



## **NABPAC *Leaders Speak* Series**

NABPAC is committed to building understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst our stakeholders. As we close out Women's History month, enjoy our second installment of *Leaders Speak*, a series of interviews with members of our NABPAC community. Learn about the importance of representation and role models and the power of taking risks from **Mayealie Adams, Director, Compliance, Political and Government Affairs, at Phillips, North America.**



### **1. What led you to a career in the Government Affairs profession and your current role?**

It was definitely not planned. After law school, while I was waiting for a job opportunity at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to come through, I accepted a temporary assignment at FedEx as a legislative analyst in the Gov't Affairs office. It was supposed to be a one-week placement but I kept coming back and stayed for six years. I really enjoyed the work and ended up turning down that SEC job.

I think the real turning point for me was my boss Gina Adams who was one of few women, and even fewer Black women, running the Gov't Affairs office of a Fortune 500 company. Having a Black Woman Head of Office and seeing her as a role model in that position really opened my eyes to the possibilities of things I could do with my degree (She was also a lawyer). She was very focused on community engagement and making a positive difference for the public good while protecting and promoting the company's interests. I just loved her, and I loved the work. I've been in this space since.

### **2. Why is it important to see others who look like you in leadership roles? How have role models impacted your career?**

Representation matters. Having visible role models matter. Growing up, I did not have anyone in my family, or that I knew, who was a lawyer. But when I was in the 10th grade, I participated in a program for Take Our Daughters to Work Day and was placed with a Black female lawyer. I spent the whole day shadowing her to court and meetings. She was AMAZING. After that I said to myself, "Okay, I want to be like HER." And then my experience with Gina at FedEx changed my dream and life again forever. I think it's so important to have representation and role models. They help you build your dreams, expand your world view, see yourself in places you might have thought unattainable.



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### **3. If you were speaking to other women about development, what advice would you give? How have you developed yourself in the government affairs and PAC space?**

I'm a Joiner. I regularly join committees, working groups, task forces, panels etc. and I find it all extremely enriching. These opportunities have helped me develop personal and professional skills while building a great network of friends that I learn from every day. So I guess my advice is to put yourself out there and be engaged. Get involved in what matters to you.

### **4. Your development has included taking risks. Why is risk taking important?**

You have to be okay with being in uncomfortable situations, stretching yourself out of your comfort zone. That's the place where you learn and grow. We typically think of big risks but it's important to take small risks as well, pushing yourself to strive one small step at a time. Go ahead, take a risk, don't be afraid to fail but if you do, make sure you learn from it and if you succeed, take a moment to celebrate your success. There's a great book, Fail Fast, Fail Often by Psychologists Ryan Babineaux and John Krumboltz I'd recommend on the topic.

### **5. 2020 was a challenging year that led to some awakening around diversity, equity, and inclusion. NABPAC has taken a strategic, sustainable approach to DEI through its DEI Task Force, of which you are a member. What is your perspective and message to others about this awakening? What are your thoughts on NABPAC's engagement in DEI?**

I feel empowered, energized, and grateful for the opportunity to be able to have these conversations, share my perspective and try to create a more inclusive culture here within my company and within our industry. I feel very thankful for that.

Looking at Philips and looking at what we're doing with NABPAC, change is happening. I think I'm most proud of the fact that not only did NABPAC create a diversity taskforce, but it committed resources to developing and implementing a strategic DEI plan for the organization that aligns with its mission and vision. The simple truth is, each of us is the culture and we can create a more inclusive industry together by embedding DEI in everything we do. NABPAC is leading by example.

### **6. What else would you like to share with readers?**

My final thought is to hold on to the joy and pride in who you are. Injustice, discrimination and biases can cause us all to feel beaten down. But there's joy in who we are. And it's so important to have that and hold on to that. Celebrate the beautiful, wonderful person that you are and the amazing talents you bring into the world.