

DEI Insider

a diversity, equity, and inclusion periodical from Nukk-Freeman & Cerra, P.C.



CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL TRANSGENDER DAY OF VISIBILITY

BY CATHY WILLIAMS

March 31 is International Transgender Day of Visibility, a day for “celebrat[ing] the joy and resilience of trans and non-binary people everywhere by elevating voices and experiences from these communities.” (See the Human Rights Campaign’s [website](#) for more.) Why does my family celebrate a day for transgender visibility, when we also have Trans Awareness Month and Transgender Day of Remembrance in November? To answer that question, I can’t help but think of Langston Hughes’s poem, “I, Too”:

I, too, sing America.

*I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.
Tomorrow,
I’ll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody’ll dare
Say to me,
“Eat in the kitchen,”
Then.
Besides,
They’ll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed—
I, too, am America.*

International Transgender Day of Visibility is a day for transgender and non-binary people and their families to celebrate “how beautiful” they are—and to proclaim out loud that they, “too, [are] America.” It is a day to celebrate their accomplishments and diversity. For example, it might inspire you to learn directly from one of the many transgender and non-binary people who have chosen to share their stories in the last few years, such as Samantha Allen in *Real Queer America*, Lamya H. in *Hijab Butch Blues*, or one of the many people featured in the *Washington Post*

in 2023, including [this inspiring soccer coach](#) who is making his sport more accessible to children from low-income families.

At the same time, especially given the work we do, it is impossible to ignore that visibility has a cost. The [recent Blue Ocean Brain segment](#) on the “paradox of authenticity” pointed out that 85% of LGBTQ+ employees in a recent survey reported that they hide their sexuality, political views, or relationship status at work for reasons that include “avoid[ing] making others uncomfortable.” And as Jennifer Eberhardt explains in *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do*, exposure to and contact with people who are different from us does not always result in less prejudice.

Research in the race discrimination context shows that “contact has a much greater chance of piercing bias when the interactions meet a long list of conditions, including that the contact is between people of equal status, is condoned by authorities, and is personal rather than superficial.” (Eberhardt at 199.) When those conditions aren’t met, “bias isn’t challenged and stereotypes endure,” and the “threat of becoming the target of bias” can increase. (Id. at 200, 205.) Perhaps this March 31 will be an occasion to reflect on, and better educate ourselves about, how we can create the conditions in which visibility is safe, and move ourselves and our clients toward the “tomorrow” in Hughes’ poem.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

SPOTLIGHT: MLK AND 10 INTERESTING UNKNOWN FACTS
DEI QUARTERLY FIRM CALENDAR
THE IMPACT OF THE JEEPNEY IN THE PHILIPPINES
BOOK REVIEW - ONE MLB PLAYER’S TOME
TOP SECRET RECIPE REVEALED - SUNDAY “GRAVY”
MY NEXT GUEST NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION FEATURE

SPOTLIGHT:

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

10 SURPRISING FACTS THAT YOU MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN

BY REEMA CHANDNANI & SHARINA RODRIGUEZ

Martin Luther King Jr., one of the most prominent civil rights activists in history, dedicated his life to ending racial injustice. While MLK's list of accomplishments is long, in honor of last month's MLK day, we wanted to share some interesting less known facts about him and his family.

- (1). MLK was born Michael King Jr. His father was inspired by Protestant Reformation leader, Martin Luther, and changed his name, as well as MLK's who was 5 years old at the time.
- (2). MLK studied medicine and law.
- (3). MLK attended Morehouse College at just 15 years old. Morehouse College was his father's and maternal grandfather's alma mater.
- (4). In September 1958, MLK was signing books at a Harlem department store when a woman asked if he was MLK. After he responded "Yes," she stabbed him in the chest with a knife. While recovering in the hospital, MLK issued a press release where he indicated that he had no ill will toward the woman, that he hoped she received the help she needed, and affirmed his belief in the power of non-violence.
- (5). MLK was arrested 29 times.
- (6). In 1974, approximately 6 years after his assassination, MLK's mother was shot and killed while playing the organ at church.

(7). MLK won a Grammy after he passed away for Best Spoken Word Recording in 1971 for his speech "Why I Oppose The War in Vietnam." In addition, he was nominated two times prior, once in 1964 for his "We Shall Overcome" speech and the second in 1969 for his "I Have A Dream" speech.

(8). After his death, MLK's family filed a civil lawsuit against the government and won \$100, which they donated to charity.

(9). MLK day was recognized as a federal holiday on November 2, 1983, after President Reagan signed the King Holiday Bill into law. This was 15 years after the legislation was first introduced, 4 days after his assassination. MLK day was not recognized by all 50 states until 2000.

(10). There are more than 730 streets in the United States named after MLK.

BONUS FACT: Throughout his life, MLK was honored with at least 20 honorary degrees from institutions such as Bard College, Yale, and Howard University.

Additional Resources:

- [The King Center](#)
- [NAACP Article](#)
- [The Nobel Peace Prize](#)
- [The Forgotten Mothers of Civil Rights History](#)

FEBRUARY			MARCH			APRIL		
BLACK HISTORY MONTH			IRISH-AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH and WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH			ARAB AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH and DALIT HISTORY MONTH		
1	World Hijab Day		2	Granting of U.S. Citizenship to Puerto Ricans		1	Step Challenge Kickoff	
2	National Wear Red Day		8	International Women's Day		2	World Autism Awareness Day	
4	World Cancer Day		10	Harriet Tubman's Birthday		6	Tartan Day	
8	NFC East - Karaoke Night		10	Ramadan begins		7	World Health Day	
10	Chinese/Lunar New Year		13	NFC DEI Council Meeting		9	Eid-al-Fitr	
13	Mardi Gras		17	St. Patrick's Day		10	NFC DEI Council Meeting	
14	Pink Triangle Day & NFC DEI Council Meeting		21	World Down Syndrome Day & International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination		15	Patriot's Day	
15	Parinirvana		24	Purim		22	Earth Day	
19	President's Day		25	Holi		22	Passover begins	
27	NFC State of the Union		27	March Core Day		24	April Core Day & Administrative Professional's Day	
28	February Core Day		31	Cesar Chavez Day and Easter		26	Arbor Day	

THE KINGS OF THE ROADS

A TEAM MEMBER'S RECENT ACCOUNT TO HER ANCESTRAL
HOMELAND...THE PHILLIPINES AND THE IMPACT OF "THE JEEPNEY"

BY JADE JARENCIO

During my most recent visit to the Philippines, my ancestral homeland, I learned of a developing implementation to modernize the country's public transportation system. Out the gate, this sounds like a positive thing, Metro Manila is home to 15 million residents and as long as I have been visiting the Philippines, I can only remember being sat in bumper-to-bumper traffic every time I got in a car. Since COVID, an increase of Motorcycles has infiltrated the Manila streets and highways to bypass the ongoing car traffic. Unfortunately, this influx of motorcycles on the roads has only made traffic worse, where cars and motorcycles now participate in a tug-of-war over who owns the roads.



Jeepneys sometimes called jeeps are minibus-like public utility vehicles, serving as the most popular means of public transportation in the Philippines.

However, a constant staple to not only Philippine transportation but to Philippine culture was still present on the roads like I have witnessed in all my times back, The Jeepney. Jeepneys are Filipino buses that pick up and drop off citizens anywhere along specific routes. They are quintessential to the Philippine working class and aid millions of people in getting around. The origins of Jeepneys are that they were World War II surplus vehicles of the U.S. military before they became modified and used by Filipinos for transporting people and goods.

This governmental plan to modernize the country's transportation system includes replacing Jeepneys with bigger and more energy-efficient vehicles. Despite Jeepney drivers' support for improving the transport system, the clear disregard for their personal benefit seems to have been completely dismissed. Jeepneys are all privately owned and provide jobs to more than half a million people within the Philippines, and more importantly serve an even greater number of individuals who do not have cars (which is a large chunk of the population!). Authorities have encouraged drivers/operators to apply for franchise cooperation & those who refuse are expected to purchase the improved e-jeepneys or mini-buses imported from other countries. The discourse regarding this topic has caused many protests among Jeepney drivers and working-class citizens whose efforts have pushed back the deadline for franchise consolidation multiple times.

This current issue brings up an important question for us all, what does modernization mean for the culture and people of the places we love and cherish and may even call home? For countries like the Philippines whose structures date back to colonial times and whose economy relies heavily on international commerce, Jeepneys are not just transportation vehicles with colorful personalities. They represent the Filipino ability to deconstruct and arrange things to create something new, they have provided liberty to Filipinos everywhere to get around, and most importantly have given a uniqueness to Filipino streets and have become a staple to what the Filipino experience includes. These "surplus vehicles" have been memory foragers for generations of Filipinos and continue to be.

I wanted to share this topic not only because it is a hot topic currently in the Philippines, but to allude to this overall message regarding modernization and change. It is important to pay attention to how government officials are meant to make all these changes that seem beneficial for the respective country, but what will that mean for the heritage and culture of a society? It is also just as important to look at where we can improve our communities in ways that are conscious of all citizens' actual benefit from these changes.



Jeepney drivers protesting the modernization plan on December 29, 2023, near Mendiola, Manila.

Further Readings:

- <https://thedioplat.com/2024/01/filipino-jeepney-drivers-make-last-stand/>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/world/asia/philippines-jeepney.html>
- <https://www.cnn.com/2024/01/16/asia/philippines-jeepney-phase-out-strikes-intl-hnk/index.html>



National bird: Monkey-Eating Eagle boasts a wing span around two meters (6 1/2 feet)

The Philippines is made up of 7,641 islands offering history, nature, and adventures in spades. To give you a better idea of this fascinating country, here are SEVEN interesting facts about its amazing and unique culture:

- 1 The Money-Eating Eagle is considered one of the rarest and most powerful birds in the world and killing one may lead to 12 years imprisonment (pictured left).
- 2 The Philippines is home to the world's longest underground river - 24 km (14.9 miles) beneath the mountains.
- 3 The largest and most expensive pearl in the world was found in the Philippines.
- 4 The country boasts three of the world's largest shopping malls - the biggest one is larger than the Vatican City.
- 5 Camiguin, island province in the Philippines, is the only island on the planet with more volcanoes than towns.
- 6 The Philippines' professional basketball league is Asia's first and also one of the oldest in the world.
- 7 There are 175+ languages in the country; 52 million speak English making it the 5th largest English-speaking nation in the world.



BOOK REVIEW:

"Going the Other Way"

BILLY BEAN'S IMPACT ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN SPORTS

BY RYAN CARLSON

In the world of sports, diversity and inclusion have become integral aspects of fostering a truly representative and welcoming environment. Billy Bean, a former Major League Baseball player and first round draft pick of the NY Mets in 1980, shares his personal journey in the book "Going the Other Way," making a significant contribution to the ongoing conversation about diversity and inclusion in the realm of sports.

Bean's narrative is an exploration of the challenges he faced as a gay man in a profession historically characterized by traditional norms and conservative attitudes. The book provides a rare and honest glimpse into the internal struggles Bean experienced while pursuing a successful career in Major League Baseball. His story resonates with individuals who may have faced similar challenges, offering a source of inspiration and courage. For example, in the book Bean recounts a particularly challenging moment during his time as a Major League Baseball player with the Los Angeles Dodgers. During a road trip, Bean found himself in a situation where his teammates were engaging in casual banter about their personal lives, including relationships and romantic interests. Faced with the pressure to conform to the traditional norms of masculinity prevalent in the sports world, Bean felt compelled to keep his own truth hidden—that he was gay. The conversation became a stark reminder of the prevailing heteronormative culture in professional sports and the fear of being ostracized for being different.



In that moment, Bean experienced the isolation that often accompanies concealing one's authentic identity. The internal struggle between authenticity and conformity became a central theme in his journey. This anecdote exemplifies the challenges he faced as a gay man in an environment where stereotypes and expectations about masculinity were deeply ingrained.

One of the book's key contributions is its role in breaking down barriers and fostering a more inclusive sports culture. Bean's openness about his sexual orientation adds an important layer to the broader conversation about diversity, encouraging athletes, fans, and sports organizations to embrace authenticity and reject prejudice.

"Going the Other Way" challenges stereotypes. By sharing his personal journey, Bean advocates for a more accepting and inclusive sports community. His experiences highlight the importance of creating an environment where individuals feel safe to be their authentic selves, regardless of their background.

In the corporate world, where diversity and inclusion are increasingly recognized as essential values, Bean's story serves as a reminder of the positive impact of embracing differences. Employers and employees alike can draw parallels between the challenges faced in professional sports and those encountered in the workplace. The lessons from Bean's journey resonate across industries, emphasizing the need for open dialogue and a commitment to fostering inclusivity.

In the end, "Going the Other Way" is a powerful testament to the transformative power of diversity and inclusion in sports. Billy Bean's courage in sharing his story contributes to a growing awareness of the importance of acceptance and understanding, inspiring positive change both on and off the field.



Billy Bean currently serves as Senior VP of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for Major League Baseball. Unfortunately, Billy was recently diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia in 2023. Despite his illness, he continues to serve in his role with the MLB and champions DEI efforts across professional sports and beyond.

DID YOU KNOW?



Glenn Lawrence Burke was the first MLB player to come out as gay, making this announcement in 1982 after he retired.

Glenn spent his MLB career as an outfielder with the Los Angeles Dodgers and Oakland Athletics from 1976 to 1979. His autograph signed 1978 Topps Card is currently valued at \$1,926.27.



Sal's Sunday Gravy

A common Italian-American tradition is gathering with family for a weekly Sunday dinner, usually of "gravy" served over pasta. (Some families call it "sauce" and others call it "gravy." This difference can and will cause heated debates, so raise this issue judiciously.)

The Lipari family embraced this tradition wholeheartedly. Growing up, our family gathered and ate this Sicilian-style gravy/sauce almost every Sunday. Now, though we no longer enjoy regular Sunday dinners, we still eat this several times each year (whenever my father is willing to make it). I'm proud to report that my daughters (even the one-year-old) have already devoured several bowls of "Sal's Sunday Gravy."

Ingredients:

- Beef soup bones and/or short ribs (including ox tails, if you can find them)
- Pork neck bones and/or country spareribs
- Veal neck bones
- Beef or veal knuckle bones
- Sweet Italian sausage
- Meatballs (another family recipe, perhaps to be disclosed in another edition of DEInsider)
- Rind of parmesan cheese
- 6 cloves of garlic
- 2 medium onions
- 4 to 6 whole cloves
- 4 cans of crushed tomatoes or tomato puree
- 1 can tomato paste
- Olive oil
- Fresh basil
- Salt and pepper
- Tablespoon of sugar (optional, depending on natural sweetness of the tomatoes)

Instructions:

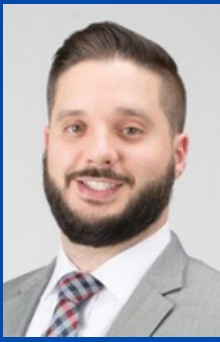
1. Salt the bones.
2. In large sauce pot with heavy bottom, brown bones and sausage in olive oil. Add additional oil if necessary, depending upon amount of meat. Set meat aside once browned.
3. Add onion and garlic to pot and sauté until translucent, maybe 5 minutes, scraping bottom of pot to loosen "fonds."
4. Add tomato paste to complete deglazing the pot. Fill can with water and add if needed to completely deglaze pot.
5. Add tomatoes and $\frac{1}{2}$ can of water for each can of tomatoes.
6. Add basil, cloves, salt and pepper.
7. Add teaspoon of sugar if tomatoes are bitter (usually add it).
8. Add browned meat back to sauce with cheese rind.
9. Bring to low boil and then simmer on low for at least 3 hours until meat is ready to fall off bones. Stir occasionally to avoid sticking on bottom of pot.
10. Add salt or additional teaspoon of sugar to taste if necessary.
11. When done cooking, let cool. Skim excess oil off top of pot.
12. Remove meat and set aside.
13. Strain sauce into another pot. Can use cone strainer and pestle, or a traditional food mill or strainer.
14. Add cooked sausage and meatballs to sauce and let cook for an additional 30 minutes.
15. Serve sauce over pasta (usually rigatoni) with the meatballs and sausage. Serve the set-aside meat and bones separately.

Please note that this is a highly confidential and privileged recipe, which has been passed down by generations of Liparis and even used by my grandfather in the restaurant he owned in Passaic, NJ (called "Sal's Broadway"). Making it is definitely a "labor of love," so set aside a few hours. Trust me, it's worth it.

Salute! Phill

Photo caption: Sal with his granddaughters, Eva and Vienne (adorable!)





MY NEXT GUEST

NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION

WITH JULIE ALARCÓN

*Continuing with Sharina's excellent interview of her iconic mother, I decided to interview my husband, **Alain M. Bauzá**.^[1] Sharina's interview is a tough act to follow but I decided to interview Alain for a few simple reasons. For one, we live together so scheduling an interview was an easy lift. Second, like Sharina's mother, Alain is a successful professional who is hardworking and very charismatic. You would not know how charismatic upon first meeting him because I do the talking for both of us, but he is so funny once he does get a word in. Lastly, this interview is important for me because ophthalmology departments remain among the least diverse clinical departments in medical schools. My hope is that Alain, a first-generation Cuban American doctor, impresses and inspires some of our NFC students just as he impresses me.^[2]*

Question: I think the first question in people's mind is, how do you pronounce your name and what is the origin?^[3]

I think to best answer that question I have to answer the second part of the question first. The name Alain is a French name of which I have no ancestry. That being said, my mom had a huge crush on a famous French actor named Alain Delon growing up and decided to name me after him. I have heard many iterations and attempts at the name, but I pronounce it Uh-Lon (like Mulan), which is not really the proper French pronunciation, anyway.

Question: Give us a bit of background on your profession. For example, what does your day-to-day look like?

What I love about my field is that since I do both surgery and medical treatment, my day-to-day activities can vary. Certain days of the week I have a full caseload of surgeries that can range from 14 to 20 cases. I do an assortment of anterior segment surgeries (front part of the eye) ranging from cataract surgery, laser-assisted cataract surgery, ocular surface reconstruction, removal of abnormal tissue growth, etc. On other days, I will spend my time in the office performing a wide variety of therapy from medical evaluations and treatments, surgical consultations, laser procedures for glaucoma and cataracts, and minor surgical procedures. There are a number of conditions that affect the body systemically that can manifest in the eye, so sometimes we are the first ones to diagnose a condition that may otherwise be dangerous (for example, we sometimes can predict an oncoming stroke through our exam). So, in short, no day is the same.

Question: What motivated you to choose ophthalmology in medical school?

I always knew I wanted to become a doctor, so much so that my grandfather (my abuelo Tata) used to call me "Doctor" when he was not calling me Alain "Cabeza de Pan."^[4] Ophthalmology was not really on my radar though before college. In fact, I thought I was going to become an orthopedic surgeon. However, in college^[5] a few friends recruited me to join a volunteer organization called Unite for Sight so that I could be their Spanish interpreter.^[6] Luckily, I agreed because it was life changing. It was my first exposure to improving someone's quality of life through vision. Medical school confirmed my decision -- as an ophthalmologist, I am able to restore someone's sight through surgery and provide long-term care to my patients. This blend allows me to build rapport and nurture my patient-doctor relationships in a way that not many specialties can. This field also allows for a good work-life balance.

Question: Why do you think it is important to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the field of ophthalmology?

The answer to this question goes back to my experience in the previous question. Early on, I noticed that Latinos in this county have limited access to

care, whether it is eye care or otherwise, because of language barriers or systemic disenfranchisement. The same is true for other underrepresented minorities in this country especially those from lower socio-economic backgrounds including immigrants. The lack of access causes avoidable healthcare problems and premature death -- something that should be concerning for all. One easy fix, and definitely not the only one, is to increase the diversity among providers. Research shows, and my own experience confirms, that diverse and representative physicians improve patients' access to care, their perceptions of the care they receive, and their health outcomes. In my case, my patients can tell me exactly what is going on with them medically in Spanish, or English, and I can assess and provide recommended care to improve their vision almost instantaneously.

Question: What advice do you have for students thinking about a career in medicine?

Being a doctor is extremely challenging in today's world for reasons that go beyond the time we have for this interview, but the gift of healing is truly rewarding so my advice is study hard and stay focused for the long road ahead.

Question: Can our NFC team visit you and/or reach you if they are considering medical school?

Of course! I primarily work out of Freehold, Edison, and Perth Amboy.^[7]



Photo Captions: (top left) Alain with proud parents, Nelsy and Carlos Bauzá; (top right) Alain focusing his microscope as he prepares for surgery; (adjacent) Alain's first residency at Boston Medical

[1] Following Sharina's format, my commentary is included for added reading pleasure.

[2] To be clear though, I am not getting a medical degree.

[3] This was 100% my family's first question.

[4] Literal translation: bread head.

[5] Rutgers alum just like some of the other NJ lifers I know.

[6] If anyone is interested in learning more, please click [here](#).

[7] Contact me [here](#).



diversity | equity | inclusion
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