

COMMITTEE CORNER

Profile of Chlora Lindley-Myers

by LaKisha Cargill

A steadfast dedication to equal treatment, equal opportunity, diversity, and helping others. This epitomizes the mission of The Institutes CPCU Society Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness (IDEA) Committee. But it's also among the hallmarks of Chlora Lindley-Myers' more than four decades in the insurance industry.

This issue's Committee Corner offers a broad view into the career of a lifelong advocate of breaking barriers and the power of collective efforts to bring about change—efforts that are embraced by the IDEA Committee and embodied by Lindley-Myers.

Making History

Getting the job done is what Chlora Lindley-Myers is known for—and it's an important reason the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) elected her as its 2022 president-elect.

Lindley-Myers is poised to make history as she becomes the first African American woman to lead the NAIC in its 150-year history

Lindley-Myers is poised to make history as she becomes the first African American woman to lead the NAIC in its 150-year history. Although she celebrates this accomplishment, it isn't lost on her that it took 15 decades to get here. And she knows it'll take more than her to effect real change. It will take a village with a desire for change.

Lindley-Myers and the NAIC are committed to educating consumers about the variety of coverages available and the need for supplemental types of insurance to protect against threats such as earthquakes, wildfires, floods, and more. Although the increased severity and frequency of natural disasters is one of the main challenges facing the insurance industry today, Lindley-Myers believes these threats can potentially be mitigated if professionals across the industry come together and figure out next steps.

The 2022 Earthquake Summit, held in Missouri last May, exemplifies Lindley-Myers' notion that it "takes a village with a desire for change." The summit brought together attendees from Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee to work on solutions to mitigate damages from devastating earthquakes.

Forging Her Way

Growing up in inner-city Atlanta, Lindley-Myers wanted something more than the life she lived every day and knew that obtaining a high-quality education would be vital to achieving that goal. She contemplated attending several powerhouse schools, ultimately deciding on Mount Holyoke College, a prestigious all-women institution, because she wanted to make a difference. Of particular appeal was that she would be around "women who forged their way and had broken barriers."

Lindley-Myers attributes her growth at Mount Holyoke to the mentoring relationships she developed with then-emeritus

Everyone deserves equal treatment and equal opportunity

professor of English Mary Williamson McHenry, who introduced African American literature to the school, and chemistry professor Anna Jane Harrison, who made history as the first female president of the American Chemical Society.

These women were pioneering different paths than Lindley-Myers had witnessed in the Deep South, demonstrating some of what was possible. Lindley-Myers initially studied biochemistry and psychobiology, with aspirations in the medical field, but pivoted after self-proclaiming as a germaphobe. She knew she wanted to help people, so upon graduation, when offered a position in insurance, she took it—and has been helping people ever since.

Dedication to Equal Treatment and Equal Opportunity

Lindley-Myers has held numerous positions throughout her career. Before her current roles as director of the Missouri Department of Commerce and Insurance and 2022 NAIC president-elect, she worked for the Kentucky Department of Insurance, the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance, and the NAIC. She is also a licensed attorney.

Her accomplishments represent the 40-plus years she has devoted to this industry. In addition, she says, they “came from a little girl who was told that she couldn’t—[who] was told she can’t go in here or do that,” but who aimed to ensure that she had “the same rights and privileges as everyone else occupying this space.”

Lindley-Myers uses the same desire she has for equal rights and access as a guidepost for every position she has taken on. As co-vice chair of the Special Executive Committee on Race and Insurance for the NAIC in 2020, Lindley-Myers knew she was doing important work, emphasizing that, “Everyone deserves equal treatment and equal opportunity.” However, she concedes, insurance-based discrimination still exists.



Lindley-Myers is concerned that data used for creating rates may unfairly represent some consumers. She examines rates at least once a month to verify that criteria being used aren’t rooted in racism and bias—such as data points on crime, poverty, and poor health.

“We all need insurance for financial security, and thus we need a variety of diverse people looking into these issues,” she says, speaking of the good work being done at the NAIC. “We need diversity of ideas, diversity of people, and diversity of experience sitting at the table.”

Parting Thoughts

As a champion of diversity, Lindley-Myers urges everyone, particularly women, not to accept someone else’s idea of who you are or what you can do.

She didn’t allow circumstances or naysayers to hold her back, and she encourages others to adopt the same attitude of empowerment. In her words, “Don’t let someone define you and tell you you can’t do [something]. Instead, take it as a challenge and use it as motivation to show that you can do it and that it can be done.” ■

Special thanks to the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Awareness (IDEA) Committee for its contributions to this article.