

OVER THE EDGE

Lissa Broome

Founder of Director Diversity Initiative

HAPPY NEW YEAR! *It's time to set new goals, create a new agenda, establish new directions and plan for the future. So let's dive right in and share what it takes to effect positive change in the world! 2008 could be your year to effect change. Ask yourself now, "What are you passionate about? What do you believe could be better? What really gets your goat? If you could do anything and it was easy, would you take steps to change the world we live in somehow? Or how about starting smaller... What would you change in your own neighborhoods, in our schools, in our community, in our state, at the office... need I go on? How does one take on change and then how do you know that you are actually succeeding with your mission?" Let's see how one woman is approaching the daunting task of change in the complex world of corporate boards.*



Lissa Broome

Our story this month is about the passion of our *Over the Edge* person of the month, Lissa Broome, founder of the Director Diversity Initiative. We'll learn how her infectious intent to change the status quo drives her daily world and how the power of women can be so strong that when laser focused on changing something (anything!) for the better it feels less of an ominous chore. How do you simplify an overwhelming need for

big change? Incorporate these principles: simplification, passion, focus, collaboration and INTENT! Read on and as always, don't forget to take Part V of our five-part self-assessment Edge Meter Survey at the end of this article.

Passion for Change + Intent Leads to Well..... CHANGE of Course!

The wonderful thing about writing this column is meeting incredible women, like Lissa Broome, UNC's Wachovia Professor

of Banking Law and Director of Center for Banking and Finance and director of the Director Diversity Initiative at UNC's School of Law. The objective of the Initiative is to encourage boards of directors of public companies to increase their gender, racial and ethnic diversity..

Lissa's endearing modesty almost glosses over her power-packed, into-action, mission for changing the status quo. The positive effects are much more far-reaching than just the obvious stated mission for The Diversity Director Initiative. Just a few of the indirect effects could have greater impacts than one could imagine, like incoming opportunities at the highest executive levels for women. This Initiative is focused on the diversification of boards of directors with a direct mission to improve the success, the ethics and the quality of long term sustainable growth to the benefit of public corporation's shareholders, customers and employees. However, dive a little deeper and one can see a few of the indirect effects. One that

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comes to my mind is women supporting women over time will eventually dissolve the artificial glass ceiling, while also allowing women a stronger platform to impact the world in positive ways. Keep in mind that women are not the only focus of the diversification effort. Yet another indirect effect of diversification of boards is a simple lesson, when engaging a diverse set of unique minds in one room the collective introduces new ways of thinking, new ways of acting and possibly stronger checks and balances to any system.

So what is necessary to break through a seemingly concrete system? It takes incredible patience, diligence, a strong cheer-leading squad of support, understanding how to leverage re-

sources to the fullest and certainly an enormous amount of passion with intent to make this change a reality over time.

Lissa is a master at leveraging her resources and recognizes the role as a professor of law at UNC allows her a certain flexibility to dive into research and writing, putting to work the great talent of the students and networking outside of UNC. These actions allow her and her team to create the re-enforcing data, case studies and program development for corporations seeking to diversify their boards and to those seeking a Board position. Lissa is quick to note "change and improvement can seem painfully slow especially the first few years. Patience, perseverance and daily steps are keys to success! We will continue to act the same, think the same and get more of THE SAME unless we are willing to push for change!"

The Mom, the Wife, the Professional and the Sports Fanatic.. HOW DO YOU DO IT?

How does she handle teaching, leading two major UNC law department initiatives, writing books, researching and mentoring as well as being a wife and mother of a school age daughter? Like many Women's Edge readers, Lissa strives for the balanced living. I ask her this question as it is always top of mind for me as a mom, wife and professional myself. I am always curious as to how others manage their lives. Without even thinking, Lissa's jets out "I have a very supportive husband!" She follows this with "HIRE SMART and have good help around you always." She has a wonderful housekeeper and as fortune would have it, Lissa's able to leverage law students in various capacities to do work or even babysit on occasion. "The students get money to fund nights out and my husband and I get nights out," Lissa points out. Great leveraging of resources!

Lissa, a former Chair of the UNC Faculty Athletics Committee, includes UNC women & men's basketball as mother and daughter activities. She is a Tar Heel zealot on the way to raising another one. Her own mother was also a big fan. Sounds like passion meets passion in the stands not just in the Broome household.

Her husband, Adam Broome, is General Counsel of a local large business in the Triangle area and is a private pilot for fun and recently took up aerobatic flying. They love to fly on trips together, travel being another one of Lissa's passions. An academic career has fueled her interests in so many areas and has also afforded her the flexibility to live life balanced while conducting such meaningful work.

Passion + Perseverance = Success in Due Time

Lissa is changing the status quo. She is redesigning concrete historical monuments slowly, methodically with perseverance, focus, collaboration, intent and passion. We can all learn lessons on change from Lissa. No matter what your educational background (and Lissa's is Harvard Law, graduating cum laude by the way and I had to look up how to spell cum laude!) change is not an easy task. "Much of the time in the early stages of a startup initiative, it can feel like the general population only loves you when your initiatives show signs of success, but ignores your efforts until these successes become visible." Lissa notes. The Diversity Initiative is just a few years into it and has had some successes to tout. Lissa is not taking any breathing time as this mission is too important to celebrate these successes just yet.



We're sipping our morning coffee which has been staring at me for an hour now and I can see the intensity in Lissa's eyes heat up as she begins to share important points for her purposeful movement. She notes that too many Fortune companies have just the one token diversity addition not realizing the real power in truly shaking up the look of the table. "And there is much work to do to prepare individuals that are potentially great candidates for board positions. The work is twofold; educating corporations on why this initiative is imperative to their success and preparing individuals for board seats." she states the goals in such a way that you just want to march right in and sign up to help her! Many women and diverse individuals are not prepared for board positions. Training, networking, building up a board ready resume and experience are all very important. The Diversity Initiative is not only training and educating but also collecting the data of those indi-

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viduals ready for board seats. The Diversity Initiative database is a searchable data base of ready talent for corporations. "We've had a number of wonderful successes in the past two years, but this database needs to be filled with many more talented individuals," Lissa says as we finish our coffee. "Corpo-

(Continued on next page)

