

Shared Balance Sheets



James R. Gill

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I once shared a story about the first time I reviewed a balance sheet with an audience of National Association of Black Accountants members. There I was, sitting in my first accounting class. As I perused the financials, I noticed the various categories of assets and liabilities. When I looked at the equity section, I came across a column labeled “Minority Interests.” This was 1978—a time of significant racial awareness in our country. So, the first thing that popped into my head was, “Wow, they even segregate the shares we own.” Of course, I soon realized that this was far from reality. The audience got quite a chuckle.

Jim Gill was recently appointed to the Board of Directors for the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, Seattle branch. Selected by the Board of Governors at the Federal Reserve Bank in Washington, DC, the board participates in the formulation of monetary policy for the United States. Additionally, the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) that sets the federal funds interest rate uses monthly reports. “It has been a great honor to serve in this capacity,” says Gill, president of Pacific Northwest Title Holding Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of The First American Corporation.

Gill, who has a degree in journalism and once worked in public relations, enjoys teachable moments in which he has the opportunity to promote financial awareness and mentor accounting students via his involvement with organizations like the National Association of Black Accountants. In fact, when asked about his current responsibilities, he takes the chance to explain not only what he does but why what he does is so important. “Your title insurance policy is your shield of protection,” he explains. “It makes your home safely yours and will defend your ownership against loss.”

As the delivery of First American’s products and services has become more faceted and automated, Gill has acquired an appreciation for the changing focus. “Electronic delivery of services is key to success in the competitive real estate-information environment,” he says. Having

an understanding of new technologies and the breadth of knowledge to understand how they integrate into the transaction-closing process has been crucial to maintaining Gill's competitive advantage.

Success, for Gill, has always been viewed as a journey rather than a destination. "Whatever heights of success and other achievements one might attain, you are still on a journey and will never arrive at a position where the need to grow and expand your knowledge no longer exists," he says.

Working with a passion extends beyond the office environment. Gill feeds his enthusiasm for young people, primarily through the Accounting Career Awareness Program. "I feel a sense of dire need to help provide students a sense of hope, positive influence, and alternative direction," he explains. A board member of the organization for 26 years, Gill helped the organization remain on firm financial footing by undertaking the labor-intensive task of securing a 501(c)3 designation. "We are able to broaden the fundraising efforts and therefore increase the number of students who can participate in the program."

"In business, in charity and in personal accomplishment, Gill has proven his dedication to going beyond expectations to create real, long-lasting success," says his Eagle Award nominator, Curt G. Johnson, president of the title insurance and services segment for The First American Corporation. "Whether it be growing his business, spearheading cultural and artistic growth for minority groups across the country, helping to create change through the political process, or spending time with family, his positive impact is tangible."

"I believe my life's purpose is to help others, especially my family and the employees at First American, to achieve their full potential," Gill shares. His philosophy includes a daily commitment to create shareholder value, create a positive work environment, and have fun and enjoy the work. Good advice.

CareerFOCUS Magazine™ and the National Eagle Leadership Institute® salute 2007 Eagle Award winner James R. Gill.

Nominating Company

The First American Corporation

Current Position

President, Pacific Northwest
Title Holding Company

Professional Milestones

- Board of Directors, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
- Member of the Year, National Association of Urban Bankers
- Member of the Year, National Association of Black Accountants

Community Leadership

- Board of Directors, Accounting Career Awareness Program
- Investment Advisory Committee, Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center
- New Beginnings Christian Fellowship

Leadership Principle

Every individual has the ability to offer viable and invaluable solutions to problems.

Education/Training

- Bachelor of Arts, University of Washington-Seattle
- MBA, University of Washington

Birthplace

Seattle, WA

Current Home

Bellevue, WA

The Leadership Promise at First American

At First American, there is nothing we value more than our employees. Therefore, our aim goes well beyond recruiting the best possible workforce; we work to provide our employees with the tools and training to help them excel in an environment that encourages creativity, initiative, and professional growth. Our commitment to leadership is evidenced by a number of educational opportunities that have been piloted within our business units, including our Emerging Leader and Experienced Leader training programs and regular Lunch-and-Learn sessions. We also immerse our team members in challenging and significant on-the-job training through student internships, employee business councils, and mentoring relationships that expose them to a wide range of the company's operations. All of these tools and programs work together to help our workforce develop a solid understanding of the business and identify the areas that best match their interests, skills, and abilities.