

**Women**  
are leading the charge toward  
**diversity** and **inclusion**

# BOSS LADIES

**By Ana Pelayo Connery**

From the #MeToo movement to the social justice protests that followed the murder of George Floyd, recent events across the country have once again ushered in a reckoning on equality that's giving the words "diversity and inclusion" tons of airtime. What's different this time is that companies are facing public pressure to address inequalities — with a younger generation of Americans demanding it. The following eight women of color are politicians, CEOs, big-business executives and activists leading the way for inclusion, diversity, social justice and racial equity. Each has broken barriers and made significant contributions already, but all would agree they're just getting started:





ALEXANDRIA  
**Ocasio-Cortez**

U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN,  
14TH DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

*“Change is a lot closer  
than we think.”*

**K**nown as AOC among fans and foes alike, U.S. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is the bartender-turned-congressional candidate who in 2018 at the age of 29 upset a 10-term incumbent without taking a penny from corporate entities, becoming the youngest woman ever elected to Congress.

Born in New York to Puerto Rican parents, she has a following among the working class for her tireless tenacity when it comes to fighting for inclusion in all forms. Whether she’s criticizing the bipartisan infrastructure bill for the lack of diversity among its negotiators or introducing the Political Appointments Inclusion and Diversity Act, which would require the demographics of appointees to be made public, marking a significant step toward making those appointments more inclusive, she’s resilient and determined.

Ocasio-Cortez has already built quite the track record speaking up for the rights of minorities, the LGBTQ community and women. In 2020, Rep. Ted Yoho was caught publicly using a sexist slur to describe her. She responded by taking to the House floor to defend not only herself, but Yoho’s wife and daughters, too. “When you do that to any woman, what Mr. Yoho did was give permission to other men to do that to his daughters,” she said. “In using that language, in front of the press, he gave permission to use that language against his wife, his daughters, women in his community, and I am here to stand up to say that is not acceptable.”

Whatever she does next, her platform, which includes Medicare for All, is rooted in a desire to advance the notion of equality and justice for all. As she told *Time* magazine, “I think that change is a lot closer than we think.”

SAUL LOEB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



**BOSS**  
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GETTY IMAGES

## MAXINE WATERS

U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN, 43RD DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

*“For the system to work for all of us,  
it must also look like all of us.”*

**C**urrently serving her 16th term in the U.S. House of Representatives, Maxine Waters is one of the most senior members of Congress, representing some of Los Angeles’ most multicultural neighborhoods. In 2019, she made history when she became the first woman and first Black chair of the House Financial Services Committee, where she immediately established the first Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion.

A year later, when George Floyd’s death sparked racial justice protests nationwide, many companies pledged to fund diversity and inclusion efforts, support voting rights and launch listening sessions. “I am following up on those commitments to make sure that those pledges happen,” the congresswoman says. “Often, people of color are the last hired and first fired, so our work is focused on making sure that women and people of color are represented at all levels at corporations.”

Waters has been fighting on behalf of diversity and inclusion for decades. In 2008, she co-authored Section 1116 of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act, which created the Office of Minority and Women Inclusion at the U.S.

Securities and Exchange Commission to oversee diversity in employment, business activities and management within that agency. In 2010, she co-authored Section 342 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, with the goal of improving accountability and transparency in the financial system, ending bailouts and protecting consumers from abusive financial services practices.

Over the past year, Waters’ committee helped pass into law COVID-19 relief for small businesses and funding for minority banks and community lenders. “But there is still so much more we can do to ensure that diversity and inclusion is heard everywhere and that minority-owned businesses as well as minority-led community financial institutions and lenders are given opportunities to compete and undo hundreds of years of redlining and discrimination,” she says.

At 83, Waters is popular even among millennials, earning her the nickname Auntie Maxine. She routinely gets re-elected with more than 70 percent of the vote and was named one of *Time* magazine’s 100 Most Influential People of 2018. “We must keep pushing for progress and social justice in all areas of culture, politics, business and government to make sure that the movement that grew following the deaths of George Floyd and many others is not in vain,” she says. “We must never stop calling for what’s right and fair.”



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GAP INC.

**SONIA  
SYNGAL**

PRESIDENT AND CEO, GAP INC.

*"Being open to all is our call to action."*

It's difficult to find a company that's pledged to double the representation of Black and Latino workers at all levels by 2025, or to increase the representation of Black employees in store leadership roles by 2025, but Gap Inc. has done both.

"We take this issue very seriously," says Sonia Syngal, the company's CEO. "We were also the first Fortune 500 company to announce equal pay for men and women." Out of more than 7,000 companies across the world, Gap was named one of the top five most diverse companies by the Thomson Reuters Global Diversity and Inclusion Index for two consecutive years. "Our north star is that we are inclusive by design," says Syngal, who is now considered the highest-ranked Indian American female CEO of a Fortune 500 company since Indra Nooyi stepped down from her post at PepsiCo in 2018.

Even when she was at the helm of sister brand Old Navy, where she led the company to record-breaking growth between 2016 and 2020, Syngal relied on the same principles to guide her, often referring to the company's goal of offering "affordable fashion to anyone regardless of gender, income and body shape."

Last year, Gap became the first retailer to require all suppliers to pay garment workers electronically, which Syngal says is "a critical path to financial freedom." She's also the head of one of the only retailers to claim a workforce that is 55 percent Black, Latino, Asian American or something other than white. This year, the company announced it was regularly hosting diversity and inclusion workshops and now includes mandatory racial equity training in its employee onboarding.

"We started out as an inclusive company," Syngal says. "Creating opportunities for the people and communities connected to our business inspires us to this day."



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KARINE  
JEAN-PIERRE

DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY, WHITE HOUSE

*"I want people to see me on TV and think, 'OK, my voice is being heard.'"*

**W**hen Karine Jean-Pierre became the first openly gay spokesperson in history to stand behind the podium during a White House press briefing in May 2021, White House press secretary Jen Psaki tweeted, "Today is a big day in the press office and @WhiteHouse. My partner in truth—@KJP46 is doing her first full briefing from the podium today making history in her own right. But doing her real justice means also recognizing her talent, her brilliance and her wonderful spirit."

Making the accomplishment even more momentous, Jean-Pierre is only the second Black woman to hold the position. "It's a real honor to be standing here today," Jean-Pierre said, her hands gripping the podium for the first time. "Clearly the president believes that representation matters, and I appreciate him giving me this opportunity."

Before making a mark as the chief public affairs officer for MoveOn, she spent several years working as an adviser in the Obama White House. During the 2020 election, she became then-vice presidential

candidate Kamala Harris' chief of staff, where she was the first Black person and first out lesbian to hold that position.

Born in Martinique to Haitian parents and raised in New York, Jean-Pierre told *Out* magazine in 2020, "As a Black, gay immigrant who comes from a working-class family, I know that America hasn't always worked for everyone. And I know that America still doesn't work for everyone. The truth of the matter is: We have a long way to go. But that's what I'm working toward: mobilizing people around this shared vision of what an America that works for everyone could look like — and then making it happen."

In 2019, Jean-Pierre wrote a memoir, *Moving Forward: A Story of Hope, Hard Work, and the Promise of America*, where she explains how others can get involved in politics and in their communities. "America is progressing towards a stronger, more inclusive future — and I know women of color are a driving force in that evolution," she told *Out*, adding that she believes that an America "that is stronger and more inclusive is within reach."

DEBORAH  
LIU

PRESIDENT AND CEO, ANCESTRY

*"Diverse voices are what help us build better companies."*

**D**eborah Liu knows what it's like to be the token person of color in a room. She also knows what it's like to be the only woman.

"I can't tell you how many times throughout my career I have been both," says the 18-year tech industry veteran and new president and CEO of Ancestry, who also serves on the company's board of directors. Even today, 72 percent of women in tech are outnumbered by men in business meetings by a ratio of at least 2-to-1, according to Trust Radius, a business-to-business review site that funds industry surveys. "One time, a Black colleague and I were presenting to a group of white men, and when I told my career coach about it, she says, 'Well, when you were looking at them, they were looking at you, right?' She had a point. It's very hard to be the 'only' anything, but just being in the room represents a step in the right direction."

Prior to taking the helm at Ancestry in March 2021, Liu was a senior executive at Facebook, where she came up with the idea for Marketplace, the hugely successful platform that allows millions of people to buy and sell products. She previously spent several years in product roles at PayPal and eBay.

Despite her own success, the lack of women and people of color in her field was so obvious to her that in 2016 she launched Women In Product, a nonprofit that connects women in product management and advocates for equal representation. "I think the interest in diversity is greater now than ever, especially for women and people of color."



WOMEN IN PRODUCT PORTRAITS



**BOSS**  
 LADIES


WALGREENS

## ROSALIND BREWER

CEO, WALGREENS BOOTS ALLIANCE

*"I tell young people of color, 'You were likely hired because of the unique perspectives you bring.'"*

**R**osalind "Roz" Brewer may have grown up the daughter of assembly-line workers, but she is no stranger to the C-suite. In fact, she's led retail giants twice before her current position as CEO of Walgreens Boots Alliance, the company that owns Walgreens drugstores, having served as chief operating officer at Starbucks and president and CEO at Sam's Club.

But her current position comes with one giant distinction: It makes Brewer the only Black woman at the helm of an S&P 500 company. "I take my role as one of the

very few Black female CEOs very seriously," Brewer says. "However, I look forward to the day when I'm no longer the first."

In 2019, Brewer became the only Black woman to sit on Amazon's board. A year prior, she shut down all Starbucks stores for mandatory racial bias training after two Black men were arrested for trespassing at a Philadelphia Starbucks when they were simply sitting at a table. "For me, making a difference and positively impacting the bottom line are complementary, rather than an either/or proposition," Brewer says. "Being able to do both is important to me because, at this point in my career, purpose is my driving force."



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JAI LENNARD/WARNERMEDIA

CHRISTY  
HAUBEGGEREXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND  
CHIEF ENTERPRISE INCLUSION OFFICER, WARNERMEDIA

*"I've had different jobs but only one mission: to use storytelling to empower our community."*

**C**hristy Haubegger was a student at Stanford Law School when she came up with the idea for *Latina* magazine. A few years later, she left law behind and launched *Latina* with *Essence* founder Edward Lewis, introducing the country to the first national publication for Hispanic women.

This year marks the brand's 25th anniversary, and while Haubegger is no longer at the helm, the Mexican American remains laser-focused on telling stories of, by and for women and people of color as the executive vice president and chief enterprise inclusion officer at WarnerMedia, a company with a portfolio that includes Warner Bros. Pictures, CNN, HBO, Cartoon Network and more. "In some ways it feels like we're still pushing the same message we were pushing 25 years ago, but the growth of our population and our impact on pop culture, economics and politics is so much greater now," Haubegger says.

Today, Haubegger oversees a workforce of about 25,000, advocating for diversity and inclusion in every aspect of Warner's business, including who's in front of and behind the cameras. Prior to that, she spent 16 years turning Creative Artists Agency (CAA) into one of the most diverse

and inclusive agencies in the entertainment business, representing the largest share of female and Black directors, according to the University of Southern California's Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. During her tenure at CAA she also oversaw the launch of its Amplify Database, the industry's first searchable database for television writers of color.

"Most people don't shape their impressions of our community through personal experience but rather through media," she says. "It shapes what we think of ourselves and what others think of us, too."

Under Haubegger's purview, Warner is producing *Blue Beetle*, the first major film from Marvel or DC to star a Latino superhero. Angel Manuel Soto, also Latino, was tapped to direct. "It's never been a better time to be a person of color in entertainment," says Haubegger. "The more inclusive we can get, the more that great talent is evenly distributed."

As if she needed a side gig, in 2020 Haubegger and 10 other prominent Latina activists co-founded Poderistas, a community designed to inspire, affirm and inform Latinas with curated content that includes current events, parenting, finances, health and more. "It started just before the last election because we found a lot of Latinas were not voting, but then it turned into so much more."

KIM  
GODWIN

PRESIDENT, ABC NEWS

*"I stand on the shoulders of giants in journalism who paved the way."*

**W**hen she stepped into the role of ABC News president in early 2021, Kim Godwin became the first Black executive — male or female — to run a broadcast-network news operation. "The significance of this appointment is not lost on me," Godwin told the National Association of Black Journalists, which recently honored her with the Ida B. Wells Award. It recognizes leaders who've helped increase opportunities for journalists of color while also improving the coverage of communities of color. Godwin took over at ABC at a time when the network's news ratings are in the midst of an upswing. Shows like *Good Morning America* and *World News Tonight* are some of America's most-watched news programs, with others like *The View* consistently ranking at the top of the ratings charts. In other words, Godwin's

impact will be far and wide at a time when America ranks last among 46 countries for trust in media, according to a recent Reuters Institute report, and trust in news sources is at an all-time low.

But Godwin is familiar with standards and ethics. It was one of her many duties during the history-making news executive's 14 years at CBS, where she oversaw the domestic and foreign news operation and served as the director of development and diversity. In fact, just a few weeks into her new role at ABC, reports surfaced that she'd met with *The View* co-hosts and others about the need to tone down personal attacks in an effort to maintain the network's credibility.

During her last year at CBS, she also developed a news unit devoted exclusively to stories that explore the intersection of race and culture while also running CBS Village, a multiplatform franchise with the aim of shining a spotlight on diverse groups and communities.



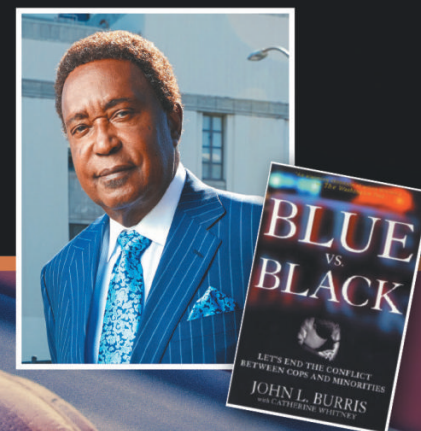
PROVIDED BY KIM GODWIN





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### NOTABLE PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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