

QUARTERLY

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A publication of the Gift of Adoption Institute Board members. These pages reflect the opinions of the writer. We encourage you to share your thoughts with us at info@giftofadoption.org.

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Just Schwartz is a new member of the Gift of Adoption Institute Board. He currently serves as the Chairman and CEO of American Family Insurance. Gift of Adoption recently spoke with Just about his personal experience with adoption, why he decided to become an investor and to share more about how he has made diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives a core component of the American Family culture.

I joined American Family Insurance at a time of upheaval for the company. We were used for valuing in Milwaukee. We had, quite honestly, some practices going on at that time that shouldn't have been happening. The company entered a consent decree in 1995, and in June of that year, they agreed on to the new rules doctrine. My first job coming in was to not only deal with all the rules and mental aspects of the business, but to also implement this consent decree, not just in the letter of the law, but also in the spirit of the law.

I remember going to my first meeting with the private plaintiff's who had sued the company with the Federal government. I walked out of that first meeting and I clearly walked that the rest of the people being aware only of the table or the other; it's about building a moral table, and it's about how we all work in a community that has been misrepresented and



disfranchised for a long time. I would like it if you see the glass, I was going to do differently.

Now, diversity, equity and inclusion are in the DNA of who we are. Part of it is because we want to be a good corporate citizen and we want community investment, but we're also doing enough proprietary and non-proprietary work to understand that having a diverse workforce and serving diverse customers gives us greater efficiency, greater effectiveness, more engagement and better bottom line results. It's become really central to who we are as a company, and we believe that our results have been really good.

My Connection to Adoption

Adoption has always been a very normal part of our family. In fact, I've had to become an adopter. My parents

were told they couldn't have kids, so they adopted my brother and then proceeded to have three biological kids, including myself. When my adopted brother became very ill with a kidney disease, I was, strongly enough, a perfect match for him. I donated a kidney to him about 15 years ago and he's doing great. He's actually challenging with us during the pandemic, and we have a close relationship.

When my daughter and son-in-law were looking to grow their family, they also went through adoption, and brought home a beautiful baby girl this past April. It's an unbelievable process.

I haven't found as many areas of brother organization that is like Gift of Adoption. Gift of Adoption is very distinctive in what it stands for and how it operates by definition, Gift of Adoption is helping the most disadvantaged and disadvantaged. I see a really strong connection between DEI work and the work that Gift of Adoption does on a daily basis.

What's most compelling to me about Gift of Adoption is that it helps people who may not have the means to carry out an adoption on their own, and a child who may be in a disadvantaged circumstance, and brings them together in a very meaningful and impactful way - as family.

Did You Know?

Consider making your Institute Board donation with a gift of appreciated stock. Please contact Pam DeWitte for more information. Gift of Adoption has an account with Charles Schwab accounts 1-800-426-2700 x446