

**A. Leon Higginbotham Corporate Leadership Award
2016 Award Recipient – Stephen R. Howe, Jr.**

Steve Howe, EY U.S. Chairman and Americas Managing Partner, visibly champions diversity and inclusiveness (D&I) across the organization. As the leader of more than 58,000 people in member firms in approximately 30 countries throughout the Americas, he empowers his leaders to create diverse high-performing teams that are greater than the sum of their parts and that value differences. Steve encourages discussion, actively engages conflicting points of views, and inspires teams to think creatively delivering on EY's purpose to help build a better working world.

EY professionals embed the core principles of diversity and inclusiveness in all aspects of the business and in EY's special culture. This year, EY ranked fourth on *DiversityInc's* Top 50 Companies list and was recognized on eight of thirteen *DiversityInc* specialty lists, taking the lead spot for people with disabilities, mentoring and diversity councils.

Under Steve's leadership, the number of women in top executive management positions has increased to over 25%. In 2015, women comprised 35% of promotions to partner, principal, executive director, and director; and today women make up 35% of the U.S. Board.

Steve sets a strong "tone at the top" and he and other senior leaders hold EY's executives accountable for the attraction, development and advancement of women and ethnically diverse talent. Ethnically diverse people represent 33% of EY's total U.S. and Canada employee population—more than double the representation from a decade ago.

Even as CEO, Steve personally co-chairs the EY Americas Inclusiveness Advisory Council (IAC), a collective think and action tank representing senior EY leaders from every service line and region dedicated to advancing diversity and inclusiveness across the organization. Steve personally appoints members of the IAC and regularly meets with EY professional resource networks including the Veterans Network, the Black Professionals Network, the Latino Professional Network, and UNITY, the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Ally Professional Network.

Recently, Steve told *DiversityInc* that he "never thought about not chairing the council." He also said, "I set the tone in our organization as the leader in the U.S. and the Americas. People are listening for the message I'm sending. My job is to lead our business to success. Diversity & Inclusiveness is fundamental to our business. Today all businesses are increasingly understanding how crucial it is to focus on D&I. I tell my colleagues that it is not at all uncommon for this topic to be front and center in discussions I have with client CEO's. That wasn't true five years ago."

Steve has also demonstrates strong leadership in the marketplace for people with disabilities, or what EY refers to as "diverse abilities." In 2014, EY hosted a Diverse Abilities Summit to raise awareness about the importance of workplace diversity and inclusiveness efforts for people of all abilities. The summit provided executives from the public and private sectors with a platform to share leading practices and discuss initiatives to help enhance inclusiveness for people of all abilities.

In collaboration with the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the U.S. Business Leadership Network® (USBLN®), EY is a founding partner of the new Disability Equality IndexSM (DEISM). The DEISM is an online tool that helps businesses objectively measure their full inclusion of people with disabilities as employees, suppliers and customers.

Steve has been honored by the National Association of Corporate Directors as a Directorship 100 honoree, recognizing him as one of the most influential leaders in the boardroom and corporate governance community. *Accounting Today* also named Steve to its “Top 100 Most Influential People” list of the thought leaders and visionaries who are shaping the accounting profession. In addition, Steve was recognized as one of the top “100 CEO Leaders in STEM” by STEMconnector. Steve uses his influence to further the importance of diversity and inclusiveness in business as a key driver of future success.

“It’s a given that to be a global leader, you need a workforce that is truly diverse – this is the main channel to markets, customers, innovative ideas, and to accessing talent,” said Steve in an interview with LEADERS magazine. “But you have to go beyond diversity. Winning means creating a truly inclusive environment where diverse people leverage each other’s differences, talents and perspectives to create the highest performing teams.”