

# VOICES OF EQUITY PODCAST

## Episode 3 Season 2

### MATT MELVIN

FEMALE VOICE (singing): (0:12)

We are the voices of equity podcast. We are the voices of equity podcast listen up ...ooh ...  
ooh...ooh...ooooh listen up.

MUSIC: (0:34)

(Inaudible)

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: (0:39)

Thank you for joining us for the Voices of Equity Podcasts at Lorain County Community College.

We are your Co-hosts Denise Douglas...

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS: (0:46)

And Kionna Macintosh-Pharms.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: (0:48)

As the Co-chairs for the Equity by Design team at LCCC, we are excited to share the work of this team, the voices of those who do this work, and the voices of the students who are the reason for our work.

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS: (0:58)

I have the pleasure of introducing our next guest, this gentleman I met, I actually started attending Lorain County Community College in 2010 and this particular gentleman who is Matt Melvin. He was one of the first individuals who welcomed me to the campus. He probably doesn't even realize this, but I had returned as a non-traditional student, and I remember walking through the halls like it was yesterday, and he was riding through the halls, and he stopped and

asked me if he could help me find anywhere that I may have needed to go. And from that instance I have been very pleased to see him and every opportunity that I have received. I feel blessed to have him as someone that I deem as a friend and without further ado, I would like to introduce to you my friend, my colleague, Mr. Matt Melvin we certainly do appreciate and introduce you to this particular podcast.

MATT MELVIN: (2:05)

What a groovy introduction that was. Thank you very much and I truly appreciate being involved and asked to be a part of this program. Thank you very much.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: (2:15)

Thank you, Matt. Kionna, I think I had a similar interaction with Matt. I had a pleasure of meeting him when I took the podcasting course here in 2019 and Matt was co-instructor of this course and was so helpful to me even when I had questions that really illustrate my lack of technology knowledge, and to put it simply, stupid questions. But he is so willing to be patient with me, to answer those questions he would meet with me before class, after class, and I think, this just demonstrates how Matt, just meets students where they are. Meets people where they are in their learning journey. So really Matt demonstrates empathy in action, and I'm so pleased to have him here today. So Matt, I have the first question for you: would you share with our listeners more about your background? We would love to hear more about your experience here at the college. Maybe some of the things that got you started in radio, or whatever you would like to share with us today.

MATT MELVIN: (3:10)

Before I start answering that question Denise and Kionna, I wanna go back to what you said Denise and reiterate that there's no such thing as a stupid question. It just empowers the journey of learning as we go along in our educational journey, so there's no such thing as a stupid question. It all started when I was really a young child. I really wanted to become a professional wrestler. I'm huge into sports. I love sports! I love professional wrestling. I love baseball, football, all sorts of sports and just like a lot of children when they're younger and watching professional

wrestling on television, I want to do that for a living! Well unfortunately with my disability, I'm unable to walk, so it's kind of hard for a professional wrestler to be in a wheelchair, and actually entertain and perform for the audience. Even though maybe for once or twice, that might be quite enjoyable. I don't quite know. But! I love sports and I love professional wrestling. I thought going into it as a career would be sports broadcasting. I wanted to be the one behind the microphone, and as we speak right now, I'm behind a microphone. I wanted to be the one to make those magical calls. When you hear them, you're like, oh I was there, or I remember that moment. I wanted to be that voice in the future for people to remember a magical call from a player, a team, going to the playoffs, winning the Super Bowl, whatever the case may be. So, I thought that the next best thing to be involved in sports even though I am disabled and, in a wheelchair, would be to be a sports broadcaster. So, that took me to being involved, behind the microphone doing some work in junior high doing some MC work for some events and going to my high school I went to Elyria High, and they provided me the opportunity to do some, play by play do some emceeing for senior night for the football team, or pep rallies and did that. Going to the year of 2000, I had the opportunity to record a radio commercial at WEOL for the city of Elyria for the new high school levy that they were trying to get passed in 2000, and I was the voice, thanks to a local television personality, Betty Halliburton, a good friend of mine in high school. She was a big influence in my high school days, and she asked me if I wanted to be the voice of this commercial. And let me tell you something, yes, I enjoyed the experience, but recording the same script 30 times, just because I couldn't get it on point was kind of annoying. I have to keep repeating and recording and recording and recording, and if anyone knows me, I do not record in one shot. I never have and I probably never will. 'Cause I concentrate too much, and I'm so focused on it I screw up somewhere. That just shows you that mistakes are part of the journey. So never be afraid to fail. Never be afraid to make mistakes. They happen. So, continuing on to 2000, I was also introduced to a very prominent person here on campus, Ron Jantz. When I was a junior in high school I met him, and he gave me the knowledge of what classes to take here. He told me 'cause I was looking into the Ohio media school that it's called currently, at the time it was called Ohio school of Broadcasting, and I was so infatuated 'cause it was a 10-month course and gave you a certificate, but could it help me land what I wanted as a career? So, I talked

to professionals and as a high school assignment, my teacher had me do a questionnaire and send it off to all kinds of sports personalities in the local area like Tony Rizzo or Jim Donovan or Tom Hamilton from the Cleveland Indians. But Ron Jantz was also a person that I interacted with, and he said, degrees will get you farther than certificates. So, he highly encouraged me to come here to Lorain County Community College and I haven't left. We're now in the year of 2021, nineteen years since I stepped foot or rolled onto this campus however you want to explain it and I am still here. I got involved with Duck Radio at the time and we have since changed our name to Boom Radio in January of 2003. Because radio intrigued me. Making that magical call, being involved for people to remember you and that's a way that boom radio could do that to me. I became the promotions director here at Boom Radio in May of 2004, thanks to the guidance of our faculty advisor Dee Gross. I've had a lot of people over my time who have very much influenced my career. Whether it be Dee Gross from an educational journey, or the late Bernie Kimble, who also was a part of the faculty advisor here who worked at 107.3 The Wave. I went on to Bowling Green State University to achieve my bachelor's degree and I had some people, like the names of Lori Liggett and Jim Barnes, who would sit there as I asked countless questions, and if you both know me, I ask countless questions, just for knowledge, and they would sit there for hours on end even having dinner with me. As we're eating dinner, I'm asking tons and tons of questions. All those people have an influence on my career, and now all these years later, I take the advice, and the knowledge, and the learning that they presented to me and recycle it and offer it to the students of the future generations. And that's what I hope to do here at Boom Radio today and Lorain County Community College.

MUSIC: (9:01)

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS: (9:06)

Wow! When I tell you that what we do here is we promote that everyone has a story to tell, you truly exemplify that. I've known you for years, I started off with that, and 2010 is when we met. And there are still things that you shared with me today, that I had no idea of. Oh my gosh, I just got chills! I have the next question though and that is, in July 2020, the American Disability Act celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Yet many people would say that the disabled community is often

forgotten within equity diversity and inclusion work. What has been your experience with this? That's the first question, and then there's a follow-up question to that.

MATT MELVIN:

(9:52)

Lorain County Community College and even Bowling Green have been nothing but helpful. In terms of accessibility services, going for my visa in terms of my needs, that I need for classes. Whether it be my door clicker, or if I need a table, or a note taker extra time on a test. They're always willing to sit down with me, and see how my day is going, how my semester is going, how my year is going. They always stopped me in the hallway and check up on me. Probably the most difficult part of my educational journey has been transportation Lorain County Transit, years ago made budget cuts and they cut certain routes. Unfortunately, in 2010, the same year that I met Kionna. In January my transportation got cut, and I had to sit home for ten months, because I didn't have a way that could transport my power chair to and from the college. I sat home for ten months, and I worked from home. I was very gracious the people at the college allowed me to keep my job 'cause I was working as the promotions director. Just like any other person they could have let me go. Because I was not able to be here consistently because of my transportation issues, but they were very kind and I'm very grateful that I was able to keep my job, and they kept me on. It was extremely difficult to find transportation, because I could not find anything that would transport my power chair for more than \$500 a week. Financially that doubled what I made here at work. I couldn't afford that out of pocket, and they tell me Well why don't you go through your insurance? I didn't want to go that route. Yes, I could have, but that's extra paperwork that would take me longer to get the ball rolling. I was looking for an immediate fix, and I couldn't find that. I would hear, no we can't transport your chair or you're too young. I heard from nursing homes telling me that I was too young to ride with their company because nursing homes of course deal with the elderly, and they're like well if you have a power chair you need an aide to come with you, that's our rule. I didn't have an aide at the time. LifeCare was \$500 a week. Then, Goodwill had a transportation company. That lasted about two to three years, but the same thing happened again. Because of funding that got cut and then I went on to Our Lady of the Wayside they had a transportation but because of COVID that got cut. Currently, I'm going through a company out of Medina, to bring me to and from work. My point is there's

very limited opportunities here for transportation in Lorain County, and I would have to say that's the biggest problem that I've faced. As you both know, I always want to be here. Be here, help the students, do my job, do whatever I need to do because I enjoy being here. I love my job at Lorain County Community College because it's very close to home and because of my disability, it allows me to do something, get out in the community, but if I can't get there, because of transportation, overall, that's a problem.

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS: (12:54)

You have been working with us on or have been affiliated to some degree with us on this podcast, and you know that we're trying to make sure that individuals share their equity story, and you did that we certainly do appreciate that. The follow up question though is, are there any questions or topics that you wished we had acts regarding equity and the disabled community?

MATT MELVIN: (13:17)

Another thing that's difficult which is always a good question to ask is proper funding. Proper funding for the disability or the disability community is always a struggle because they never know where to go. And if there is funding out there, in which there is. There's all kinds of organizations that will fund for disability to help them with their educational or whatever purpose that they need, but to try to get the ball rolling understanding of what is out there for the disability community is a struggle. And even if you start within an organization, sometimes the process could take up to six months to a year. That's tough to overtake, because some people have struggled waiting. They wanna get it going now. I know that we have to wait I understand that, but it's difficult to wait. If you're waiting for that funding or looking for funding 'cause you don't want to wait, sometimes you don't know where to go. With the organizations that help hard for them to give you a straight answer. You could ask someone, and they're giving you an answer, but half the time I don't understand what they're saying. And even if I ask hey, I don't understand, they just basically regurgitate the same answer I'm still confused, but sometimes it's just easier just to drop it, let it go and say OK sure. Proper communication in any realm is always key. As both of you know I work in a communication field. I struggle with communication. You would think me being in communications, I would be all about it, I know all about it, no. I even

struggle and I'll tell you what, going home at night, sometimes I don't feel like talking 'cause I talk all day.

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS: (14:59)

You're not alone

MATT MELVIN: (15:01)

But communication is key, but if you don't get the proper understanding of how to communicate, either your question, or the other side doesn't communicate the proper answer. There could be a barrier there. And sometimes if there's barriers, you don't get the proper help.

MUSIC: (15:18)

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS:

You know that we certainly do try to make sure that all aspects are included in our diversity, equity and inclusion focus and so it certainly does speak to that question, and we thank you sincerely for sharing your innermost with us.

MATT MELVIN: (15:43)

You're Welcome

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS: (15:44)

One of the things one of the fabulous aspects about you, is your ear and I have shared that with you number of times. One would not know, what you just shared, in terms of not being great at communication because I think quite the contrary, but nevertheless I respect your answer. But I will share that one of the other aspects that I really love about you is that ear. There is nothing that gets past you, and one of the reasons why our podcast sounds so great, so thank you for that.

MATT MELVIN: (16:16)

Well, you should also thank Mr. Tim Bradley as well, 'cause he also is an integral part of this podcast as well, and I don't wanna forget how wonderful Tim is in this, as well.

KIONNA MCINTOSH-PHARMS:

(16:25)

For sure, for sure.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS:

(16:26)

Absolutely, and Matt thank you so much, as Kionna talks about the inclusion piece. What you talked about around transportation, really keys in on that inclusion piece, so transportation is an issue for a lot of individuals, but we often don't think about who else is having difficulty with transportation and what those reasons are. So, I agree, Lorain County struggles with transportation and providing that to its residents, so thank you for digging kind of deeper into that topic and helping us better understand there. So, I have a fun question for you, you already talked about your passion for all kinds of sports and specially WWE wrestling. I used to love Hulk Hogan back in the day, so I really love that about you and your neat in your love for popular culture as well. Is there a favorite person that you have interviewed during your career that relates to some of these areas that you would like to share with our listeners?

MATT MELVIN:

(17:22)

Well, my very first interview that I ever booked, and had the opportunity to interview was Joe Tait. He was the radio announcer for the Cleveland Cavaliers, for many years. And how that came about is in high school I told my friend that if I ever got the chance, I would try to book Joe Tait, 'cause he was a huge Joe Tait fan. I'm like, one day I'm going to try to book him for you and, so you could interview him. And when I came here, and I was given the opportunity to book all these possible people and do all these giveaways as start promotions director. I'm like, I'm gonna give it a shot. He was my very first person, I ever attempted, and they said yes. But my favorite interview that I ever booked was either Joe Tait or even Olympic athlete Mark Henry. I had the opportunity to book Guy Fieri, from the Food Network. Unfortunately, that interview because of scheduling conflicts did not happen. One of my goals is to interview Betty White. Everybody that knows me, should know that I love Betty White! She's 99 years old and she'll be 100 in January of next year. That's my goal to actually interview someone that's over 100 years old. The thing about booking people or doing these for events, for giveaways the worst thing that people can say is no and if they say no I move on.

DR. DENISE DOUGLAS: (18:42)

Thank you for your story on that and thank you Matt, for joining us today. Also, thank you to our listeners for joining us for this episode of the Voices of Equity podcast at LCCC, brought to you by Boom Radio.

MATT MELVIN: (18:54)

Thank you for the opportunity, I really do appreciate it, and both of you have a groovy day.

MUSIC: (19:00)