of their various initiatives. Remember that they are examples of work that is succeeding in the specific context of place. To succeed in your own specific context will require the work of directly investigating best practices, examining your own community's dynamics and adapting available information and models to your own use.

Recounting these hope-inspiring examples gives us a sense that over the past three decades, there has been a great deal of energy and goodwill invested in the interest of diversity and inclusion. Where are we today given this degree of effort and activity? Does the field look like it should?

To answer this question, let's consider first what the world looks like today. Probably more than ever, we are aware of the diversity of color, economics, religion and opportunity that defines our global village.

Now, what does philanthropy look like? If philanthropy were a village of 1000 people, this is what it would look like in 2002: among program staff - 756 are women, 755 are white and 245 are persons of color, of which 131 are African American, 55 are Hispanic, 48 are Asian/Pacific Islander, 3 are Native American and 7 are of other ethnicity. Among 1000 chief executive officers, 543 are women, 942 are white and 58 are persons of color, of which 31 are African American, 13 are Asian/Pacific Islander, 12 are Hispanic, and 3 are Native American.

The figures I just gave you, for the “village” of philanthropy translate into the following: African Americans are 13% of program staff, a proportion approximately equal to their proportion of the current U.S. population. They comprise 3% of chief executive officers.

There is a very important point hiding in this last disparity. And it has to do with the difference between inclusiveness and diversity. As the field first began to grapple with – and to be challenged by – the absence of people of color, we talked about the issue of affirmative action. And then, some institutions actually began to take affirmative actions that brought me, and many others in this very room, into the field. Later, this loaded term was replaced by two others which still define the way we talk about issues today: Diversity and Inclusiveness. Many people in our field, maybe even most, see them as the same, but they are really quite different. Diversity is about bringing a wide array of people and their differences to the table. It’s about presence and numbers. Inclusiveness is about giving equal power to diverse voices and valuing those differences. It’s headcounts versus power. I repeat: We are 13% of staff, 3% of CEOs.

There can be no denying that the field has made some progress. After all, only three decades ago the village was completely white. That progress has occurred by virtue of numerous initiatives by the Council on Foundations, affinity groups, regional associations of grantmakers, and committed individuals within specific foundations, all of whom have deliberately moved their members, regions and institutions forward.

But at the end of the day, our numbers are still shockingly small and our inclusion, our place at the table of decision-making, is even smaller. There is unfinished business ahead.

We are not where we should be as a field.

This situation suggests some very difficult question. Like: Why is exclusion so intractable in the face of so much effort? What are we to make of the troubling dichotomies of rhetoric versus practice, words versus the will to act, and process without outcomes?

However reluctantly, we must embrace an inconvenient truth: that a field that defines itself as fair, effective, moral, progressive and well-intentioned has not made the advancements commensurate with its effort and articulated desire.

What does this mean for how the field accepts and values African Americans and other professionals of color? What does this reveal about philanthropy's responsiveness to disadvantaged communities when those communities are color-coded? The reality of this truth is

that real progress on the issue of inclusion requires the willingness to undertake a deliberate, difficult body of work that is about changing the way our institutions function, changing how decisions get made, and who gets invited to the table to make them. As I suggested earlier, there is a distinction between having presence and having voice. While diversity gets me into the room, inclusiveness demands that you listen to me.

This point is deserving of reinforcement. I am deeply troubled by the JAG study findings that only 45% of white men and 51% of white women feel that their foundation would be more effective if its staff were more diverse. Similarly, but even more troubling is the finding that nearly 60% of white women feel that their foundation would not be more effective if it was more accountable to the communities it served. If this is the attitude toward inclusion held by those in 68% of all management positions, 76% of those in all staff positions and 54 % of all CEOs, it virtually assures that progress on inclusion will proceed at a slow, if not glacial, pace.

Inconvenient or not, inclusiveness is about change. It is about bringing in persons from different communities and different perspectives and creating safe, equal space and voice. Sometimes it means that our institutions will have to change to honor the perspective of those who reflect a different set of realities, a different set of experiences, and a different relationship to the color line. Change is uncomfortable. Thus far people of color have born the burden of that discomfort. Typically people of color have had to do all the accommodating. Adaptation was always on the Black staff person and never on the institution. That's what double consciousness is all about.

But ultimately, we all have to do some accommodating. In doing so we recognize that differences and diversity are sources of strength. They are the basis of our social capital. Inclusive practices are all about building social capital: sharing information, perspectives and building trust for the purpose of working together on issues in a way that benefits the whole. Maximizing social capital is necessary for the progress of the entire community. When differences are not honored, when perspectives are discounted, we lose our collective strength and ultimately, we fail.

Social capital is not just a practice of idea sharing. It's about power. It's about who gets to weigh in on decisions that determine the allocation of resources. Coming together, sharing and building trust are all necessary steps. They have limited meaning, however, if those diverse voices, opinions, and experiences do not equally participate in the decision-making that underlies our work. Decisions like which community partners are "appropriate", whether we honor a community's indigenous theory of change, and where we choose to take risks.

Up to this point, I have been focusing on clarifying terms we use in the field to talk about issues: diversity and inclusion. I think it is also important to direct our attention to a word that does not get as much discussion, but is critical to an honest dialogue on these issues: race. In the words of the noted African American scholar Cornel West: "Race Matters."

John Hope Franklin in *The Color Line* writes that 100 years ago:

*William E.B. Du Bois asserted that the problem of the twentieth century 'is the problem of the color line...'*

Franklin went further to say that: “I venture to state categorically that the problem of the twenty-first century will be the problem of the color line. This conclusion arises from the fact that by any standard of measurement or evaluation the problem has not been solved in the twentieth century, and this becomes part of the legacy and burden of the next century.”

Dr. Franklin is optimistic that we will get it right in this century. I am too. In order to make progress, however, we have to be clear on the facts. And the fact is that the color line, which continues to affect Black professionals, families, institutions and progress, has not bypassed philanthropy. It cuts through this field as all others and in order to address it, as I believe we can, we must first acknowledge that it is there.

When we talk about ways to respond affirmatively to inclusion, it means seeking out, casting a wide net, valuing, respecting and creating an equal place for those whose perspective is different from our own. It leads us, all of us, to act against what may come naturally. I repeat: it is not a place of comfort. However, ours is a business that, more so than many other fields, is fundamentally interpersonal. The way we transact business, seek information, move from job to job, advance our ideas and seek collaborative partners all rely on relationships and trust.

Doing what is comfortable may lead us to seek out only those we are used to collaborating with, relying on familiar networks. And while it seems ludicrous to fault our personal preferences, we should be mindful that when the exercise of preference reinforces exclusion, it finds expression in discrimination. To neglect persons of color’s capacity to contribute, though it may be benign in motive, is nonetheless exclusionary in effect. And in this act of exclusion, the entire

community's potential for achievement is diminished by its failure to deploy and employ all of its productive human capital.

When we look at the pace of progress of African Americans in this field, despite three decades of deliberate effort, wide-ranging initiatives, regular pronouncements and advocacy we see the inconvenient truth: our field does not look the way it should. However intended, our practices result in exclusion.

Race also matters in a way that goes beyond institutions. It is also personal. How Blacks and other professionals of color experience this field matters deeply. As poignantly conveyed by John Hope Franklin "The specter of color is apparent even when it goes unmentioned, and it is all too often the unseen force that influences public policy as well as private relationships." Can professionals of color in the field expect their institutions to advance, if their personal experience, their racial personal experience, has demonstrated something else?

I have been in this field for 25 years. In that time I have experienced racism. From others, I have heard a litany of examples of marginalization and discrimination. Of being held to a higher standard of performance compared to white co-workers. Such reports may be anecdotal and certainly are not pervasive in all institutions of philanthropy. But the fact is that Blacks and other professionals of color are informed by this experience and carry it around in their bones. It tempers our expectation of the progress from those same institutions and colleagues that have reminded us of the realities of racism.

As a community of grantmakers, we have long espoused, but insufficiently acted upon the belief that inclusion of Blacks and other people of color on boards and staffs has a direct, positive impact on the degree to which our institutions are responsive to the needs of communities of color. Neither has the field fully embraced the proposition that the advancement of inclusion will lead to more effective grantmaking institutions.

I believe that we cannot allow the community of grantmakers – or any other community in this country – to continue to live in a state of denial about issues of race. The pace and depth of demographic change more and more each day gives prominence to these issues. For philanthropy to espouse a commitment to diversity and inclusion, while allowing the entrenchment of homogeneity, blurs the boundary between unfortunate paradox and cruel hypocrisy.

I realize that this assessment sounds harsh – even angry. That may be true. But it comes from a place of love and hopefulness. I have been in this field a long time. I love this work. I find it tremendously rewarding to make a difference in all communities. It is because I care about this field and believe deeply in the power and potential of philanthropy that I expect more of it. I love it enough to be honestly critical in the hope that we can accept diversity as a source of strength, embrace inclusion, and do the work of supporting community that brought us all into the field in the first place.

So allow me to close with some suggestions for both the majority decision makers in the field and for professionals of color that might keep us moving in this direction.

For Majority Decision Makers:

- We must continue to share the work of educating colleagues about the compelling reasons for pursuing and achieving inclusiveness. It is about fairness and morality. It also makes our grantmaking more effective.
- Building an inclusive organization is about leadership and will, so it requires action at the top. CEOs and boards must lead by example. In the final analysis, these are hiring and management decisions and they will be no more affirmative than is the will of the board and CEO. Demonstrate commitment. Share your success with others. Challenge them to do likewise.
- Seek ways to mitigate the *a priori* imbalance of power between funder and beneficiary. Working with disadvantaged communities requires going beyond the usual approaches. Be mindful that the community often has its own theory of change. These are informed points of view that need to be acknowledged and respected.
- And finally, be diligent in reviewing your progress in order to maintain continuous forward movement.

To People of Color:

There are few new ideas. Perhaps, then, a call to renew our spirit and commitment.

- Make a commitment to be an advocate for your communities. Facilitate access whenever and wherever you can. Be bold in this effort, be strategic, be persistent.
- Be willing to be the interpreter within our institutions for the community programs which may not present an articulate spokesperson.

- Commit to being a part of community as a participant observer.
- Be proactive in sharing your interest in and experience on a variety of issues rather than only when the issues relate to your own community.
- Assume there is goodwill within our institutions rather than prejudice. In equal parts, we are called upon to be bold and patient, to have faith, and to be forgiving.
- Perhaps most importantly: never forget your responsibility to reach back. Remember who and what helped you become an effective grantmaker of color and try to emulate those who pointed the way for you. Be a guide, a coach, a mentor. Make the path easier for those who follow.

In closing, I want to underscore that I remain hopeful. My hope is renewed by the opportunity to invest in communities and ideas, to influence and be influenced by my colleagues and peers, and to help new bright young professionals in the field to find their way.

I am honored to have the opportunity to reflect, with you, on the work that we all share and love. And I am confident, as I hope we all are, that this is our century. I believe that scholars 100 years from today will not have cause to remark that the problem of the 22<sup>nd</sup> century will be the problem of the color line.

Let us all commit to do what we can to assure that this promise is realized.

Thank you.

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