

Cleveland Baseball Legend and Businessman André Thornton Becomes Kent State's First President's Ambassador

Kent State University has appointed André Thornton as its first President's Ambassador. Thornton is president and CEO of ASW Global, a supply chain management company based in Mogadore, Ohio. Nicknamed "Thunder" Thornton, he also is a Cleveland baseball legend who played professional baseball for 21 years.

The President's Ambassadorship is a new program at Kent State that is a vehicle for securing the services of a local, high-level person of color who will serve as a catalyst for change, promoting pluralistic understanding and mutual respect among diverse constituencies of students, staff, faculty and administrators at the university. Thornton begins his ambassadorship in September.



"The President's Ambassadorship is designed to bring distinguished local minority professionals from Northeast Ohio to our campus to share their professional knowledge and experience with Kent State students and faculty for one academic year," Kent State President Lester A. Lefton said. "André leads one of the largest minority-owned businesses in Ohio, and he has exceptional leadership skills and a commitment to diversity and inclusion. We are thrilled that he'll be our first President's Ambassador, joining us this fall."

Thornton will be involved in a variety of projects at the university. These projects may include speaking at seminars and special events, engaging students, working on advisory committees, addressing diversity challenges and implementing diversity initiatives.

Thornton has more than 20 years of experience in entrepreneurial ventures. Prior to ASW Global, he served as one of the principals in Apple Partners, leading a highly successful restaurant management group that was sold to Applebee's International. Thornton also founded a successful consulting and sports management company and continues to speak nationally on executive leadership, organizational change and diversity.

During his time in professional baseball, Thornton was a first baseman and had many notable achievements. In 1979, he was awarded the Roberto Clemente Award, an annual award which recognizes the player who best exemplifies the game of baseball, sportsmanship, community involvement and the individual's contribution to his team. He spent 10 seasons with the Cleveland Indians where he was a two-time All-Star and received the coveted Silver Slugger Award in 1984. Thornton is enshrined in the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame and the Cleveland Sports Hall of Fame.

A native of Tuskegee, Ala., Thornton graduated magna cum laude, obtaining his bachelor's degree from Capital University. He is co-author of the book "Triumph Born of Tragedy" and was twice featured in McGraw-Hill/Irwin national educational videos for his entrepreneurial and marketing leadership success at GPI Procurement Services where he served as president and CEO.

Thornton's community involvement and engagement activities include several organizations. He currently serves on the boards of the Greater Akron Chamber, the Greater Cleveland Partnership and the Ohio Region of the International Warehouse and Logistics Association. Previously, he served on the

Board of Trustees for Nyack College, the President's Council, Team NEO Advisory Board and the Governor's Workforce Policy Advisory Board. He is a member of Leadership Cleveland, graduating from the program in 1997.

For more information on Kent State, visit www.kent.edu. Additional information on ASW Global can be found at www.aswglobal.com.

#

Photo Caption:

Kent State University President Lester A. Lefton (left) shakes hands with André Thornton (right), who was named the university's first President's Ambassador.

Media Contact:

Emily Vincent, evincen2@kent.edu, 330-672-8595