



NEWS

June 10, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Joy Briscoe at 319-883-0219

briscoej@waterlooschools.org

Virtual Executive Leadership Forum for Cedar Valley Black Professionals to feature first Black Big Ten Conference Commissioner

WATERLOO— On June 24, 2020 the 24/7 Black Leadership Advancement Consortium (24/7 BLAC) is excited to host the inaugural Virtual Executive Leadership Forum for Black Professionals featuring Kevin Warren, the 6th Commissioner of the Big Ten Conference and first Black Commissioner in its history. The 24/7 Black Leadership Advancement Consortium aims to increase personal and professional development, amplify leadership and growth strategies and build networks of influence for Black Professionals in the Cedar Valley.

The initiative is an intentional and direct approach to address disparities highlighted by the 24/7 Wall Street Report (the 2018 report designated Waterloo/Cedar Falls as the worst place in the United States for African-Americans in terms of social and economic disparities, currently the metro area ranks third), the inequality intensified by Covid-19, recent acts of injustice highlighted in the media and a 12% unemployment rate for Black Hawk County.

The group seeks to connect with the unemployed/underemployed, fill vacancies and employment opportunities, build career readiness skills, work with employers committed to diversifying their workforce and influence the amount of Black managers and leaders in local companies.

Warren serves as the sixth Commissioner of the Big Ten Conference and is the first Black commissioner to lead an Autonomy Five conference. Prior to this role, Warren served as the Chief Operating Officer for the Minnesota Vikings of the National Football League where he worked since 2005. He was the highest ranking Black executive working on the business side for a team in the NFL and was the first Black COO in NFL history.

Warren worked in the NFL for 21 seasons including 15 with the Minnesota Vikings, where he directed the team's focus on creating departmental synergy and collaboration, increasing financial profitability for the franchise, improving communication, developing leadership initiatives, implementing a platform focusing on positive community impact through the Minnesota Vikings Foundation, launched an extremely well known women's initiative program,



created an elevated fan experience, and built a world-class franchise focused on the tenets of hard work, ethics, financial profitability, community service and a “best-in-class” mentality.

Under Warren’s visionary leadership, the Vikings restructured the organization, with an emphasis on broadening the executive team and promoting women to key executive positions. In September of 2013, Warren’s reputation and NFL experience were recognized when he was named a member of the NFL Committee on Workplace Diversity, which is committed to enhancing and promoting diversity at every level of the NFL. In February of 2017, during Super Bowl LI festivities in Houston, Warren was honored with the Texas Southern University Pioneer Award, recognizing his groundbreaking role as an NFL executive and his commitment to championing diversity. Warren was also honored as a member of the Sports Business Journal 2019 Champions class.

Prior to joining the Vikings, Warren worked for the international law firm of Greenberg Traurig (2003-2005) playing a critical leadership role with the Wilf Ownership Group deal team during the acquisition of the Minnesota Vikings. Additionally, he spent two seasons (2001-2003) with the Detroit Lions as Senior Vice President of Business Operations & General Counsel and four seasons (1997-2001) with the St. Louis Rams as Vice President of Football Administration, and Vice President of Player Programs and Legal Counsel. Warren was an integral part of the Rams organization when the team won Super Bowl XXXIV over the Tennessee Titans in January of 2000. Most recently, Commissioner Warren formed the Anti-Hate and Anti-Racism Coalition for the Big Ten Conference, an initiative to support student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, chancellors, presidents and others.

Additional forum speakers will be announced next week. For sponsorship information or to register to attend, please visit www.cvskillup.com. For press information, please contact Robert Smith at robert.smith@uni.edu or Joy Briscoe at briscoej@waterlooschools.org.

The Virtual Executive Leadership Forum is brought to you by the UNI’s Chief Diversity Officer, the City of Waterloo, UNI-CUE’s Executive Director, Hawkeye’s Diversity and Inclusion Director, the Chief Officer of Human Resources and Equity for Waterloo Schools, The City of Waterloo, Grow Cedar Valley and additional area agencies.



--END--