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Enid Jean-Claude: Change begins with a conversation

By Jackie Stewart

Title: Managing director and associate general counsel, MUFG

Home base: New York

Mentor: Ranjana Clark, chief transformation officer and head of transaction banking in the Americas for MUFG

Sacrifices of love: To say Jean-Claude has a unique background would be an understatement. She was born in Brooklyn, N.Y., after her parents fled Haiti – where her mother was a lawyer and her dad was a judge – due to political unrest. They eventually moved to Chad where her mother taught French and her father taught math. But the family returned to the United States a few years later, because her parents wanted better educational opportunities for their four daughters, even though it meant taking factory jobs. “My parents were selfless,” Jean-Claude said.

Chasing the American Dream: Her parents’ hard work inspired Jean-Claude, who viewed education as a foundation to build on. She would go on to get her undergraduate degree from Yale University and then study law at Harvard University. But she still had trouble envisioning herself in a position of power in the business world due to a lack of role models. “I didn’t see this for myself because I didn’t see others. You don’t see women of color reaching the highest levels,” she said.

A necessary conversation: The banking industry needs to work on getting more minority women into positions of power and that starts with having conversations not only about gender but also race, Jean-Claude said. “I think healthy discussion is critical and that’s where you get everything on the table. When it is on the table, then you need a plan for action. That action may work, and it may cause some additional conversations. It is never ending,” she said.

Comfortable with dissenting: When Jean-Claude joined MUFG in May 2016, her goal was to be seen as a trusted adviser. She serves as the lead attorney for the transaction banking line of



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MUFG's Enid Jean-Claude.

business in the Americas, and she fosters an atmosphere of openness and inclusiveness not only on her legal team but with the colleagues they advise. Just bringing multiple teams together and allowing them to express their opinions challenges traditional ways of thinking, she said. “It is important to know you have an opinion and be comfortable with sharing it, even when it may not be a popular one. That’s where you get any true inclusion,” she said.

Informal guidance: Working with Clark is “fabulous,” Jean-Claude said. They don’t have a formal mentor-mentee relationship so much as an ongoing working relationship in which Jean-Claude feels she has learned a lot. “Sometimes you need to have conver-

sations with someone who tells you the truth and gives you sound advice. She is generous with that, though she is not pushy. She will share her advice, but it’s up to the mentee to take that,” she said.

Best advice she has received: “I think it would be to have an opinion and not to be afraid to voice your opinion,” Jean-Claude said.

Memorable mentee: “Enid is smart, balanced, exceptionally experienced in the business, and takes a strategic view of the situation in formulating her responses. She is a curious learner, seeks feedback eagerly, processes it, and acts with confidence,” Clark said of her mentee.