

Saskia Epstein:

Welcome to PNC C-Speak the language of executives. I'm Saskia Epstein, Senior Vice President of PNC Bank in New England, alongside my co-host Carolyn Jones, Market President and Publisher of the Boston Business Journal.

Carolyn Jones:

Thanks, Saskia. It's great to be with you on PNC C-Speak. Each podcast features local executives talking about relevant and timely business topics. This knowledge sharing platform showcases leaders with forward-thinking approaches that disrupt the status quo and cause us to think differently.

Saskia Epstein:

Our guest today is Pratt Wiley, President and CEO of The Partnership, an organization focused on attracting, retaining and developing professionals of color at all levels of leadership. Thank you so much for joining us Pratt. Let's start off with a brief overview of The Partnership and its mission.

Pratt Wiley:

First of all, thank you all for inviting me here today. The Partnership itself is a leadership development organization based here in Boston, really designed around the twin goals of creating a place of prosperity and belonging. We seek to ensure and enhance the economic competitiveness of initially our city and then our region and now across the country by helping professionals of color as well as the companies they work for reach their full potential.

Carolyn Jones:

That's a great organization that has borne many leaders, that's for sure. So Pratt before coming in as CEO of The Partnership, you've got a really interesting background. You practiced law and you also worked in the area of voting rights and registration, obviously a critical topic these days. Talk a little bit about how did that work and form and prepare you for the role that you have now as CEO of The Partnership?

Pratt Wiley:

Sure. I'll ramble a little bit, but I think the pieces all fit together. First and foremost, my mom ran this organization when I was a teenager, so I very much grew up in The Partnership. When my mom took over the organization was nearly bankrupt and as a result, orientation for our fellows program, which is really our flagship leadership development program for professionals of color at the middle stages of their career, that orientation and many of those sessions were in my parents' living room. And so my exposure, my immersion in this organization, really what it means for people personally really does start it at that stage. But I never thought that this is where I would end up. Never thought that I'd be working at The Partnership itself.

When I was working in the Obama administration where I ran voting rights for the Democratic Party I would travel all over the country trying to help raise awareness around voting rights and even more so develop strategies and tactics to help ensure that every citizen was able to register and vote and be confident that their vote had been counted.

Wherever you find voting rights issues, you tend to find black and brown communities. And every time I would come back from one of my road trips, regardless of where we were, whether it was in the Midwest, in Ohio, in Wisconsin, in Minnesota, whether it was in the South, whether it was in the Pacific

Northwest, I would always when I would call my mom and let her know that I had gotten back safely from my work trip, say, "I wish there was something like The Partnership in this city." I wish that there were some mechanism that had connected all of the professionals of color so that we could have conversations about the resources that we needed assistance in securing. That we could have support in communicating the issues that were important to the community. So that we could tap into more effectively the power dynamics within the city.

So that was one piece of it, just organizationally. But what I also realized was the challenges. I'm a native Bostonian, grew up in Brookline, and the challenges, the reputation of Boston I realize are merited. There are racial tensions in this city that are real. It is not easy to be a person of color and in Boston, but it's not unique. And that many of the challenges that we face here in Boston are faced all across the country and that maybe some of the solutions that we've stumbled upon over the years might also be applicable all across the country. So that was a little bit of my journey. I was a corporate lawyer, never thought I was going to do any of this, but I was just going to help people start companies and be hopefully a valuable member of the bar. But at some points I think I needed to do something a little bit different.

Saskia Epstein:

Talk to us a little bit about the journey of the organization to embrace that national mandate and magnet as you described it, and how you've managed to stay so locally rooted as well and continue to grow and achieve so much in the local footprint.

Pratt Wiley:

Our decision to expand our presence is one that really has occupied the organization for probably 15 years, if not longer. When you look at the companies that we serve, part of why I was brought in is that we have this great collection of anchor clients, those who have been with us in many cases for 20 plus years, who have sent hundreds of participants through our programs. Brands like TJX, Marshalls, TJMaxx, HomeGoods, Liberty Mutual, Biogen, National Grid. These are companies that themselves have employees all over the country and so they are oftentimes looking at the services, they may be based here in Boston, but looking at the opportunities and services to develop their leaders and in some cases they were flying talent in once a month to take part in our programs.

Secondly, as much as we've always wanted to retain talent in Boston, that's really one of the major goals of the organization. Our very founding was to help reverse the brain drain that the city started to suffer following the busing crisis. We know that not everyone's going to stay in Boston, that there are opportunities all over the country, all over the globe and we want our alumni to be able to take advantage of those opportunities. And so if someone has the opportunity to launch a startup and it happens to be in Silicon Valley rather than here in Massachusetts, then so be it. And if that's good enough for Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook, then that should also be good enough for folks of color who are starting those opportunities, leveraging those opportunities as well.

So we had alumni that were all over the country and we had clients that were all over the country. And so what we've been able to do over the last several years is rather than expand and create franchises, if you will, of The Partnership all over the country, we really have been able to immerse ourselves in communities where there are already these clusters of participants and there are mentors and their mentees and alumni so that we can meet people where they are both professionally and personally and geographically and help them get to where they want to go.

Saskia Epstein:

Well, I can see why the Boston Business Journal named you one of its 2021 Power 50 Movement Makers, Pratt. That list was comprised of community and business leaders like yourself whose work is helping to shape a more equitable Boston. Talk to us a little bit more about your movement and the other changes that might be underfoot or that you hope will be.

Pratt Wiley:

As nice and as humbling as it was to be named on the Power 50 Movement Makers list. What was really the most satisfying to me was the fact that there were 16 other members of just the 2021 list that were also alumni of The Partnership programs, a member of The Partnership community. And to me that's what makes this award so satisfying, this recognition so satisfying. But what also makes it so, I think so perfectly named, movement really is the right word, both in scale and within time. This isn't about a campaign. This isn't about me and what I can do or what The Partnership can do. This is really about all of us. And this isn't about a moment in time, but this is really about ensuring that our legacy is one that is benefiting generations to come. And so to be just among so many extraordinary leaders, again, many of whom are themselves products of this organization and our services and our community, it was again, very exciting.

And what is I think challenging for me and for my colleagues and for Carolyn is that every year we will be in a position to nominate more than 50 people who are just alumni of The Partnership, who are themselves leading these movements and integral to this movement in civic spaces and government and corporate spaces just this last month or so. So we now have the Chief Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the US Attorney, as well as the District Attorney. They are all members of this partnership community and I'm feeling much more comfortable if I get a parking ticket or a speeding ticket.

[inaudible 00:10:29] too much trouble. But it's also thinking about just in one area, one area of law, in one industry, the impact that an organization like this and those that we work alongside can have. And we're having that same impact in education. We're having that same impact in life sciences. We're having that same impact in financial services, and it really is, it's an exciting time to be a Bostonian.

Carolyn Jones:

Well, it shows the impact of The Partnership, the fact that so many were on our list and I think the fact that there's lots more out there in many directions we can take it. Our goal is to constantly be looking at who those key leaders are, but who else is making a difference? And there's always new folks.

Pratt Wiley:

Maybe Carolyn, maybe one day we have in the BBJ, one of our lists are just Partnership alumni.

Saskia Epstein:

I was going to say and if not-

Pratt Wiley:

I would love to see that work in our book of lists one year.

Saskia Epstein:

And if not, Pratt, you just gave Carolyn a pro- tip for next year's Power 50, as they're sourcing nominees, they know the list to look at, which is The Partnership alumni list.

Pratt Wiley:

And that list, the 40 under 40 CFOs, the number of ways that we can be supportive is...

Carolyn Jones:

You always give us a great pipeline, which we appreciate. And I want to talk a little bit about you as a leader, and your mom, as you said, was the first CEO back in 1987. And just a pretty neat fact that now in 2019 here you become CEO. Talk a little bit about that connection, how both the learnings, the challenges and how that interaction with your mom or your experience with it, how that shaped you as a leader.

Pratt Wiley:

One of the great gifts that my sister and I had in our twenties and thirties, we would almost always be walking down the street of Boston and somebody would stop us and say, "I went through The Partnership while your mom was running the organization and it changed my life." And certainly as a teenager, the last person that you're ever going to listen to is your mother except maybe your father. And so, this wisdom, this mentorship, this advocacy, this sponsorship that she was so great at giving others was taken for granted by me and I think I can speak for my sister as well. But we really did grow up in it. We really did grow up in it. One of our key programs here at The Partnership is called Efficacy, but you can think of it as resiliency. And I did that as a 12-year-old, 13-year-old, something like that.

And it completely to this day has shaped my founding of how I think about challenges including setbacks. Failure is simply information. It's not ratification, it's information and what you do with it. But it's also about people. And I think that was really what I learned more than anything else from my mom is that leadership isn't about organizational behavior. It's not about org charts, it's not about balance sheets. It is about people.

And what I try to do as a leader, certainly here at The Partnership, but when I was in politics and in government when I was a practicing attorney, was always try to spend as much time as I could investing in people. And you never know. You never know what that person is going through. You never know where they are in their journey. You never know what part of a conversation may be helpful. But certainly it never hurts to let people know that you're there, that you've got an ear for them to bend. And if you're someone like me who has benefited from having a tremendous depth and wealth of mentors and I can pass along what I've learned from that collective wisdom to others, then you're doing something right. You're doing something right. And that has, again, that's served me well in every role that I've had as a professional.

Saskia Epstein:

Well Pratt, among other things, your story is giving me hope as a parent of two teenagers who are not inclined to follow in my footsteps or those of their father. So thank you for that.

Pratt Wiley:

Honestly, Saskia, it was like one day one of my mentors in the legal field, Mo Cowan, many people know now he's a US senator and leader in law and government business. But when I was first applying to law school, first thinking about law school, Mo was one of the people, he was still a leader in law at the time, that I reached out to, and I credit him with so much of where I have ended up over the years. And one time he did say, "I'm just parroting the advice that I've had from your folks." But the messengers matter, right?

Saskia Epstein:

That's true.

Pratt Wiley:

It took me about 20 years to figure it out but I got there.

Saskia Epstein:

Well, the seeds of your career may have started when you were 12, but you certainly went on to carve your own path with the advice of Mo and your parents and others, many other mentors, I'm sure. I'd love to hear a little bit more about some of the markers of that career journey and the moments that were pivotal in shaping who you are as a leader, how you think about your leadership style and the experiences that influenced your success.

Pratt Wiley:

I mean, there's a lot. We've got all day, I would still have more of those markers than we would have time for, but there are a couple that really do stand out. One was from my boss and mentor Bob Bauer. And we had just come off of the 2012 campaign, the reelection campaign for President Obama. And I had quit my job at Nutter McClennen to go work on this campaign. And I was trying to decide what do I want to do next? I could come back to Boston, I could practice law, I could move to DC and join a law firm. I could stay in Chicago. I didn't really quite know what I wanted to do, but didn't want to at least explore opportunities in the administration. And Bob asked me a really simple question, and he said, "There isn't no right or wrong answer other than you have to be 100% honest with yourself, but there is no right or wrong answer. And when you're thinking about a job in the administration, which is more important to you? Do you want to be a paper pusher, but you know exactly how many paces away from the Oval Office you are? Or do you want to work someplace where you have a tremendous impact but no one may ever see it?"

And I probably spent three seconds thinking about it. And for me the answer was the second category. And he just sort of chuckles and he says, "I already knew your answer, and this is the job. We want you to run voting rights across the country. We want you to help make this a practice area of law and really make it a key component of democratic campaigns moving forward." And that question has guided me honestly in everything I have done for the last, it was probably 10 years ago right about now. It was right before the president was re-inaugurated in 2013. And it has been just so, so important for the decisions that I've made and then the decisions in the guidance I give others.

Another piece of advice, and this is one that I got probably as a 12-year-old. Marina Clark, who was a member of The Partnership community and helped found the organization and graduate of Barber Business School, her advice was essentially, feel free, give yourself permission to zag when everyone else is zigging. You have to have the confidence to build your own course and to collect the different tools and resources and experiences that you'll need in order to be successful, but give yourself permission to zag when everyone else is zigging. And I certainly have done a lot of that. If you look at my resume and it's just like, what on earth? What has this guy been doing?

Saskia Epstein:

That makes a lot more sense than perhaps you're giving yourself credit for, but I love the expression of zigging when people are zagging or vice versa. It's a great takeaway.

Pratt Wiley:

And it's hard to do. It is really hard to do, to have that confidence because you're always "What don't I know?" And especially if you're a person of difference, you're already thinking, I have smaller margin of error, but I have never gone wrong by at least looking at those moments to zag.

Carolyn Jones:

It's important. That takes a lot of confidence too. Really does which takes time to build up as well. So Pratt, you like everyone has experienced these last two plus years that have really impacted business, how we do business, our community on so many levels. How would you frame those challenges? How have they shifted perhaps or influenced how you look at things both in business running your organization and then in the community over the long term?

Pratt Wiley:

In 2022 where we had this moment going back to movements versus moments when everyone was focused on this racial reckoning conversation, and I think were and are sincere in examining both its causes, its effects and exploring remedies. One piece that was very important to me was that we never forget how truly persistent and resistant systemic racism is. And going back to just Saskia's question about what did I learn in voting rights?

I had a chance to help organize a number of celebrations around the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act in 2015. And it was beautiful. I mean, it was inspiring. We went back to Selma, we got to walk work with freedom writers. I got chance to be on multiple panels with John Lewis and talk about this work. And all of it was exciting and humbling, but it was also depressing that 50 years after this moment, 50 years after this legislation, 50 years after the tremendous political courage of President Johnson to even advocate for the Voting Rights Act, that I still had a job as the director of voter protection and voter expansion. That we were continuing to see new ways that states and parties, on both sides, the parties were manipulating our electoral system to disenfranchise entire communities.

So that persistence and that resistance of systemic racism is something that cannot be overestimated. And so that's something that I think has really helped shape the way that we at The Partnership have then helped lead discussions around best practices and solutions that both leaders, professionals, and executives of color and their organizations can adopt to ensure that we're making progress, that we don't just simply check a box. Ensure that the hard work, the difficult questions and discussions and the sometimes painful decisions become part of our muscle memory. Just as it's hard for us to make a budget every year and to set priorities that mean that other things are not going to be prioritized, we need to do that hard work around culture as well. And that's the way that we think about DE&I at The Partnership. It really is about corporate culture. And it's about creating corporate cultures that can best attract and leverage the talent to help you win.

Carolyn Jones:

Can we take that just one step further, that topic? What are some of the things you're most optimistic about, and conversely, what are some of the things that really worry you?

Pratt Wiley:

So the first thing that I'm really optimistic about is we are seeing some companies that have really changed. There's a whole new perspective in how they look at diversity, inclusion, belonging. It has

become part of their DNA. And we have more than 500 companies that we've worked with over our 35 years. And you are starting to see companies cluster themselves in different parts of the spectrum.

And on one end of the spectrum, there were those companies that put out a press release and a really heartfelt statement after the murder of George Floyd, and then maybe did something else a couple of months later and have now said, "Well, I think we're going to prioritize our core business objectives from here on out." And then there are others that have really embraced that diversity equity inclusion is really a pathway to belonging. And that belonging is a pathway to prosperity and thriving and that it is a core business objective. And that the hard conversations are only bad when they stop being hard or when they stop being had. It's exciting to say, and I think that's part of why you're seeing this whole new generation of leaders of color assuming roles throughout the city, throughout the region, and really throughout the country because people have really committed to having these tough conversations and then making the tough decisions as a result of it.

Saskia Epstein:

You highlighted that you've seen some companies really change, and I'm certain that any CEO or business leader listening to this is asking out loud how? How did they do that? So how would you respond? What are some of the things that corporate leaders can and should be doing and the business community at large to help make Boston more equitable and accessible for all?

Pratt Wiley:

So there isn't a one size fits all response to this, but there are a couple of common threads. And one common thread is it starts at the top. It really does start at the top when a CEO, board chair and the board themselves are themselves invested in change, for lack of a better word, but certainly invested in this work of creating more equitable and accessible spaces. Just as a company where a CEO is focused on operational efficiency, just as a company where the CEO is focused on transformation, just as in the company where a CEO is focused on financial results, when the CEO is focused on this, it really does have a tremendous impact. And so for every CEO who has over the last couple of years hired a chief diversity officer or someone along those lines, that's not the ending of the process. It's the beginning.

And just because you hire a CFO, it doesn't mean that you're a CEO not still responsible for the financial health of an organization. If you hire a CDO you're still responsible for the cultural health of your organization. And so I think that is lesson number one. Lesson number two is, and this is a big piece of what we talk about at The Partnership all the time is, part of the challenge that we see is not that there is the absence of talent of color, but rather the networks are disconnected. And so if leaders, especially at the CEO level, but leaders, anyone in the C-suite who take the time to meet with, engage and then build out their networks of professionals and executives of color, you're going to very quickly realize that there's a tremendous amount of untapped talent or at least untapped to you talent that's available to you.

And I think a great example of both of these lessons are actually our outgoing governor, Governor Baker. Coming into office he was following Deval Patrick. So he already had, I think some skepticism within the communities of color just, "Well, we had our first governor of color and now here's this tall white dude coming in. What are we going to see?"

And not only did Governor Baker continue and really push forward through to completion, what's now the Massport model and really dramatically changing policies in terms of how diversity is thought about and having diversity and equity be part of evaluations for real estate development. But when you look at who he surrounded himself with, the governor, who he appointed and how that pipeline of diverse

talent grew over his eight years in office, much of it was not him saying, "Well, I really want to appoint somebody here who is Latinx or somebody here who is black, but I have a much more broader and more diverse talent of people that I know and who I've been able to really assess and test and now from this pool, I can really pick the people who I want."

And when they are people of color or people of difference, it's all the better. But that's not where he starts. It's part of how he added to the process. And so I think if the governor of Massachusetts is able to make this type of change, especially when he had the political environment that he had, I think those of us who are executives in organizations can recognize that there are far fewer institutional barriers for us than there were for him. And I think that gives us some encouragement.

Carolyn Jones:

And some exciting times ahead in the State House with a diverse group.

Pratt Wiley:

And all the better. Now we have even more diversity in the governor's office and who would've guessed that Governor Healey, the bar is going to be pretty high for her to continue to have diverse administrations and she's meeting that standard so far.

Carolyn Jones:

You talked a lot about the diversity piece being such a key part of a company and their culture and those that really make that part of the fabric. Talent and retention is one of the top things on every executive's list these days. Finding talent, keeping talent. How do you do that? What insights can you share both from your own leadership at The Partnership but also the things that The Partnership teaches? What can you share with us about how to create a great employee experience and culture and maintain it?

Pratt Wiley:

Again, this is me being the beneficiary of great mentors myself. During the very beginning part of the great resignation and talking about what we were seeing and me having conversations with folks who were making those transitions and he looking at it from a more macro perspective. And he observed that folks are really asking themselves three questions. They want to know, do I love what I do, who I do it with and who I do it for? And that generationally the three of us would have asked two questions, at least two of those three questions. And if we had an answer to probably one of them, we would've been happy. I would've just asked a third one, are they paying me? And then let me know, just point me in the right direction. But do I love what I do? Do I love who I'm doing it for? Do I love who I'm doing it with?

And when any of the answers was no, then people started to look elsewhere during this great resignation. It wasn't really a great resignation. It was a great reshuffling. People weren't just simply retiring off to the beach. They were either finding new opportunities or they were creating opportunities of their own and they still are. As a manager I think being very sensitive to those questions is important. Understanding how your team, your reports will answer those questions are important. And it doesn't mean that it's Disneyland every day, but if somebody is feeling that they are any position where they can continue to grow and be challenged, they are able to be themselves and respected by their colleagues and they have a pride in the work they do and the clients they serve. That makes a big difference. That makes a real big difference.

And taking the time to have those conversations either very explicitly and sort of go through the questionnaire or perhaps less so, but really have a conversation about where people are and where they



want to be and how they are engaging with those around them, I think is critically important. Here in the region we've been suffering from losing nursing staff at unprecedented levels and the strain that has put on our healthcare system and the strain that has in turn put on the finances of the hospitals and the systems themselves. And there's all sorts of reasons why nurses are leaving the profession at higher rates than ever before, not the least of which is this global pandemic and the different waves that seem to just never stop.

But we would be foolish to ignore the other piece of the equation, which is that the number of incidents, violence or harassment within hospitals and towards nursing staff in particular, but staff all around is also at unprecedented levels. And so you can look at a smaller organization like The Partnership or large organizations like our hospital systems and see how tending to that quality of people loving what they do and who they do it with and who they're doing it for will have a huge impact on certainly retention. And retention to us is really the key to recruiting. The single best tool you have to bring in new talent, especially talent of color is having folks there who are thriving and who are happy to tell other folks to come join us.

Saskia Epstein:

I feel like we're in a speed mentoring session, Carolyn. We're getting a taste of what I think is probably the wisdom and teaching embedded in your curriculum, and thank you so much for that. We've talked a little about the change that is underfoot and you just highlighted some of the challenges that many industries are facing, not just healthcare with nurses, but education with teachers, and I'm sure there are many other professions as well. As we look ahead a bit further to the next generation of executives and leaders and the next generation too of companies, technology and discoveries, what do you think the future holds for our city?

Pratt Wiley:

It's such a great question. It really is a great question. And if I were able to predict the future, I probably wouldn't be working at a nonprofit. I'd be on a beach someplace, right?

Saskia Epstein:

I'd say you're very well positioned actually.

Pratt Wiley:

But I'll use the recent past as a way to hopefully predict the near term future. There are again, a number of high profile, highly important leaders of color who have assumed positions in the last, really just the last three years, we're actually planning a dinner for CEOs of color who moved to the city during the pandemic. And the guest list keeps getting longer and longer, which is great, which is really great.

Saskia Epstein:

That's wonderful.

Pratt Wiley:

But if we look at where I'm sitting right now in the seaport and we look at the life science industry, it's just two examples of an industry and a space that have just absolutely exploded over the last 15 years. I think we can all recognize that we did not embed DE&I, we did not contemplate systemic racism as we

were thinking about how we could best position the growth, the explosion within these industries and within these spaces.

And so if I'm just thinking about artificial intelligence, and all I know about artificial intelligence is what I read in the newspapers, I haven't even played around with it myself at all, but can this region with its leaders and its changing face and being a real leader, a real leader in this conversation about equity and accessibility, can it help shape an AI future where systemic racism isn't embedded in the formula?

Can it help lead a future where health equity as well as wealth equity, as well as educational equity are all maybe not completely solved? I don't think we're ever going to solve it in our lifetimes, but certainly where those gaps have been closed across the board so that we become a model for others in the country and the world.

One piece that has been really illuminating for just us at The Partnership, our most recent class that just completed their programs in December were in 11 different countries. And so we very much focus on the experience of being a person of color in the US. And we anticipate that it would be analogous in Canada and in the UK and a couple of other places. We had people from China and from India also participating because these challenges are real and they're uniform.

And so these opportunities for this next generation of leaders to not just react to a challenge after it has already been baked into the cake, but to really think critically about those ingredients at the very beginning, that is going to be the transformative moment. And we might never actually know of it. It will be the absence of a problem. So we might not ever really think about it or know of it, but that is, to me, that's the moonshot, that's the game changer, and that's the opportunity for this next generation of leaders to not just continue to change opinions, office by office, department by department, company by company, but to really shape industries in ways that would've been unthinkable before.

Saskia Epstein:

Thank you so much for that. That's a powerful charge and a great note to end on. But before we do, we'd like to close with some rapid fire questions. This is truly off the top of your head. So speed round. Pratt, what are you currently reading or watching or listening to other than C-Speak?

Pratt Wiley:

So I am a devoted C-Speak listener. Two books, one Born A Crime. I just finished that over the weekend, Trevor Noah's memoir, and I'm fulfilling the withdrawals of him leaving The Daily Show. And I was like, you know what? This book has been sitting on my bookshelf for a long time. Let me read that. And it was so good. It was so good. And then a book that both my mom and I are reading, and we're going to do a little comparison. Horse by Geraldine Brooks. She lives on Martha's Vineyard. She's not too far away from where my folks are, and so we're counting her as a local author. I think she's won a couple Pulitzers, but we're just counting her as a local author.

Saskia Epstein:

Great. I know a lot of our listeners are going to be picking up that book just so that they can join your Family Book Club. Pratt, we've talked a lot about leaders, and you've very generously shared with some of us who your mentors have been. Who are the Boston leaders or an organization that you are watching?

Pratt Wiley:

So I think All Eyes are going to be on Tanisha Sullivan this year, as well as Michael Curry. Tanisha is the President of the Boston Chapter of the NAACP. Mike is a member of the National Board of the NAACP. And as the convention comes to town, finally, I think most of us are very much looking forward to showing the nation who we are and surprising them with what they find here.

Another is Tsedal Neeley. Tsedal is a professor at Harvard Business School. Tsedal is one of the leaders in organizational behavior as well as digital transformation. She's also a member of our board here at The Partnership. And as we all collectively are figuring out what the new normal is, I don't know anybody who has thought about this more and what it means, the challenges to leadership than Tsedal.

Damon Hart, who is an executive at Liberty Mutual, he's the new chief legal officer at Liberty Mutual and one of the founding members of the New Commonwealth Fund for Racial Equity. We're all very, very pleased with Damon and his leadership.

One last person that just think would be very timely, and that's Imari Jeffries. And if folks haven't had a chance to go visit the Embrace Boston Common, I really hope that they take the time to do so.

Saskia Epstein:

Great call out. What is a favorite spot in the city, in addition, perhaps to the Embrace Memorial.

Pratt Wiley:

My favorite spot in the city is walking up Park Street towards the State House. My favorite true space, my real happy space is the Boston Atheneum. [inaudible 00:41:39]

Saskia Epstein:

Oh, that's a hidden Treasure, I love that.

Pratt Wiley:

Can't beat that.

Saskia Epstein:

All right. Well, you are a serious guy doing serious work, and this conversation has been serious too, but I know you also laugh a lot. What makes you laugh?

Pratt Wiley:

If it is inappropriate, it makes me laugh.

Saskia Epstein:

Well, I guess it's good that he skipped over those parts of the conversation.

Pratt Wiley:

Right. My girlfriend has a four-year-old nephew, and so I can make him laugh with making inappropriate bodily function sounds.

Saskia Epstein:

I was going to say toilet humor is really big with the four-year-olds.

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Pratt Wiley:

Exactly. And then, like I said, anything like Trevor Noah or folks who are standup, I love standup. Standup is my favorite art form.

Saskia Epstein:

And finally, Pratt, a #wish for Boston.

Pratt Wiley:

I just hope, we're tying a bow on this, I really hope that Boston and its tradition of being first in so many important areas is the first city, the first region where no matter who you are or where you're from, you know that when you come here, you can be yourself and you can reach your full potential.

Saskia Epstein:

Beautiful sentiment. Thank you so much, Pratt for joining us on this episode of PNC C-Speak. We loved having you here.

Pratt Wiley:

Thank you.

Saskia Epstein:

And that wraps up another episode. Thank you so much for joining us Pratt and for sharing your insights. I'm Saskia Epstein.

Carolyn Jones:

And I'm Carolyn Jones. And this is PNC C-Speak the Language of Executives. Until next time.

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