

# NEWS 12/96

The St Paul

A publication for employees of The St. Paul Companies November/December 1996 Volume 4, Issue 10

## Mapping our future



PROFILE

# Jarvis Jones

Commitment to diversity and community has distinguished Jarvis Jones' career as a lawyer in private practice, as a member of The St. Paul legal staff and as business development officer for St. Paul Medical Services. "It sounds corny, but I have an unpaid debt," Jones said. "So many people inside and outside The St. Paul have mentored me in unique and powerful ways that I feel an obligation to pass on their gifts to someone else." After graduating from law school in 1985, Jones served as corporate counsel for United Health Care and then worked in private practice with several large insurance clients, including The St. Paul. In 1991, he joined the company's Legal division; in 1994, Jones made the move to Medical Services, where he is now responsible for creating a system and processes for developing new medical products. He also has "A to Z" responsibility for managing the development of new products through cross-functional teams. Also in 1994, Jones became the first lawyer of color to serve as president of the Hennepin County Bar Association (HCBA), the largest county bar association in the state with over 7,000 members, and is now in his second term on the Minnesota State Bar Association's Executive Board. "My 'firsts' signify that although there is much work to be done along the 'color line,' we can successfully do the work necessary to cross the line," he said. In 1992 and 1993, Jones co-chaired the HCBA Glass Ceiling Task Force and helped champion diversity education in the legal community. As a result, Minnesota became the first state in the nation to mandate that all attorneys take two continuing education credits every three years that focus on eliminating bias in the legal profession. Jones received the Minnesota State Bar Association's President's Award for his work, and he served as a panelist on the subject at the American Bar Association Annual Meeting this year. Other state bar associations, taking the lead from Minnesota, are exploring similar diversity training. Jones vividly remembers his father "smiling and laughing when talking about outmaneuvering the 'system' that placed mountains in front of him." Jones says he now sees that the challenge for his father "was never the 'system' but the challenge itself. The support I've received from this company, and Medical Services in particular, exemplifies the company's commitment to community and a diverse working environment. Mentoring other employees, particularly people of color, in understanding corporate culture is also very important to me. Often, misunderstanding the corporate culture can be more detrimental than the race issue itself."

PAVING THE WAY

*When facing difficult decisions, Jones noted, "I draw on the strength of my fore-parents and parents who paved the road I now travel on. By comparison, I have a charmed life, and I feel compelled to further extend that paved road for others."*

