



Recorded Message: The Hennessy Report from Keystone Partners. A free flowing conversation with leaders in the HR community talking about themselves, the industry, and their work. Brought to you in cooperation with NEHRA, the Northeast Human Resources Association.

Dave Hennessy: Welcome to the Hennessy Report. I'm your host, Dave Hennessy. Today we're kicking off a series of three podcasts leading up to NEHRA's D&I Gala on March 22nd where Anita Hill is the Keynote Speaker. Here are the three podcasts in reverse order:

The third one, to be released in about a month, will be with Ed Hurley-Wales, the VP of Diversity & Inclusion at ADP.

In about two weeks, we'll be releasing Lydia Greene, the CHRO of Tufts Health Plan.

And now, you'll be hearing my interview with Frank McCarthy, who founded one of the first diversity recruiting firms before it was called diversity and inclusion, Xavier Associates, about forty years ago. And today, Frank is still focused on that work, as the principal and founder of his firm, Diverse Workplace.

I can't imagine a more unique career path than Frank's. He started in the priesthood which led him to mission work in the community and then felt it was his duty to serve his country in the military and became a paratrooper in the U.S. Army. Frank shares how challenging the corporate environment was at the time with regard to diversity hiring; some of the things he did to help many of them take positive steps in this area. Frank's authenticity comes right through in this interview and he is really ahead of his time at the vanguard of the diversity recruiting space. Now, I bring you Frank McCarthy.

Well, here we are with Frank McCarthy, the founder of Workplace Diversity. Also the founder of Xavier Associates and I'd like to say that, Frank, you're also the godfather of diversity recruiting in this Boston area. Welcome to the podcast. It's good to have you as a guest.

Frank McCarthy: It's nice to be here. Thank you.

Dave: In fact, I wouldn't be here without you and working at Keystone because you placed my boss at Keystone I don't know how many years ago that is...

Frank: It's got to be at least 20 years ago.

Dave: ... oh yeah, I've been at Keystone 18 years...

Frank: Have you really?

Dave: ... Yeah, yeah. And you placed Elaine Varelis when WinterWyman was spinning off a new division of outplacement.

Frank: Right.



Keystone Partners

Dave: Before, we're going to talk a lot about diversity and how diversity has evolved over the years, how you got into it, as well and started your business of Xavier; but, I thought maybe it'd be good for our listeners to hear, what are the things early in your life that helped form who you are as a person and that led you to become who you are as a professional over the years?

Frank: Okay, I grew up in Medford in the 1930s and 40s and went to Catholic school, played a lot of ball, and then I went to VC High. VC High was very difficult for me. It was a big transition and we took Latin, Greek and French, three languages.

Dave: Oh, the academics were difficult.

Frank: The academics, oh boy, but after a while, I did well and then the last year I just decided I'd give it a shot and take the exams anyway. And said, "If I don't pass the exams, that's the bargain." So, I get in. I went to Saint Deccan's Hall, which is part of Saint John's. And then, went through the eight years there and learned an awful lot.

Dave: Where was that?

Frank: Saint John's Seminary in Brighton.

Dave: In Brighton, yeah.

Frank: Yeah, and went to Saint Clement's Hall, which is the first ... We had 70 guys in my class. There's a class picture over there you can see on the wall.

Dave: Oh, yeah.

Frank: The number of guys that were ordained all through... We had 70...

Dave: I can vouch for everybody listening. I can see the picture right on the wall...

Frank: That's right, yeah.

Dave: ... in Frank's office.

Frank: And most of those guys, I'd say 59 of them, were from Boston and the other 10, there were 70 guys all together. Now, this is how many years later. This is 1956 and only 10 of us left in that class. Isn't that amazing? So I went to the seminary, St. Johns in Brighton. Boston was so crowded with priests. I mean, we had tons of priests and we had different missionaries coming from all over the world, talking to us about leaving Brighton.

Dave: They didn't need priests in Boston at the time. There was plenty.

Frank: Well, they said they didn't.



Keystone Partners

Dave: Oh, they said they didn't.

Frank: Five to seven in a parish. Now they have one guy covering two or three Parishes. So, this is very different. So, in the last year I went to the Rector, and there were five of us out of the 70 that decided we'd like to go to different dioceses. So when we went to see Cushing, it was funny. Cushing was very tough. Tough guy, but a lovely guy. And so the guys went to Baker City, Oregon, Yakima, Washington, Cheyenne, Wyoming and then one went to Connecticut, and then when I was the last one in he said, "Do you wanna be a cowboy too?" I said, "No." I said, "I wanna work in a big city with poor people." He said "You can do that in Boston." I said, "Not for 10 years." And he started laughing and he said...

Dave: Why not for 10 years? You weren't allowed to?

Frank: Because you're always out in the country. You didn't get into a big city parish all that time.

Dave: Oh, I see. Okay.

Frank: And so he said, "Do you know anything about Patterson, New Jersey?" I said, "No, I never heard of it." He said, "No, I don't know it either, but the Bishop's a good guy and he needs priests. That's where you're going." So I went to Patterson, was ordained, went to start out in Passaic, New Jersey. Huge city parish. They had a high school, three general hospitals, a ton of nursing homes, all kinds of people there. Nine different national parishes and every nationality you can think of. And it was great. I went there and as young guy in Boston, you never get that. I was made the pre-cana pre-marriage counseling...

Dave: Sure.

Frank: ...director for the diocese. Which was funny, I'm not even ordained two months, but that's because they had nobody else.

So, there're a lot of funny stories that go with that, but the one I'll tell you is: He said "Okay, now it's time for you to give somebody anointing who's dying." In the Catholic faith, there are three ways to anoint people. If it's an accidental death, a real quick, you just give them the sign of the cross with the oil. If it's a longer one, it's a sick person, you can take maybe about 15 minutes to settle one of those. So, we went to see the lady. I never forget, God rest her. Her name was Rose McGarry. She was 82 and she was dying. And Charlie, Father, said to me, "Okay, you're gonna do the whole thing." So I did. I took the book out, but I did all three. I did the short one, the middle one, and the long one. And he busted me something fierce. He said, "You jerk, you did the whole thing." She lived for two years. I never let him forget it. She lived for two years. So then I was touched by the military and I went to see the bishop and he said, "Gee, you're young, do you wanna go?"

Dave: So, what was drawing you to the military?

Frank: All my uncles were navy, all during all the wars, and one of them was killed. I felt guilty. Everybody I grew up with was in the military from Medford, everybody. They all went in the service. One of the guys was killed in Korea. Before he died, I got a letter from him saying, "I'm over freezing my butt



off, getting shot at, and you're playing ball, and basketball, and football every day." Never forgot it. He was kidding and all that, but...

Dave: But you felt like it was your duty.

Frank: Well, I said, "I'm an American," and everybody my age had been in the service. So, the bishop came down for confirmation, Bishop Nelton. He said, "How you doing Mack?" and I said, "Great, can I come see you?" He said, "What's the matter, you're not happy?" I said, "Oh yeah, this is the greatest place in the world Bishop, I'm very happy, but I wanna go in the service." "You're too young, way too young." And he said...

Dave: So, what are you 19 at this time?

Frank: No. I had been a priest 3 years, so I was 29.

Dave: Oh okay. You had done it for a long time.

Frank: He said "You have to wait 10 years." I said, "It'll be too late." He said, "Too late?" I said, "Yeah." I told him about the guy in Korea, and I said, "All my buddies are marines and I wanna do them one better. I wanna be a paratrooper." And he said, "That's not a very spiritual reason." I said, "Yeah, but it's the truth." And he starts laughing. He said, "Call me during the week." He let me go.

Dave: He let you go.

Frank: I knew of 4, 5 guys...

Dave: So at 29 years old, you went to the paratroopers.

Frank: Yep. Well I went to Fort Benning for training and then went to chaplain school in January. Went to Benning in September, went to chaplain school, came back and I really wanted to go to jump school, but I was assigned to a unit that was going to Korea. It was the 2nd Infantry. The colonel was a good guy. I said "I'd really like to go to jump school", and he says "Great, go ahead. I'll give you the week off." I went to jump school and man, I learned more about myself in the four weeks at jump school. My number was 11, no, 26 was my number. You just had the number on your helmet. And when they found out I was a chaplain, they really busted me fierce.

Dave: Really?

Frank: Every day, "We want a volunteer to go off the 20 foot tower, the 25 foot tower or the 100 foot tower. That's it, you're 26, you're the volunteer. Thank you very much." And they did that for everything, but it was great for me because I get to know all the guys. Mostly West Pointers. So, one of the sergeants that was really tough on me and everybody, but mostly me, I found out later he was from Lowell and he picked on me for everything. Every single thing. And as a result of it, I get to know everybody in the class. They all knew who I was.



Keystone Partners

So, what happened, I was going to Korea and my whole unit was assigned to Korea, and the senior chaplain priest said to me, "Hey Mack, I can't do the character guidance for the NCO Academy, all these guys that are sergeants that are gonna go to be sergeant majors." There were 200 or 300 guys in the class. He says, "Will you take the class for me?" I said, "Sure."

He says, "You want my notes?" I said, "I'll do a character guidance." So, I'm waiting to go in and it's all spit and polished, I mean everybody, you could see your face in their shoes. I'm waiting there and there was a lieutenant and saw all the guys and who goes in but Sergeant Benoit, the guy who really gave me an awful time in jump school.

So they all went, it's all spit and polish, so I walk behind the podium and said, "Gentlemen, before we begin, I have a serious question to answer. There's a sergeant here. I just finished jump school. There's a sergeant here who made my life miserable, more than anybody. He's in the class now and I really want to get him. I'm from a place in Boston called Medford and we don't let guys get away with stuff." I said, "But I'm a chaplain. What should I do?" And they said, "Get him, get him, get him." The whole place.

So I said, "Sergeant Benoit." He jumps up and says, "Yes sir." I said, "Do you remember me?" "Yes, sir, I do remember you." I said, "Get in the front leaning rest position and I'll figure out what I'm going to do with you." The front leaning rest position is the push-up position.

Dave: Okay, yeah.

Frank: And I talked for an hour. He was in the push-up position for the whole hour. I felt great. What happened... He came by and said, "Sir, do you have a minute?" I said, "Sure, Sergeant, how you doing?" He said, "I'm sorry, I guess. Well, you got me." I said, "Not as much as you got me." He said, "Listen, Father, I hear you're going to Korea. Wish you the best. I'll keep you in my prayers." Like that. And that was it.

Toured Korea. When I came back, I was assigned to the 101st Airborne, back in the paratroopers. Did that for two years. And I was trying to make up my mind whether to stay in the service. I think I really wanted to stay in the service, but we had a new bishop. I wrote to him and said "I'd like to stay in the service," and he said, "I think you've had enough of the service after six years." He said, "I want you to get out." So I did after my tour of duty was up in Japan and first thing I did was join the National Guard. Did that for a couple years, in the National Guard.

But Bishop ... The first meeting I had with him, he said, "I'm sending you to a parish where the pastor is in a lot of trouble." It's a very wealthy parish. So he wanted the pastor removed. And I don't think I'll tell that story, but what happened after I was there, probably six months...

Dave: Where was this?

Frank: This was in Parsippany, New Jersey.

Dave: Okay.



Frank: They moved the pastor, made me administrator. Usually in those days in the Catholic Church, in Paterson, especially, you were probably ordained 20, 25 years before you got a parish. So I was an administrator. I knew I wasn't going to stay there because it's a beautiful parish, one of the top parishes. So I did that for about three months.

Dave: You knew you wouldn't stay long?

Frank: Oh, I knew that because everybody wanted that parish. Then I went to another parish with the same problem. I said, "Oh boy, this is going to be a great life." What I didn't realize was that the bishop was looking, just getting to know me and what I could and all that kind of stuff. So he called me in one night and said, "I'm making you administrator of Our Lady of Lords on River Street in Paterson." I had never been there.

Dave: Even though you were there before...

Frank: I was never in Paterson. I was in Passaic.

Dave: Okay. Passaic.

Frank: Paterson's a tough ... I must have looked very proud of myself. "Don't get a big head boy. A number of guys turned it down. They don't want to be there and you don't have a choice." So I want you ... Our Lady of Lords was on River Street, which is right on the corner of the black and Latino communities. Maybe a mile from downtown where all the black families live. I said, "This is going to be great." Because in the military, the whole black issue is not a big thing. You didn't give a damn who jumped beside you as long as he knew what we was doing.

When I went there, it was a very poor parish. All kinds of debt and it had a school. Very beautiful school, which part of it was condemned. Really get into fixing the school, building an addition. We owned three tenements. I tore those down. I made a big playground. We had 18 backboards in the playground and the men and women, boys and girl who played there were either black, Latino, or Italian, but mostly black and Latino. The kids were always there. When any one of the priests was going out on an errand or doing something, first thing you know, bunch of kids were in your car. Took them out, get them ice cream and stuff like that.

Dave: You were pretty well embraced when you joined, by the community?

Frank: Oh yeah. Funny story was, which was just the true story, brought a bunch of Mary Knoll nuns and Dominican nuns and went out in the community because I wanted to start a Catholic community center right in the middle of Paterson. I had already rented a place and the young priest that was with me, John, he really wanted to go live in the street. Couldn't tell him... We didn't tell the bishop that, but he... So, we rented the whole first floor, and there was six families living in it. And part of the top floor, and Red lived there. Didn't get any permission at all, and I had three four priests working there, and nobody told the diocese that we were doing it.



Keystone Partners

Then we had a new bishop named Casey from Rochester, New York, who was great. Unbelievable. We went toe-to-toe all the time. But I loved him, and he really did great stuff in the black community. But, before that, I brought these nuns down. I had my collar on. We rented the place and we're gonna build a Catholic community center. What happened was that we were met by a bunch of guys who were the black leaders. They really told me off in very...

Dave: Colorful language?

Frank: ...very colorful language in front of the nuns. So, I listened to them, and I could pick right away who the boss is, and I said to him, we'll call him Tony, "Tony, were you ever in the service?" He said, "Yeah, I was in the service. What the hell... What's that to you...?" I said, "Well, I just wanted to know, do you know what the first sergeant is?" "Yeah, the first sergeant owns your ass!" I said, "Okay, my bishop is my first sergeant, he said for me to come here and bring all these nuns with me, and that's what I'm gonna do." He said, "You want a beer?" I said, "Yeah," and that was the, as God is my judge, that was the only fight I had in the black community for the next five years.

Dave: It was the military connection that...

Frank: Probably.

Dave: ... saw the two of you through that.

Frank: Yeah. But, it was a very trying time. All kinds of things happened. There were shootings. Unbelievable stuff happened. We were all given our time by the police, by everybody. I'll tell you one...

Dave: Even you were given a hard time by the police?

Frank: Oh, yeah.

Dave: What? Why?

Frank: Because we were working in the black community. I'll tell you one quick story, which is an example of what happened. Whenever we went out from the... Cars were parked in the playground, and in the back...the back of the rectory. There's always mobs, so when you go out, the kids would say, "Hey, Father, where you goin'? Can we come?" So they get in, and we get ice cream or we do something.

This day, I had a bunch of kids in the car. Was going to chancery office or something. We're down in all the traffic in downtown Paterson, and this cop started giving me... He stopped the car, blew his whistle, called me all kinds of names in colorful language, "You're working with those..." and used the N-word in front of all the kids. So, I parked the car, took the key out, jumped out of the car, went like this to him and I said, "Don't go, I'm not going after you... I just wanna see your badge number. Because my next stop is the chief of police, who was a former paratrooper, who got out of the army as a lieutenant colonel, and was a great friend of mine." You know what the guy said to me after he called me all these



Keystone Partners

names and colorful language, he said, "Geeze Father, I'm a Catholic, don't squeal on me." I said, "You know what you're gonna do," and that was it.

But those kind of things happened.

Dave: Yeah.

Frank: All the time. I took a leave of absence and I came home, and I didn't really know what I was gonna do. I took this leave of absence, came home...

Dave: Back to Boston.

Frank: Back to Boston. I lived with my sister. Then I got an apartment in Weymouth. Got a job teaching at Dorchester High.

Dave: So you left the...

Frank: I left the..

Dave: You left the church.

Frank: I resigned from the priesthood.

Dave: Yeah.

Frank: I took out a year's leave of absence.

Dave: A year's, yeah.

Frank: And then, Bishop Casey was great. I stayed in touch with him all the time. I taught at Dorchester High. This was 1972, and...

Dave: So you go right back to the inner-city.

Frank: Yeah. And, once you do that, that's your life. I taught at Dorchester High. They put me in guidance. They said, "Do you know how to talk to those people?"

Dave: Is that the way they phrased it?

Frank: That's the way they phrased it. "Do you know how to talk to those people?" I did that for about five months. Then, different guys who had left the priesthood got jobs in the poverty programs. The sad thing that happened, I went to the federal government, and it was a good job, and I loved it. It was working in action programs in Providence and helped them set up all the programs and how to spend the money. It was fun. I wish I had that when I was in Paterson.



Keystone Partners

One of the guys I knew who had left the priesthood called me and said, "Would you speak to another guy who left?" And I did. Boy, this guy really needs help. Helped him get into treatment, and then he and the other guy came down here for Christmas. One of them left. And this guy stayed, the one who was sick, stayed with me. We went for a walk about, it was gotta be 10 or 11 o'clock at night. A week or so later, he killed himself. It really bothered me. To this day, it bothers me.

I started working with guys who were thinking of leaving the priesthood. What probably worked...

Dave: You're almost, just like a mentor to them?

Frank: Somebody to train them. They didn't know how to get into business. They didn't know how to write a resume. Being in the military, and then being on my own...

Dave: You had a lot of life experience that you could figure things out...

Frank: And I would know where to go to get help, too. Mostly. I decided doing that. Working with guys all over the country. I said to Ginny, "I wanna start my own business." And she said, "Go ahead, I'm used to being poor." Those were her exact words. I started this. I started...

Dave: Started Xavier?

Frank: I started Xavier...

Dave: Is that your middle name?

Frank: Yeah.

Dave: Xavier, yeah.

Frank: I said, "I'm gonna call it McCarthy Associates." She said, "Boston is full of McCarthys. Use your middle name, nobody's gonna know it. It's gonna be very different." I said, "Oh, you're crazy." She said, "Try it." And so I did, and it worked.

Dave: So, was it from helping priests that were leaving the priesthood? You had a placement, or a coaching, almost like our industry, it was almost outplacement for...

Frank: Yeah, right.

Dave: ...for priests. And then you decided, I wanna do this full-time. I wanna become a placement specialist.

Frank: So I did. Yeah. And I focused on diversity. So...

Dave: It wasn't probably called diversity at that point, right? Was it called "diversity" at that point?



Frank: Community, it was community action.

Dave: Community action?

Frank: It was... A lot of different changes...

Dave: And how did you come to that decision, "I want to focus on diversity?"

Frank: Because what I saw in Paterson. The stuff I saw in Paterson. How unjust things were. Even at Dorchester High, all the kids were not really, in those days, getting a fair shot. The black community was terrible. You're often on a tirade on that. No equal rights for people, at all. What happened, I started this, and everybody laughed at me, because doing diversity. I wanted to work in civil rights, for lack of a better name. I was kind of laughed at by a lot of people. People...

Dave: People, what? In business?

Frank: Oh, yeah...

Dave: Friends of yours from the military, or?

Frank: No, just people from...

Dave: Just people.

Frank: Yeah. I told you about Russ White, the story about...?

Dave: No, no, we were talking about Russ White. Is this the guy you're talking about?

Frank: Perfect time, because Russell... I placed him five times over the years, and he and his wife, we placed his wife at Digital too, and Digital...

Dave: How did you meet Russ, first of all?

Frank: He just dropped in the office one day, when...

Dave: So, you had Xavier, you started...

Frank: No, I started in Providence, so...

Dave: Okay, first it started in Providence.

Frank: And Russell dropped in. He always worked in the street. He was very street person. He could be a 5th Avenue gentleman, he was so posh. But he was a street guy. I got him some interviews, and he got hired at ITT Grinnell. That was the first one. We got to be great friends. I get a chance to go to this major



company in Boston. It was, really, my first sales call. I said, "Gee, this sounds scared stiff," and that was a major company. I talked to two vice presidents, both Catholics, by the way...

Dave: Were they HR, or were they-

Frank: Oh yeah, HR.

Dave: Or were they just hiring managers?

Frank: HR.

Dave: HR leaders? Yeah.

Frank: Not the top two, but pretty high.

Dave: Pretty high, excellent.

Frank: I asked, "Hey, can you take a day off and come with me?" He said, "Sure, sure, I can do that."

Dave: And why did you invite him?

Frank: Because I know he was going to talk about diversity stuff. We didn't call him to do so. "Let's go talk about civil rights or equal rights and..."

Dave: Equal rights, yeah.

Frank: Russell came, and these two guys started making fun of us.

Dave: In front of you?

Frank: Yeah. They said, "Geez, McCarthy, you're a priest, and you're doing this stuff? You're working with..." They used the N-word a couple of times. I lost it. Russ is a tough guy, but he knows when to pick a fight. After a while, I very clearly told them off.

Dave: These two HR people? This was a big company...their attitude.

Frank: On the way back to the parking lot, Russell said, "What did you think of that?" I said, "Well, I told those mothers." He said, "Yeah, you sure did." He said, "You know what they're doing now?" I said, "I don't care what they're doing now." He said, "They're tearing up your lovely brochure, and they're tearing up your business card, and they're saying, 'Don't let that nut in here, again.'" I said, "Russ, what did you want me to do? Sell my soul?" He said, "No, I expected you'd act like you do on the street fighting. What do you do?" I said, "You find common ground."

Dave: Like you did at Paterson?



Keystone Partners

Frank: Yeah, you're not gonna tell them off; you'll never get anyplace. You find common ground and you... I said, "Yeah, but this is business." "No, it's not, you gotta do this." Russ is a tough guy, he said, "I care for you very much, you know that? But I'm telling you, if you can't change that Irish temper and act like you do on the street, then get the hell out of this business." And it changed my life, it really did.

Dave: After that, when you encountered... First of all, I'm curious, what was your sales pitch when you went into companies like this? What were you selling, I guess?

Frank: I'd say, "This is who I am. This is my background. I wanna work in diversity." I learned very quickly that I had to do more than diversity if I wanted to stay in business.

Dave: Okay.

Frank: So I started hiring people to do other stuff.

Dave: So you're placing people of all types.

Frank: All of it. Eventually, I had 24 people when I sold it. After it kept going, I had people of color. What we started doing very early, probably one of the first ones... I'm not taking credit for anything, but we were probably one of the first in Boston. We called it "research," but it's sourcing. I knew that people would say to me, "There are not black people who can do this." I said, "There are." What I would do is build them a database, free, of all the people who sought for engineers, or this or that, who are black. It really got me to meet a lot of people.

Russell would take days off and come and work with me, and say, "They're not making any money. You're proving to the people..." If they don't know it, then you get them to know it. I don't know what they do about it. But he said, "You gotta start... You know, you're building these databases for nothing. You gotta start making some money or get the hell out of the business." So I said, "Russ, they don't want black folks, anyway..." "Listen, they do, and they know they have to do it. They're gonna hire people from that research, and you're not gonna get a fee out of that. We'll show you how to do that, too."

So, I started selling research, and it took off. It really took off.

Dave: So you weren't actually making the direct connection? You were providing them a way that they could make the connections, themselves?

Frank: For example, if they wanna hire a mechanical engineer, especially in Rhode Island. We know there are many black people out there. So I put together...

Dave: And they'll say that to you?

Frank: Oh, they say it. After they get to know me. First time, they think I'm nuts, in those days. What's a white guy doing this kind of stuff for?



Dave: Yeah, and I'm just curious about that. You used to hear that a lot?

Frank: Oh, I used to hear that. They'd say this and start laughing...

Dave: Did you always tell them the story? Or did you skip over it?

Frank: No, I just...

Dave: Because I think, what you've shared already; it explains why.

Frank: And I think a lot of them put that together. But then it started really going. And the companies that were the leaders were Polaroid. Unbelievable.

I used to go to Polaroid to walk around. I was so at home there. Digital, too.

Dave: Why did those companies start to shift their thinking?

Frank: Because they hired all kinds of people, and they didn't have any women and people of color. The leadership realized that they're gonna be targets for a lot of companies. A lot of other companies are. And they could be leaders in this. Olsen was an unbelievable guy.

Dave: Kent Olsen, yeah.

Frank: The team that they put together. It'd be great. If I had nothing to do, I'd go to Digital and walk around the campus and get to know people, and that would do workshops.

Dave: On what?

Frank: On diversity. Recruiting, how to do research.

Dave: Oh, so you'd help them train their own recruiters inside?

Frank: Oh yeah. We did a lot of that.

Dave: Frank, I wanted to ask you, how did your business start to change? It sounds like, you explained, you were doing the research, and they were starting to pay you for it. Then these big companies around Boston, Digital, Wang, Polaroid, State Street; they were starting to tap into your resources.

Did your business start to evolve at some point when new companies were coming on? How, when did it shift to more placement? Because you said you started doing more placement, right?

Frank: A lot more placement.

Dave: So, what happened? What was the shift, I guess, is what I wanna...



Frank: They realized that this... We could produce diversity candidates.

Dave: Okay.

Frank: I didn't know the word diversity for years. So.

Dave: Yeah, so, still at that time...

Frank: Candidates of color, all this. And, Digital was a leader, Polaroid was a leader.

Dave: What were some of the challenges in placement at the time? Now, your business is starting to shift towards...

Frank: A lot of them, in the way people...

Dave: ... placement, yeah.

Frank: ... the way people of color were treated.

Dave: Yeah. So, what were candidates...

Frank: Like people of color were treated like women are treated today. I'd hear back from candidates, and a lot of candidates put up with this stuff. Then, as soon as they saw something better at a better company, they'd leave. Not everybody's gonna be a saint, so.

What they did, they took a chance on putting people of color and women into senior positions. The other companies didn't do it, and probably they wouldn't do it. Olsen and the rest of them pushed them to do it, to hire people of color. And word got out, it was great.

Dave: Did you get to meet him during that process?

Frank: I had a meeting. But not...

Dave: You weren't close with him?

Frank: No.

Dave: No.

Frank: Close with the HR people, though.

Dave: Yeah.

Frank: That's kind of where it's at. Where it's at today is, it's...



Dave: Yeah, I was wondering: how would you compare the work in diversity?

Frank: I sold the company in '99 to Bob Gatti sold Xavier to Bob Gatti...

Dave: Why did you sell it?

Frank: Well, it was a good opportunity. He really wanted it. I thought I could probably try to do something else with it.

Dave: And he was focused on HR for most of his career, they I remember. But, at that point.

Frank: I knew him in HR, I did work for him in HR. I helped him with his business. Good guy.

Dave: Great guy.

Frank: We'd go toe to toe a lot, but he was a good guy. When he wanted to do this, I said, "I had a, three year, non-compete." And during that three years, I didn't do much. I did stuff with the family. We moved here. I would, probably, do talks on diversity. I did a lot of those with different people of color.

Dave: But you weren't doing placement.

Frank: Wasn't doing placement. And I missed it. The day I finished my three years, I started Diverse Workplace. Ginny said to me, "I don't care if you start another business. As soon as you hire somebody, you're outta here."

I did, and I did searches and build databases, did some sourcing for companies, and I've done that... Not that great, but it's been fun. It's supporting.

Dave: Right. Keeps your toe in the game, right?

Frank: Yeah. But a lot of it that I knew was it, as well, I don't know. Now, I'm still looking to do...I just finished up for a non-profit that really wanna hire a senior person, and they...

Dave: A diverse candidate. They're looking for a diverse candidate?

Frank: They said that... I don't know if it's with a search firm or not. But they're not seeing any people of color. So, there's this person of color there that I've known for years, and she told them about us. The guy called me and said, "What can you do?" And so I told them about a database, and I built them a database of twenty people.

Dave: Mm-hmm. That could be a good fit.

Frank: Yeah, they could be. That was the first phase. They got it this morning and called me right away. I told them I'd talk to them later today.



A lot of companies are like that: non-profits. A lot of companies, they don't have any women and people of color in significant positions. And that's still a problem. Do companies realize it, are they doing anything about it? I don't know. My take is that they're not.

Dave: You don't see enough?

Frank: Oh, no. There's not enough action.

Dave: So, it sounds like... There's been recent articles in the *Boston Globe*. I know you're the... The series...

Frank: I was gonna tell you about that, and I printed them out.

Dave: They're talking about what you're talking about right now. That you're not seeing enough change...

Frank: When I knew you were coming, I called a bunch of people I know of color and said, "Where is it at today? I think I know, but I wanna be sure."

Dave: What kind of things did you hear?

Frank: I hear that there's a lot of talk, and not a lot of talk. It sounds like a contradiction. But, some people are talking about it. Some of them think that the diversity jobs are gonna go away, the directors of diversity.

Dave: Oh, the function inside...

Frank: The function, yeah. The answer that I get when we try to get with them is, "Oh, we have tons of people from all different kinds of countries. We really don't need diversity."

Dave: Oh, the answer you're getting is, "We have a very international..."

Frank: That's it.

Dave: "...employee base." And that's the diversity.

Frank: At this stage of my life, I think I wanna focus on just doing HR-type jobs. HR, directors of diversity, but mostly HR. Because, that's the changing part of a company. If there's a good HR person there... Not just because they're black and they wanna... It's because this is the way of the future.

Dave: Because they could guide the culture...

Frank: Amen.



Dave: ... of the organization?

Frank: They can do it, and they can bring good people in. They realize that the world is changing. A lot of these companies are gonna be left behind, especially if this new section of Boston really grows, and...

Dave: Frank, I'm glad you brought up HR, because, as you know, we at Keystone are delivering this podcast in cooperation with NEHRA, who you know quite well, as well, the organization. And, we have the question of the podcast. We have a question we ask every time about NEHRA, and that is: What advice would you give to somebody that's in the HR profession... I mean, you've placed a lot of senior HR people and know a lot of them... to move up in the function? To be more successful as an HR person. So, somebody that's up-and-coming in HR, what advice would you give them?

Frank: I'd give them the advice to get to know NEHRA. To get to know NEHRA, I know fairly well. But, they're doing a lot of things. To do more of the training things that they do, to realize that they could be, they are key players in diversity. They do go after them. They're great people.

Dave: In fact, this podcast is a lead in to their diversity and inclusion gala, which is on March 22nd. That's part of why we're sitting down here today, right?

Another question, Frank. If you could write a letter to your 30 year old self, what would you write?

Frank: I think one of the things would be to really make a decision what I want to do with my life. It's thirty, a lot of people are in the midst, they don't really know, they wanna keep going in HR.

Dave: And you told your story. You were doing a lot of different things, right?

Frank: And I would do that, and different things would help me train to do... I'd pick two or three things that I'd really like to do, whether stay in HR, to have to my own business, and do some homework on that. Take some courses, if you can. Find out different people have done that. Plan for your future. A lot of people don't do that, and they're in companies, and they don't know what to do if something happens to the company.

I don't know if that answers your question.

Dave: Yeah, I think it does. It's you saying to focus on a few areas that you really wanna go deep in.

Frank: Yeah. What do you wanna be? Where do you wanna be ten years from now? What do you wanna do? What moves you? What would you like to change in the world?

Dave: Yeah, what inspires you, right?

Frank: What would you like to be remembered for? That's kind of corny, but...

Dave: Yeah.



Frank: But, to just stay in the same...

Dave: Well, that's a good question that'll I'll ask you: what do you want to be remembered for? What are you proudest of, I guess, Frank, in your career?

Frank: Three things: serving in the military, being a priest, working in the black community, getting married, having kids, having responsibility, learning how everybody lives. As a priest, you don't know how everybody lives. You really don't. You may think you do, but you don't.

Dave: Right, because people don't share completely?

Frank: They don't share, and they're always on guard with a priest. Not always, but... It's not the real world. It's really not the real... It's probably gonna be the real world before long. My prayer is that let women and married people become priests. And I don't know why they don't.

Dave: Right, you might have stayed in the priesthood.

Frank: Oh, I probably would have. No question about it. I would go back in a minute. I talk to guys all the time back in the military. A lot of guys became ministers and joined other faiths.

Dave: Something I was gonna ask you before, Frank: you've placed a lot of people, and you've met a lot of people. Are there any interesting placement stories that you'd like to... You've told a few, already, but any other people that you've placed or interesting placements you'd like to share?

Frank: Quite a few.

Dave: Any come to mind that you think the HR community might like to hear about?

Frank: I was working with a black woman in Connecticut, and she said to me, "Would you help my brother?" She was from Africa, one of 19 children. Very well-educated. I've lost touch with her over the years. She had a younger brother who was working at Digital. She said that he's probably gonna want to move. I said, "I'll look him up."

So, I called him, and he sent me his resume. I said, "There's a mistake in your resume. You came here from Africa, you went to Harvard and MIT, and you have a degree from Harvard and a degree from MIT the same year. You made some mistake." "Oh, no. That's not a mistake." I said, "How did you do that?" He said, "I worked hard."

Dave: He was going to classes at both universities.

Frank: Both schools.

Dave: I'd never heard that before.



Frank: He got these degrees. I said, "Gee, how'd you do that? How'd you perform all that time?" He said, "That's before I knew about women." I said, "Oh, okay."

Dave: (laughing)

Frank: There's a lot of funny things that happened. One of the major firms in Boston had a thing in the newspaper that they were hiring this lady from Texas to start their search firm...

Dave: She was running staffing...

Frank: She was going to be...

Dave: ... running the staffing organization.

Frank: They had all kinds of stuff, placement, training...

Dave: Oh, so they were in the same business as you.

Frank: They wanted to add to it.

Dave: Oh, okay.

Frank: They actually asked if I'd come to work for them.

Dave: Okay, so they were gonna add this to a practice area.

Frank: They're gonna bring this lady in. I said, "That's great, Boston could use this." She started as an airline stewardess, and they got her doing some business stuff in Texas. Jane, her name is Jane Edmonds, who was with the company in Boston. I don't know if she's still around. I think she is. I think her kids are running it, now.

This lady came to Boston. She called me, she said, "This is...", her name was Leslie Mays, "this is Leslie Mays, and everyplace I go, I hear your name. Would you ever consider talking to your company?" And I said, "Sure, I'd love that. Do you want to meet for breakfast?" And she said, "Yeah, that'd be great."

At the Boston Hotel, we met, and I'm always early, so it's 7:30 or 7 o'clock or so. I'm there, and I'm sitting in the... It was in the wintertime. In walks this woman, and I said, "Leslie Mays," and she goes, "You can't be Frank McCarthy." I said, "I am." "You're white." I said, "Yeah, what am I gonna do?"

Dave: (laughing) She was so surprised because she heard so many good things about the work you did.

Frank: Yeah. But a lot of stuff like that happened. It's been sad, some of the things that have happened, something very sad how people are treated. I think I'm gonna tell you this... Some of them are really... The way in the early days, and sometimes today, the way people of color are treated is shameful.



Keystone Partners

Dave: Well, what needs to be done, Frank? What would you do, I guess, we were talking.

Frank: Hire more people.

Dave: So, what would you say to the HR leaders out there? What can they do to change the thinking inside their organizations? Is there any specific advice to HR leaders that you'd like to share?

Frank: Don't put, if you have three to five people interview for a job, don't pick people of color just because they're people of color. Make sure that the people you get are really... Those people could walk away doing this job. Make sure people are really...

Dave: Oh, so you see that people... So, they're putting somebody of color or somebody that's diverse into the mix, but they're really not qualified, or they're not doing the sourcing work?

Frank: They wanna get people of color and have a record of having people of color interviewed for the jobs. And sometimes, some companies, are not serious about getting people of color, who are qualified for the job.

Dave: So why?

Frank: They don't want to get in trouble. They wanna have blacks in the interview list. They want to have people of color.

Dave: They want to have diversity in their...

Frank: Yeah. But, if they spent the time and really screened the people well and made sure... Don't put people in the list of people to interview if they're not qualified.

Dave: So have qualified diverse candidates.

Frank: Yep. Qualified candidates is in alliance if they're diverse or what. That's what you want, you want to get five imminently qualified people, and if you're serious about diversity, look hard for imminently qualified diverse people. Put those in a thing. If they're not hired, get the reasons why they're not hired. And, that's kind of painful.

Dave: That's good advice.

Frank: A lot of companies won't do that. This has been a great ride. Very painful, sometimes. Very great, sometimes. So...

Dave: You mentioned, Frank, earlier, some people really had a big impact on your career, your life. Who are some other leaders that really influenced you?

Frank: Dave Melville is one. Dave was always...



Dave: Who founded my company, Keystone.

Frank: I could always go to him with trouble. His buddy, Bill Ryan, they used to bust me all the time. For a lot of reasons, for not being in the navy and all that kind of stuff. But they were good guys.

Dave: Military pride issues, right? Which division you were in.

Frank: Cal Thomas was a black woman who's worked for Gillette through placement. She started when I was in business, she still doing all around the world. She's on a boat today traveling someplace to do a diversity thing.

The guy, who I told you about who worked at Digital that I stayed in touch with all these years, he's unbelievable, the stuff that he's done with his life.

Dave: Frank, we've talked a lot about where the progress hasn't gone as quickly as you've wanted to, with regard to diversity and inclusion. What progress have you seen? What give you hope with regard...

Frank: What gives me hope is that how so many people of color have made it in big jobs, have made it in all walks of life. Not just money. The thing that I'm so impressed by and so, I don't know what the word is, so motivated by is how they give back. How they give back to other people of color. How they give back to everybody. But mostly... And, once they make it, they don't pull the ladder up. They're back hiring other people.

Dave: If you could go to dinner with anyone, living or dead, who would it be and why?

Frank: I think I would go to dinner with the pope. A lot of people I'd like to go to dinner. But the pope, I think he's down to earth, and he's not being well received by some of the cardinals because some of the stuff that he wants to do. I'd just like to tell him, I think, keep at it. You're doing a great job. Can I talk to you about women being priests? Because I think this guy, unless somebody shoots him, is gonna be a big change. He's very open to other faiths, other religions, other people; and he's not judgmental of, from my experience, reading about him and listening to him, he doesn't judge people. And he's not afraid to make the Catholic Church what it should be.

But I think there are a lot of other people that I'd like to... Halle Berry. I used to tell everyone else, if I'm finally getting to somebody, to Russ, I'd say, "What are you doing today?" He'd say, "Damn, Halle Berry's calling me again, I gotta go..."

Dave: (laughing) So it sounds like she's after the pope? She'll be the second person that you'd wanna go to dinner with?

Frank: I know I may have thought that out. I know she can sup with anybody. Anyway.

Dave: Well, thank you Frank, so much for being a guest of the podcast, this is great.



Keystone Partners

Frank: Thank you.

Recorded Message: Thank you for listening to the Hennessy Report from Keystone Partners. Be sure to subscribe to listen to all of our conversations with leaders in HR. Go to KeystonePartners.com and click on the podcast button.

The information, opinions, and content presented in this podcast are for general information only.

Views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in the podcast belong solely to the speaker, and not necessarily to the speaker's employer, organization, committee or other group or individual.

Keystone Partners assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of this transcription. The information contained herein is provided on an "as is" basis with no guarantees of completeness, accuracy, usefulness or timeliness.

© Keystone Partners and The Hennessy Report. 2018. All Rights Reserved.

All other trade names or company names referenced herein are used for identification purposes only and are the property of their respective owners.