



Beginning on page 26 of this issue, we place a spotlight on radio's future leaders – specifically, African American leaders. They are professionals who have risen to the head of the class. They bring with them a passion for the industry, growing experience, and their own unique vision of what they fervently believe this medium they so love can, and should, become in the years ahead.

Each of their stories is unique, and yet they share some common denominators. These future leaders believe in radio, in the business, and in the creative environment of the medium, as well as its potential to serve and strengthen the communities and audiences it reaches. They recognize the impact they can have on it and are dedicated to fulfilling that mission.

Another characteristic in common is how each of them has personally been impacted by individuals who have fostered, mentored, and supported their aspirations. That's a critical factor in any career. Beyond grit and determination, and with acknowledgement as well that persistence pays off, no one climbs the ranks without someone holding the ladder. Or in most cases, without a squadron of supporters.

The stories of the Future Leaders featured this year are stories that demonstrate the importance of having a network that includes mentors, and footsteps in which to follow. Reading their profiles on the pages of this issue is a strong reminder of how important a mentor can be to one's career. And that the role can run the gamut from organic and informal to more structured relationships.

Pam Tyus, director of marketing and promotion for Salem in Los Angeles, was inspired in her career choice by a chance meeting with a promotion director while sitting on a bus headed to a concert after winning tickets to the show.

It's a story many can relate to, including me. As a 16-year-old high school Junior Achievement member, I sold a marketing survey to the local Top 40 radio station. The general manager, Jim Bennett, was one of the most encouraging individuals I ever met in my career. Always on the lookout for tomorrow's "talent," he not only bought the survey (my first sale) but invited me to come back after graduation. I was young enough to believe he meant it, and he was gracious enough to see me again. And with that, my career, like Pam's, was born.

Once in the door, however, the role of mentors and career advisers takes on a new dimension; one that goes from planting the seed to helping nurture and grow it to fruition.

Shelley Wade's remarkable career is certainly a reflection of her talent and drive. Wade, the first African American ever to have a full-time radio show on Z100 in New York, credits a cast of many who, over the years, have opened doors and provided

wisdom and encouragement. Today, she continues to enjoy success in afternoons on KMYI-FM (Star 94.1) in San Diego and is mindful of those who have helped her realize her dream over the years.

For me, one of those people was Glenn Bell, former president of Stoner Broadcasting. At a time when female managers were few, and later, when "consolidation" was a new word in our radio dictionary, Glenn placed his bet on me, allowing me to write my own chapter in radio management.

No matter what form it takes, mentoring makes a difference. Any manager or corporate executive worth her salt understands that it's also integral to successful leadership. But it's not reserved only for the top echelon. Smart leaders encourage those in the middle management tier to also foster talent and nurture the next generation of leaders.

It's a fact borne out by research. According to the study "Career Benefits Associated with Mentoring Protégés: A Meta Analysis" from the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, people who have mentors and career coaches are usually more successful in their own careers. They achieve a higher level of compensation, have more opportunities for promotion, enjoy greater job satisfaction, and feel more commitment to their careers.

There are some excellent formal programs available today, including the MIW group and NABEF's Broadcast Leadership Training, but, like the educational system, they can't do it all or take the place of in-house career mentoring. That's where the rest of us are needed.

When is the last time you asked an employee about their goals and aspirations? When is the last time you welcomed them to your office to chat? It's important to their – and our – future. ●



Pam Tyus



Shelley Wade



## SHELLEY WADE

Personality  
KMYI (Star 94.1 FM)/San Diego  
KBIG (104.3 MYfm)/ Los Angeles  
iHeartMedia

This 25-year radio star still relishes the memory of her first day on the job. “I clearly remember walking down the hall leading to the KMJQ/Houston studio ahead of my very first commercial radio show,” Shelley Wade says. “I remember it as clearly as if it were yesterday. That was a part-time weekend show. Six months later, I got my first full-time show, at KBXX/Houston – the first commercial Hip Hop station in the South. It was a very magical time for me. I grew up singing and performing, so to say that I was given the opportunity to play music on the radio was the stuff of dreams.”

She goes on, “What I love most about radio is still the fact that I get to earn a living by playing music on the air. That amazingsness is still never lost on me. I also love the conversations and those connections we make on a very personal level with people. I was on the radio at Z100 New York when the September 11 attacks happened in New York City. And although I haven’t been on the air in NYC in four years, many of those listeners still keep up with what I’m doing now because we made such personal connections with them on the radio while trying to be a bright spot in their days during such a devastating time. So, yeah, the kinds of connections you get to make with listeners through the radio are very meaningful.”

Wade says her big goal in radio is pretty simple. “I know this sounds very generic, but I just want to be better. My father passed away a few months ago, and I just feel the need to be the best that I can be in every aspect of my life so that I represent him well for the rest of my life. So my goal? To be better.”

And her advice to young broadcasters? “Don’t give up. I feel that God wouldn’t put the passion for what we do in our hearts if our success weren’t meant to be, so don’t give up. And don’t allow others to tell you what you can’t achieve. Every single person I know that’s successful achieved their goals in their own unique way. So there’s no one equation that leads to the right answer. Don’t let someone tell you that you can’t do something just because they couldn’t do it or because they haven’t seen it done. I know I sound like Will Smith in the movie, but it’s true – don’t let someone tell you you can’t do something just because they couldn’t do it. Don’t give up.”



## SHERMAN “TREY” WHITE

Media Personality  
WGCI-FM/Chicago  
iHeartMedia

Nine years ago, Sherman “Trey” White started out as a promotions intern in New Orleans before getting a shot on the air three years later. “I chose radio as a career because I love the aspect of connecting with local people and being a voice for my community,” he says. “My hope one day is to make a big impact in a positive way. My goal is to be the ‘Black Ryan Seacrest’ and dominate radio and TV.

“I also want to continue to use my platform in a way that promotes positivity and sparks conversation around important topics. To accomplish this, I always try to stay on top of the trends and am very transparent with our listeners. I still have a long way to go to accomplish my goals, but one day I think the hard work will pay off.”

White goes on, “I’m so passionate about the radio industry because personalities use their voices to make someone’s day. Sometimes listeners can have a rough day, and you never know if one of your comments or personal anecdotes could change someone’s life. Also, because of radio’s wide reach in every community, it’s awesome that I get to connect with people from all walks of life.”

On advice, he says, “This may sound clichéd, but the advice I would give someone getting in the game is to never give up and to believe in yourself. I think back to when I was a child and I was told I had a learning disability. Some people didn’t believe I could accomplish some of the things I’ve done – but thankfully I have parents and friends who have always believed in me, which made me believe in myself more. You will get so many no’s in life, but one day someone will say ‘Yes!’ If you aren’t confident, how can someone else believe in your vision?”

“It also helps to have mentors and network in the industry. I’m grateful to have people in my network that I look up to in this business, because I wouldn’t be where I am without their encouragement and advice! I also pray a lot; it’s important to have that faith foundation.”