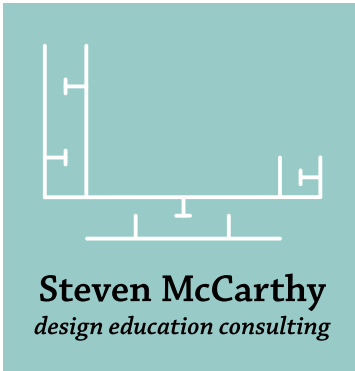


Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Position



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POSITIONALITY STATEMENT

If judged as a straight white man in his mid-60s, people would largely be correct – and somewhat guilty of using a superficial lens.

My mother is a Black woman who was born into the Jim Crow laws of racial discrimination in Knoxville, Tennessee. Because the “one drop rule” was still in effect the year I was born, 1958, my birth certificate declares “Father: Caucasian / Mother: Negroid.” A 23andMe DNA test reveals my genes to be composed of 22% Sub-Saharan African ancestry.

I’ve long identified as “bi-racial” and delight in telling my story even though my Irish ancestry dominates my appearance. For further writing about my take on racial (and cultural) hybridity, I invite you to read this essay I wrote for the AIGA Design Education Community, titled “Not Quite White” – <https://educators.aiga.org/not-quite-white>.

On the strength of this essay I was invited to review the book *The Design of Race* for Eye, the British magazine of graphic design and visual culture (Eye 102, p. 110). I’ve also addressed race in numerous creative projects (see CV).

As a heteronormative man I’ve had the great privilege of bringing two humans into existence through procreation, my adult daughter (35) and son (32). Their mother, an immigrant from Belgium, died of a rare lymphoma a few years ago, making me the reluctant owner of another label: widower.

Life experiences, natural forces and ideology contribute to my diversity:

- I was born on a US military base near Bordeaux, France
- I am the eldest of five siblings, and the only one left-handed
- Because of my father’s job, I lived in Asmara, Eritrea (then Ethiopia) for two years during grades 4 and 5, and twice saw Emperor Haile Selassie
- My high school was in Stuttgart, Germany and my GPA was 2.6 out of 4.0
- While in college I did union construction work at steel mills and oil refineries in the Gary, Indiana industrial area
- When I was accepted into Stanford’s MFA design program the ratio of applicants to admits was 16:1
- As a black belt in Tae Kwon Do I helped train a woman who became the gold medalist at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, Korea
- I wear hearing aids due to a condition called *otosclerosis*
- I was raised into Roman Catholicism, but I am now an atheist (though I often use the term “secular humanist”)
- Due to arthritis, I had a hip replacement surgery in 2020 and now have a cobalt prosthesis
- My scholarship has taken me to six continents, with diverse humanity.