

# African American Chamber hosts annual luncheon

[Dec 18, 2014](#)

By Diane I. Daniels



**A HAPPY TRIO**—African American Chamber of Commerce of Western PA Board Chairman Samuel Stephenson and President and CEO Doris Carson Williams salute David L. Porges, EQT Chairman, President and CEO after a well-received luncheon speech. ([Photos](#) by Diane I. Daniels)

If you were one of the 400 attendees of the African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania's 15th Annual Business Luncheon Thursday, December 11 at the Omni William Penn Hotel; it was your opportunity to learn about its many valuable resources as well as EQT Corporation's vision for energy, and what it means for the region.

With the mission to continuously improve business and professional opportunities for African-American business owners and professionals, Doris Carson Williams, president and CEO of the Chamber credits their Business Institute as a key tool in assisting its members in growing, evolving and advancing into complex territories. She said the [workshops](#) throughout the year as well as a [certificate program](#) and monthly Powerbreakfasts have provided meaningful business insight, access and acumen for its membership.

EQT is one of the many Chamber corporate members, supporters and sponsors. Delivering the luncheon keynote message, David L. Porges, its chairman, president and CEO pointed out EQT's commitment to the Chamber and businesses throughout the region it serves.

With a footprint not only in western Pennsylvania, EQT's obligations are throughout the Keystone State as well as Kentucky, Ohio, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. Dedicating itself to good corporate citizenship, Porges [told](#) the crowd that the corporation cannot be successful without obtaining a social license to operate. "Our commitment to do the right thing at all times, everywhere we operate, is not just the right thing, but it's good business. EQT's comprehensive "Supplier Diversity Initiative" is an extension of that commitment," he said.



**A HARDY WELCOME**—Chamber President and CEO Doris Carson Williams welcome the luncheon attendees.

Elaborating on the company's commitment, Porges said in 2008, EQT realized they could do better in supplier diversity. Taking a top down approach, as a result he said sound internal supplier diversity policies and systems, the core of the Initiative were put in place. The six point plan included; setting goals and metrics to ensure accountability throughout EQT; [tracking](#) and reporting diversity spending monthly to the Board of Directors; including supplier diversity 'value drivers' in annual performance evaluations for entire departments and individual managers; conducting supplier diversity training throughout the company; promoting and recognizing supplier diversity via special events and award programs, as well as their website and other communication channels and as part of the bidding process, encouraging prime [contractors](#) to have their own supplier diversity programs and keeping a Tier 2 reporting scorecard to maintain accountability at every level, and ensure that suppliers are taking definitive steps to hire women- and minority-owned businesses.

Porges defined a key challenge in their diversity plan as having a limited pool of firms with energy experience and working only with the small pool of firms that have that experience possibly not producing the best price, freshest thinking, or most innovative solutions for EQT.



**COMMITTED**—David L. Porges, EQT Chairman, President and CEO informs the audience on their commitment to diversity and inclusion.



Admitting that achieving their supplier diversity goals takes real work, vision and a commitment at every level of the organization he identified components of their Supplier Diversity Outreach and mentoring as hosting Supplier Diversity [Matchmaking](#) events, participating and having relationships with national and regional organizations serving women- and minority-owned business enterprises and through direct employee involvement; EQT [employees](#) taking leadership roles on supplier diversity initiatives. They also have a supplier diversity manager in place providing assistance to businesses.

Porges, a Chicago native, has been involved in the energy industry for more than 30 years. He started his career with EQT in 1998, was named Chairman of the Board in 2011; and President and Chief Executive Officer in 2010. He started out as Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer.

He has a Masters' degree in [Business](#) Administration from the Stanford University Graduate School of Business and a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering and Management Sciences from Northwestern University's McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science. He is a member of the McCormick Advisory Council for the Robert R. McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science at Northwestern University. Highly involved in the Pittsburgh area, he serves on the Board of Directors of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, is a member of the Pennsylvania Business Roundtable and serves on numerous arts organizations including the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust. He also participates in organizations within his industry inclusive of the American Natural Gas Alliance, Inc., and Interstate Natural Gas Association of America.

EQT was founded over 125 years ago by George Westinghouse as a natural gas business and has developed throughout the years to become one of the country's largest natural gas producers. Porges described its current growth trend as being built on the use of advanced horizontal drilling technology.

"We pride ourselves on our commitment to safe and responsible operations as we work to meet the country's growing demand for clean-burning energy, while at the same time providing a workplace that enriches the communities where our people live and work."

A membership organization, the African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania connects small business owners to a wide variety of business tools and resources and helps improve access and build skills to better enable the successful business navigation.

Officers of the Chamber are: Chairman Samuel Stephenson; Vice Chairman Oscar Worthy; Treasurer Cheryl Allen and Secretary Ann Rucker.