

# One Instrumental Day



## Tyronne Stoudemire

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While playing sandlot baseball in an alley in Detroit, a girl up to bat lost control of the instrument. I just happened to have been playing catcher that day, even though I had no true catching skills. One thing I wasn't able to catch was the bat as it went flying out of the girl's hands and into my face, dislocating my nose bone. That ended my baseball career and turned me to music.

Faith and tenacity are what guide Tyronne Stoudemire, global director of diversity and inclusion for Hewitt Associates, a worldwide human-resources outsourcing and consulting firm with more than 2500 clients. “By standing firm in my belief that no good deed goes unrewarded, I have developed a patience that keeps me in place for the long haul,” he says.

After 10 years with Hewitt, Stoudemire has proven that he has not only the patience but also the leadership skills to see things through. He has received high marks for overseeing the operation of Hewitt's comprehensive suite of diversity programs that serves 24,000 employees worldwide. He is credited for designing the company's first multi-cultural Diversity Summit and managing six Associate Network Groups, with 28 chapters. He is also known for creating groundbreaking diversity-learning and communications programs, featuring such noteworthy speakers as Illinois Senator Barack Obama, Miss America 2003 Erika Howard, and founder of Working Mother Media and CEO of Diversity Best Practices Carol Evans.

A master trainer for the company's internal diversity/cross-cultural learning program, Stoudemire has observed a 50-percent increase in the number of managers of color over a three-year period.

When asked about the impact of his presence upon Hewitt, Stoudemire points to the company's positive image. By trumpeting Hewitt's mission to make the world a better place to work, he helps deliver a greater understanding of the company's corporate profile to the people, clients, and communities that it serves.

In addition to his work at Hewitt, he is committed to his church—Chicago’s 18,000-member Apostolic Church of God. So, for one of Hewitt’s first celebrations of African-American history, he integrated his church affiliation with his appreciation for gospel music, to create a company chorus at Hewitt. Ironically, most of the chorus’ first members were not people of color, which, at first glance, presented a unique set of perceived challenges for some Hewitt associates. Despite opposition, Stoudemire’s savoir-faire managed to convert the irony into a teachable lesson about the power of diversity at Hewitt.

This comes as no surprise to Andres T. Tapia, Stoudemire’s Eagle Award nominator and Hewitt’s chief diversity officer of emerging workforce solutions. “Tyronne has a blend of extraordinary skills,” he says. “He connects with people to ensure that they are enabling the advancement of diversity rather than getting in its way,” continues Tapia. “Not only does he know the diversity space inside and out, but he brings superb networking skills that turn relationships into strategic partnerships.”

Admittedly, Stoudemire says that success comes with the occasional need to stand your ground. “When trumpeting the cause and relevancy of diversity, the obstacles can be as numerous as they are subtle,” he explains. He says he’s had to help shatter misperceptions of African-American men, for instance. “I know what it means to be prejudged based upon preconceived notions. I also know that a strong work ethic transcends all notions.”

Having lost both parents before reaching adulthood, he knows what it means to be self-sufficient and recognizes the importance of family. He says his family keeps him grounded. He and his wife Valerie have a 5-year-old daughter, Kennedy Joi. “They are the wind beneath my wings,” he says.

*CareerFOCUS Magazine*<sup>™</sup> and the National Eagle Leadership Institute<sup>®</sup> salute 2007 Eagle Award winner Tyronne Stoudemire.

#### **Nominating Company**

Hewitt Associates

#### **Current Position**

Global Director of Diversity & Inclusion

#### **Professional Milestones**

- Advisory Board for Diversity Best Practices, National Black MBA-Chicago Chapter
- Who’s Who in Black Chicago
- Monarch Award for Outstanding African-American Male

#### **Community Leadership**

- Board of Trustees, Music Institute of Evanston
- Loretto Women’s Hospital
- Advisory Board Member, Apostolic Church of God Youth Music Program

#### **Leadership Principle**

A leader wears humility not as a badge but as a barometer for recognizing that all people matter. How do you measure a leader? In service, time, dedication, late nights, triumphs, challenges, and giving.

#### **Education/Training**

Wayne State University

#### **Birthplace**

Detroit, MI

#### **Current Home**

Chicago, IL

## **The Leadership Promise at Hewitt**

As a premier human-resources consulting and outsourcing firm, at Hewitt, we are committed to making the world a better place to work. This is no small ambition. It requires self-conscious attention to all dimensions of the work experience: from how people treat each other, to offering life-enriching and protecting benefits, to generating rewarding pay and career-growth opportunities. None of this can be achieved without a strong and diverse leadership that can advocate for the diverse needs and aspirations of all employees, up and down the organization.

But achieving a diverse leadership requires its own nurturing. To this effect, at Hewitt, we have Leadership Forums such as the Multicultural Leadership Dialogue, Women in Leadership and the LGBT Leadership Council, where diverse associates who are already leaders are brought together for further career-enhancing growth. We believe the more diverse our leadership is—in terms of race, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities, perspectives, and styles of thinking—the stronger, more profitable, and valued our firm will be.