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PRESENTED BY:



Roderick Palmore Pathmaker Award Winner

MARK ROELLIG

*Executive Vice President
and General Counsel*

MassMutual



Less than a month before his death, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at Grosse Pointe High School in Michigan about the racism and inequality facing blacks in America.

Mark Roellig, 13 at the time, was one of the more than 2,700 people gathered in the gym to hear King speak. Roellig's father was president of the city's Open Housing Commission, which was working to integrate schools in the predominately white city of Grosse Pointe and helped organize King's appearance.

More than 40 years later, Roellig, now executive vice president and general counsel at Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company (MassMutual), said it was impressive to watch King deliver "The Other America" without a script or notes. One line in particular stayed with him: "Somehow we must come to see that in this pluralistic, interrelated society, we are all tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality."

This moving experience combined with his parents' social activism and the racial tensions that dominated America during his childhood helped shape Roellig's ideals early on, contributing to his successful career as general counsel where he has gained the reputation for fostering work environments that highly value diversity and inclusion and leading efforts to drive social equality.

Throughout his career, Roellig has been a firm believer that diversity of thought, background, and experience leads to better business outcomes. "I've always had diverse teams, and time after time, we've achieved better results than our competition because of it," he said.

MassMutual is one of the leading life insurers in the United States providing a comprehensive portfolio of products and services to help people achieve financial security, including life and disability income insurance, annuities, retirement plan products, and broker dealer and trust services. Listed 94th on the FORTUNE 500 for 2015, MassMutual had \$33.5 billion in enterprise-wide revenue and \$651 billion in total assets under management at the end of 2014.

In his capacity as general counsel, Roellig is responsible for all of the company's legal, regulatory and government relations issues. He advises management and the Board of Directors to ensure that MassMutual adopts and complies with strong governance controls and safeguards the interests of MassMutual's policyowners. Roellig reports to MassMutual Chairman, President and CEO Roger Crandall.

Roellig's experience includes serving as general counsel and secretary of Fisher Scientific International Inc., Storage Technology Corp., and US West Inc. He began his career in private civil litigating practice in Seattle after earning his law degree from George Washington University. Roellig has his MBA from the University of Washington, and he is an adjunct professor at the University of Colorado Law School, teaching "An Introduction to In-House Practice."

The first lawyer in his family, Roellig said he first thought of entering law after a lawyer came to speak to his high school civics class. "I come from a very analytical family, both in mathematics and sciences, and law is very analytical. It is a very structured problem-solving. You get an opportunity to be innovative and think of new ways to solve problems," he said.

One of the first problems Roellig wanted to solve when arriving at MassMutual in 2005 was increasing diversity within the Law Department. Roellig recalls how there were no people of color or women serving as direct reports to the general counsel. A decade later, five of Roellig's 11 direct reports are people of color or women. More than 40 percent of the attorneys in MassMutual's Law Department are female, 16 percent are people of color, and 24 percent are people of color and openly gay and lesbian.

For Roellig, creating a diverse and inclusive team has always been a priority because of the benefits associated with it.

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including the ability to attract and retain top talent and better understand customer needs. In Roellig's experience, diverse teams always lead to better solutions, innovation and creativity.

To this end, the Law Department has developed a four-step diversity program that focuses on creating an accepting environment, branding its diversity efforts both internally and externally to drive awareness, developing a pipeline of diverse talent and finding ways to promote diverse employees through increased opportunity and responsibility.

The Law Department has a standing committee on diversity to drive its efforts. All attorneys have specific diversity-related objectives, and the results against these objectives are part of their performance evaluations. The department also tracks and reviews the diversity efforts of outside law firms that MassMutual partners and consults with to ensure similar values.

During Roellig's tenure, the department has also developed a strong mentorship program. New hires receive two mentors—a peer outside of their team and a senior leader—for a year. Roellig said the mentorship program is a good way to help assimilate attorneys to MassMutual because the experience is very different from being at a firm.

Roellig is currently mentoring two employees at MassMutual, as well as attorneys within the community, an experience he values because of what he learns from it. "One of the values of mentoring is reverse mentoring. They tell me what I should be doing differently, which is really important. They give me some great ideas," he said.

Roellig's efforts to foster diversity and inclusion go beyond his own division and extend to all of MassMutual and the community. He is the executive sponsor of MassMutual's Women's Leadership Network and past executive sponsor of MassMutual's PRIDE employee resource group, which focuses on creating an inclusive workplace for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people (LGBT) and their allies.

Through programs like these, MassMutual has received 100 percent on the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Corporate Equality Index (CEI) for the last two years based on its corporate policies and practices related to LGBT employees, earning a place on the CEI Best Places to Work list. HRC, the largest civil rights organization working to

achieve equality for LGBT Americans, annually surveys corporations that opt in using the index.

Roellig is on the boards of the Leadership Council for Legal Diversity and Lawyers Collaborative for Diversity. He is also a honorary co-chair of the 2015 American Bar Association Presidential Commission on Diversity and Inclusion. In 2013, he received the National Bar Association's Pinnacle Award for Leadership and Courage because of his work to promote diversity.

Under Roellig's leadership, MassMutual has taken public positions on key issues affecting the LGBT community, including supporting tax equity for same sex partners and being one of the first to join the historic amicus brief filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in 2010, urging the repeal of the Defense of Marriage Act.

In 2014 and 2015, the Ethisphere Institute recognized MassMutual as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for outstanding leadership in its ethics and compliance program, corporate citizenship and responsibility, culture of ethics, governance and leadership, and innovation and reputation. In 2014, MassMutual was the first mutual company in the life insurance industry category to be honored with this distinction.

Earlier this year, the Ethisphere Institute recognized Roellig as one of the 2015 Attorneys Who Matter, a distinction awarded to about 75 attorneys around the globe who exemplify ethical best practices. He was selected for his exceptional leadership, strong commitment to diversity and inclusion and practice of mentoring employees, law students and attorneys in the legal community.

Roellig said he is proud to be a part of the ongoing change at MassMutual. "Our diversity and inclusion efforts are benefiting our policyholders, diverse individuals and all of our employees. Being a part of this effort and change and seeing the transformation is enormously rewarding," he said.