

Young award recipient 'determined to succeed'

by RON FANFAIR



Hazel Claxton, Emmanuel-Okyere Frimpong-Manso and Richard Pinnock

As the first and only Black member of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) 18-member Canadian Leadership Team, Hazel Claxton oversees all aspects of the 100-year-old firm's talent management and human resources.

PwC hires hundreds of graduates every year from business and other university programs and Claxton - as the Human Capital Leader - gets the opportunity to meet most of them.

She, however, confesses that she does not see many Black faces.

"There needs to be far more than what I am now seeing," said Claxton who joined PwC in 1983 and was the first Black admitted to partnership in 1995. "This is not just confined to the accounting profession but to all aspects of the corporate world. If we want our people to win the game, they need to be in the game and in the pipeline."

PwC has collaborated with the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) to create a scholarship for a Black high school student. The first academic award was presented to 18-year-old Emmanuel-Okyere Frimpong-Manso at last Sunday's Black History Month launch.

"This is the first of what I hope will be many scholarships that will encourage young people like our scholarship recipient to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential," said Claxton, who holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Queen's University. "In presenting this award, we are celebrating the future successes of our young people and encouraging them to contribute to creating new chapters in our history."

Born in Mississauga, Frimpong-Manso moved to Ghana at age two after his father died. He spent 16 years in the West African country before returning to Canada last September to complete his high school studies at Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Brampton.

"From the moment I read his story, I felt a really strong connection with him because I lost my mom when I was five years old," Claxton added. "I immediately identified with his resilience and his determination to not let life challenges hold him back. I have no doubt that he will be able to accomplish whatever it is that he sets his mind to and I look forward to the day, in the not too distant future, when I look around the room at PwC and see him there."

Frimpong-Manso, who pursued business studies with electives in accounting, business management, economics and mathematics at the Presbyterian Boys Secondary School in eastern Ghana, aspires to be a chartered accountant.

"I am aware that pursuing a chartered accountancy program is challenging," he said. "However, I know that I will succeed because I am a determined, committed and industrious individual...This is a profession with a strong sense of ethics and values at its core and I am confident that it's the right field for me."

PwC provides industry-focused assurance, advisory and tax services for public, private and government clients in corporate accountability, risk management, performance and process improvement and structuring, mergers and acquisitions.