

FORUM

Look at leadership characteristics in choosing next 21st century leader



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Guest Columnist

It seems as though challenges, uncertainty, tragedies and economic downturns are taking hold of the world on a daily basis. The nightly news seems always to turn into breaking news and the news paints a morbid picture of doom and gloom. Just days ago, we had a terrible shooting with lives lost in Munich Germany. Less than a month ago we had a terrorist attack in Nice France. Closer to home we have had shootings in Louisiana and Minnesota. Police have been killed in Louisiana and Texas. Some of us are asking the question, does any life matter? Recently, Great Britain pulled out of the European Union and it has affected the world's economic stability. Here in the states, the Dow Jones has taken a big hit and 401k plans are suffering. Where are we headed economically? That question is on the minds of many of us. If all of the aforementioned wasn't enough, the presidential candidates of the major parties, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump are throwing punches at each other on an hourly basis. The Republican National Convention just finished days ago in Cleveland, Ohio and the Democratic National Convention is in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, this week.

My advice is to get out and vote in November. If we end up with a golf course developer as the President of the United States of America, we only have ourselves to blame because we didn't vote. Do we want a wall divider or a bridge builder? You know the answer to that question. Let us not be lulled to sleep because we think insanity doesn't stand a chance. Remember, crazy does happen. Here is what we need going forward in these uncertain times. A few days ago, I picked up a book I hadn't read in a while titled, "The Leadership Challenge" by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Some of the sections are titled: "Set the Example: Do What You Say You Will Do" and "Confronting and Changing The Status Quo." Over time, many of us have developed thoughts and ideas about the leadership question. Let me toss out a few good leadership characteristics for your review and consideration. I believe leaders should be good listeners. Without listening, it is difficult to know what people are thinking. Those who lead get a number of new ideas and approaches from just listening to other folks. Having a vision is another important trait that leaders must have. While tomorrow is not promised, we must plan for it. Being a visionary means seeing the possibilities and then making it happen. Leaders must also understand the difference being liked and being

respected. Many years ago now, one of my mentors, Dr. Lionel Hodge Newsome a former president at Johnson C Smith University in Charlotte N.C. said to me that being liked for your decision is akin to the Dow Jones; you are up one day and down the next day. He told me further that if you base your decisions on being liked that you will not last very long. There is not one of us who wants to be disliked but being respected is a much higher calling. Leaders unfortunately have to say unpleasant things to people at times. One of the keys is to do it with compassion. Understanding that people have feelings goes a long way in tempering unpleasantness with some humaneness. Mentoring future leaders is a component of leadership that is extremely important. Leaders have a responsibility to shape and to mold the skills of future leaders. It is my opinion that organizations that foster mentorship will continue to have in place great leadership. Lastly, leaders must be confident and be risk takers. They must have presence and others must see it and feel it. Leaders who serve as change agents are good risk-takers. Obviously, the continued growth of our great country will require risk takers. New leaders on a national level will be chosen soon and their leadership will be at the forefront. Our ability to understand will help us in the years to come.



NBA, LGBTQ, WNBA, BLM: Alphabet soup of inconsistency



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Guest Columnist

The letters NBA, WNBA, LGBTQ and BLM circle around pro sports entertainment on the one hand, and possibly the two most controversial special interest groups on the other. Except for those who have lived under a soundproof solid rock over the past quarter century, the initials NBA and, to a lesser extent, the WNBA, are household tattoos. The abbreviation LGBTQ is short form for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer/questioning. BLM is the acronym for the relatively new and much maligned (and, in my view, the much more misunderstood) Black Lives Matter movement. And, from the conservatives' point of view, both LGBTQ and BLM are lightning-bolt abbreviations that are usually not spoken in the same sentence as NBA and WNBA; that is, not until recently. Of late, in an unprecedented move, the NBA pulled its 2017 All Star Weekend out of Charlotte: a business – and, according to the NBA – a moral decision made in reaction to a so-called ethical and political judgment made by the North Carolina legislature that was centered on LGBTQ. That takes us to yet another contraction, HB 2. House Bill 2 is best



Members of the New York Liberty basketball team stand during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner before a game against the Atlanta Dream, Wednesday, July 13, in New York. During the New York Liberty's mid-morning game Wednesday, Liberty players stood in solidarity as they donned all-black warm-ups in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

known because it eliminated protections for LGBTQ, among other civil and human rights' concerns. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver announced the verdict by so much as saying it was boosted by the NBA's business partners – Fortune 500 companies that are also known by alphabets such as ESPN, CBS, TNT, and ABC – who last year signed a deal with the NBA in the amount of \$24 billion over the next decade.

This financial slam dunk doesn't include other NBA partners that are the globally influential standard-bearers and household names of corporate America: Coca-Cola, Verizon, PepsiCo and beer giant Anheuser-Busch. In reaction, N.C. Republican Gov. Pat McCrory said, "American families should be on notice that the selective corporate elite are imposing their political will on communities in which they

do business, thus bypassing the democratic and legal process." Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts said she was "deeply disappointed" that HB 2 bill caused the NBA to move the game, which was estimated to bring more than \$125 million to the Queen City. Some LGBTQ activists must get a real kick out of that irony. The uniformity of the NBA's relatively unprecedented decision to support LGBTQ rights did not

extend to the judgment of its sister league, the WNBA, who last week fined the Indiana Fever, New York Liberty and Phoenix Mercury \$5,000 each because players wore black T-shirts during pregame warm-ups in the wake of recent shootings by and against police officers. According to WNBA officials, the shirts violated the league's uniform policy. According to that policy, "all shirts worn during

warm-ups must be the Adidas brand – the league's official outfitter – and may not be altered in any way." Top NBA players jumped from the bench and social media lit up like a scoreboard following the WNBA's punishment of players who supported BLM, calling it out like a double-dribble or a technical foul, as in double standard, raising the question: Does the NBA and WNBA play by two sets of rules? What became of treating people the same? Who fouled the belief that what is decent and respectable for a man is equally noble for a woman? Does corporate America draw the line that separates the differences between groups such as LGBTQ and BLM when it comes to the fight for justice? When it comes to LGBTQ and BLM, the NBA and WNBA should practice another way of putting the old adage "What's good for the gander – a male goose – ought to be good for the entire flock." The way the NBA handled the NC/LGBTQ muddle, as contrasted to the way the WNBA/BLM tangle played out, had put a wedge between these two natural allies. Let's add IM to the glossary of abbreviations and acronyms: Inconsistency Matters!

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