



CHAMPION IN ENERGY

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Ronald, your distinguished career has multiple examples of your leadership, what has been the biggest challenge you have faced or lesson you have learned?

I, like many in my generation, have had a diverse career path, which has led to many different opportunities. From teaching and coaching high school students, to running a start-up telecom with operations in several countries, along with serving the public as a city planning commissioner, legislator and utilities commissioner; my experience in leadership has been wide ranged. One important lesson I have learned is to listen with the intent of learning and to understand the facts and perspective from which they are being conveyed. Another lesson has been to get out of the safe zone. Between 2006 and 2008, we, at our telecom/technology company missed being an early adopter and provider of cloud computing services and a service similar to Netflix for Latin America and the Caribbean. Not playing it safe with these two opportunities would have definitely changed the trajectory of company.

Involved with the energy industry from a number of perspectives, do you believe Florida is in a better place today in energy efficiency than 10 years ago, for example?

Yes, I believe that Florida is in a better place than 10 years ago as it relates to energy efficiency. Technology has significantly advanced and consumers are making better choices without the need for the same level incentives. For example, consumers are able to manage their energy usage using their smartphones while at work.

Involved with the energy industry from a number of perspectives, do you believe Florida is in a better place today in energy efficiency than 10 years ago, for example?

My advice to students is to be open to opportunities. Challenge yourself in as many different disciplines as you are able. Strengthen your critical thinking and analytical skills, and also work on becoming an agile and able communicator.

As a life-long proponent of diversity of thought, is it your opinion that enough progress has been made in diversifying the energy workforce?

There has been significant progress that has been made. Yet, there is a lot more work to be done in this area. It has always been my belief that to effectively provide a service, it is essential that the provider reflects the communities that are being served. This is of greatest importance at the decision making levels. I am specifically referring to the executive level and boards of directors. It is at these levels where the values, goals and strategies are developed, and the metrics for success are measured. I serve on the board of the National Utility Diversity Council, and we have developed Supplier Diversity Toolkit which is an online tool that allows suppliers to gain intelligence about the energy market in a state and provides access to information on how to engage with the utilities. We are currently launching another toolkit in collaboration with the Department of Energy, NARUC, HBCUs and other minority serving institutions. The purpose of the collaborations will be to connect energy and utility companies with colleges and universities to align curriculum to reflect the current and future workforce needs. This toolkit will also be available to students to help them identify institutions that will support their interest in pursuing higher education.

You've recently been appointed to Florida's first Blockchain Task Force and you've been selected to chair the committee. Do you see a place where the information you receive or recommendations that you generate will impact the energy industry? If so, please elaborate.

I am grateful and honored to have been appointed to Florida's Blockchain Taskforce by CFO Patronis and subsequently elected chair by my colleagues on the taskforce. Blockchain has the capability of being transformational in many ways. There are clearly opportunities to employ this technology within the energy industry. When you consider the components of blockchain technology, the ledger, smart contracts and currency, the application of some of the components can revolutionize how the industry's ability more precisely validates data coming from a distributed energy grid. As the energy generation decentralizes with the inclusion of more renewable resources blockchain will be able to uniquely support energy, environmental and commodity trading with real-time settlement and reconciliation.

As a former Chairman of the Florida's Public Service Commission, a former member of the Florida Legislature, and now a government affairs consultant with Gunster, you have worked tirelessly to ensure that work ethic and good results earn people a "seat at the table." For those professionals working hard toward greater leadership positions, what advice would you give them to remain motivated?

Continue to work hard and develop meaningful relationships with your colleagues both within and outside of your company. Mentor and sponsor others as well as seek out your own mentor and sponsor. There are many opportunities; however, you must take the initiative to seek them out.

Who are the champions in your life and how do they inspire you?

My parents are my champions for simply believing in me and also investing in my future at an early age. Their belief in me provided me with the foundational belief that I can achieve whatever I set my mind to.