

Making History

When it comes to diversity and inclusion, it doesn't take much effort to find some startling statistics. More than a quarter of US House Members represent diverse districts, but don't have any top staff of color, according to a report from The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. That study found that of the House's 329 white members, just 16 have chiefs of staff of color.

We asked this year's Most Influential Minorities about a February 2018 UCLA study that found of the 45 new scripted shows approved for 2017-18 across broadcast, cable and digital, only four were from creators of color. Many honorees said it was disappointing, but not surprising.

"If you scratch the surface of the study, you will clearly see they conclude that films with casts that were from 21 to 30 percent minority had the highest median global box office receipts and the highest median return on investment, while films with the most racially and ethnically homogenous casts were the poorest performers. Based on these findings, why are we not more committed to employing people of color?" says Michelle Ray, honoree and acting executive director for the Walter Kaitz Foundation.

That's the question we all must ask ourselves, and it's why I'm proud that Cablefax shines a spotlight each year on individuals and companies that are leading by example. This year's cover features Altice USA, which has strong minority representation in key leadership roles and a rich Diversity & Inclusion program that includes an executive council chaired by CEO Dexter Goei. Between these pages are a collection of executives who are standouts in the industry—making strategic decisions and often times bringing up others with them.

Nothing changes overnight, but day by day I see some progress. Like when my college pal J. Shawn Durham reveals that he's been cast to play the role of Thomas Jefferson in "The King of Crimes," a David Robbins play being adapted by Central Virginia PBS affiliate WCVE. You see, Shawn is black. He credits that other smash colonial production "Hamilton" with helping to break down barriers. In fact, King of Crimes actually is kind of a sequel in some ways (minus the singing) as it's about Aaron Burr's treason trial—with Jefferson ordering his arrest.

As I close, I find myself humming a line from Hamilton: "I am the one thing in life I can control. I am inimitable. I am original." When I find myself overwhelmed by the world, I am reminded that I can control my choices. Our Most Influential Minorities embody that.

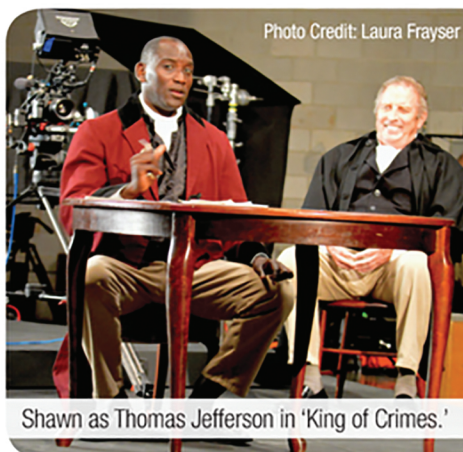


Photo Credit: Laura Frayser

Shawn as Thomas Jefferson in 'King of Crimes.'



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