Greenleaf Center to Reach a Half-Million in Public Education Campaign

by Larry Spears, Executive Director

The Robert K. Greenleaf Center has launched a major new project aimed at informing an audience of over 500,000 people about servant-leadership. This project, featuring display advertisements in ten different magazines, constitutes the single largest effort ever made by the Center to educate the public on the servant-leader concept.

Thanks to a grant from The Lilly Endowment, the Greenleaf Center has created and placed display advertisements within a varied group of predominantly-national publications. These publications were selected, in part, to reach individuals working within four distinct areas: corporations, higher education, not-for-profits, and religious bodies.

As we went to press, the Greenleaf Center advertisements had begun to appear in the following publications and issues: Changing Men (Winter '90, Issue #22), The Christian Century (11/21-28/90), The Chronicle of Philanthropy (10/16/90), Friends Journal (Dec. '90), The Futurist (Jan.-Feb. '91), The Indianapolis Business Journal, Ministry (March '91), The New Republic (10/15/90), The Nonprofit Times (Nov. '90), and Quaker Life (Nov. '90).

Our readers may be interested to know that Ministry magazine,

Illustration, by John Davis Gummere, which accompanies many of the ads. It serves as a visual depiction of the Center's nurturance of the Servant-Leader concept.


Robert K. Greenleaf, 86, died on September 29, 1990 at Crosslands Retirement Community, in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. A Quaker service and burial was held in Terre Haute, Indiana, on October 9, 1990.

Robert Greenleaf was born on July 14, 1904, in Terre Haute. Greenleaf graduated from Wiley High School in Terre Haute, and attended Rose Polytechnic Institute prior to transferring to Carleton College in Minnesota.

Greenleaf spent most of his organizational life in the field of management, research, development and education at AT&T, retiring in 1964 as Director of Management Research. He subsequently held a joint appointment as visiting lecturer at M.I.T.'s Sloan School of Management and at the Harvard Business School. In addition, he held teaching positions at both Dartmouth College and the University of Virginia.

Upon his retirement from AT&T, he launched a whole new second career, becoming a noted author, lecturer and consultant on leadership and management issues. In 1964 he founded the Center for Applied Ethics, a not-for-profit organization which became the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in 1985.

He was well-known for his writings on servant-leadership, the concept which encourages increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decisionmaking in order to build a better, more caring society. In 1970 he published The Servant as Leader, which was the first in a series of essays which

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Message from the Chairman

by James B. Tatum

"In the Spirit". That’s the way Robert Greenleaf signed off on his correspondence to others. The fact that he no longer lives and breathes on this earth takes not one iota from that expression.

The funeral service for Bob held at Terre Haute, Indiana was, “in the Spirit”. The Quaker service which was held was a simple, but deeply moving one of great beauty. I was touched by the words spoken by those led to do so. One speaker had never met Bob, but made expressions which could have been spoken by literally thousands of others who also had never met him. These people realize the lasting impact he has made on their lives.

Another speaker was his college roommate of over 60 years ago. In a powerful way he was able to succinctly convey the quality of Robert K. Greenleaf to the assembled listeners. The full flavor of Bob’s life came through in an unforgettable way.

The way these two were touched by Bob spans the entire spectrum of the multitude of people worldwide who are better off because of his life. Bob’s espoused measuring rod for institutions, and for that matter individuals, came down to this, because of having been touched—"Are people wiser, healthier, frerer, more autonomous, more able to serve others and help others learn to serve and are the least privileged in society better off?"

A resounding yes in the case of Robert K. Greenleaf.

Bob had his concerns about the future of the Servant Leader concept and the work of the Greenleaf Center. It is clear to me that this is no cult which has been worshipping at the feet of one person. It is also true that refinements and fresh new explorations and practices of the Servant Leader philosophy are happening. We find ourselves living at a time when receptivity is quite high to this concept—as more people realize that how things get done with lasting results can best happen through that special caring which is at the core of Bob’s thinking. Let us make no mistake, Robert K. Greenleaf did not invent caring. He did not invent the concept of service and serving. What he did do was to identify a deep and abiding idea out of human history and give it special freshness. This, along with an incredible ability to focus on that which is important and express it in an appealing way, was his special genius and his legacy.

The work of the R.K. Greenleaf Center Board and the Executive Director has taken on a growing sense of strength in recent months. The commitment to see this organization assist in more fully actualizing institutions and individuals to higher degrees of wholeness is bearing fruit. There is clarity that the wholeness cannot be unless there is a vision of serving nurtured by a deepening awareness of the rightness of this way of life.

This compelling purpose is supported by a great number of enspired people who are firm in their belief and commitment.

"In the Spirit", there is no other way. Bob, your spirit and that of the Servant Leader goes on. That’s just the way it is!!!!!!

The Greenleaf Center is planning a special memorial service and program to be held in Indianapolis on June 14-15, 1991. Specific information will be sent out in the Spring.
Education Campaign
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with a readership of 70,000 ministers, presently plans to feature a major review of Robert Greenleaf’s writings within its March 1991 issue.

All ten advertisements are designed to provide brief information about servant-leadership and the Greenleaf Center; and each one offers for sale a copy of Robert Greenleaf’s The Servant as Leader. Individuals responding to the ads will also be sent a copy of Life’s Choices and Markers by Robert Greenleaf. Most importantly, each order will be sent along with the Center’s membership information packet.

The goals for this project are threefold: First, the Center hopes to promote the servant-leader concept nationwide through sales of The Servant as Leader; second, we believe that a number of these new customers will elect to become members of the Center; finally, these ads will introduce a half-million readers to the concept of servant-leadership.

All advertisements include a coupon which can be used for ordering the essay, with each one coded for a specific magazine. The Greenleaf Center will be tracking the responses over the next six months to determine how well each one does.

Message from the Executive Director

by Larry Spears

Some months ago when I knew I would be in Philadelphia for a meeting of the Board of Managers of Friends Journal, I wrote to Bob Greenleaf to ask if I might visit him. There was no way of knowing then that our visit on September 20 would occur only a week before his death on September 29.

The sequence of those two events has caused me to do a great deal of reflection. I shall forever cherish my one and only meeting with Robert Greenleaf. It also led me to think about all the people who have known Bob over the years and would have treasured a last visit with him. I thought I would write about my experience in the hope that his many friends might also, in a way, share in a last visit with him.

Immediately prior to visiting with Bob, I spent a half hour talking with the social worker at Crosslands, the Quaker retirement community where he lived, who frequently read to him. She told me a bit about his recent life there; how his weakening condition had caused him great frustration; how he loved listening to classical music; and a bit about his personality traits. She mentioned that he was one of the most unassuming people she had ever met, and she recounted a story which seemed illustrative of his extremely modest nature: Bob Greenleaf had supposedly once been asked by a new resident at Crosslands what kind of work he had done in the past. Greenleaf, who had retired as Director of Management Research at AT&T, and who then went on to become a noted author, lecturer, and consultant to corporations, universities, and foundations, had simply responded, “I worked in an office.”

Walking into Bob’s room, I found him sitting in his wheelchair and facing the window. He turned his head and smiled, and said hello to me. I sat down in a leadership potential in small organizations and encourage its development.

From The New York Times, 10/2/90

“Greenleaf had an important voice in the shaping and thinking about management of corporations and not-for-profit organizations,” said Robert Lynn, scholar-in-residence at Bangor (Maine) Theological Seminary.

“He was immensely appealing to people in both the business and private world who were looking for some way of combining their exercise of power with the understanding of their religious faith.”

From the Terre Haute Tribune Star, 10/4/90

Commentary From Selected Obituaries

Robert K. Greenleaf, 86, a management consultant who preached that the human spirit is more important than the bottom line, died Saturday at his home in Kennett Square.

He argued that business leaders should view themselves as servants of the corporations they work for who allow others to share in the decision-making process, and to promote a more caring society.

“He was an early discoverer of some of the very principles that many people talk about that are responsible for the success and productivity of the Japanese,” said Dr. Tom Kessinger, president of Haverford College.

In 1988, about 200 corporate executives, ministers, university officials and politicians from around the country gathered at a seminar in Atlanta to discuss Mr. Greenleaf’s teachings.

“He helped corporations think in broader terms about what a manager is,” said Malcolm Warford, president of the Bangor (Maine) Theological Seminary. “He was a persistent and quiet teacher to all sorts of leaders.”

From The Philadelphia Inquirer, 10/3/90

Mr. Greenleaf wrote extensively on the topic of servant-leadership, a theme that deals with the reality of power in everyday life—its legitimacy, the ethical restraints upon it and the beneficial results that can be attained through the appropriate use of power. He also developed a program to help trustees of foundations to seek out
nearby chair and introduced myself. As I did, I noticed on the windowsill several pictures, including a picture of our two sons, which I had sent to him along with a birth announcement about our younger son’s arrival this past summer. Matthew had been born on the same date as Bob’s birthday—July 14. I picked up the picture and turned it toward him. He smiled and said, “nice children.”

Robert Greenleaf had been concerned in past years about the continuation of both the servant-leader concept and the Greenleaf Center. In a letter from that time he wrote, “My major concern for the Greenleaf Center is for its future. I may be hanging up my sword any day now, and I would like to feel the work I have done to encourage building greater integrity into our many institutions will be continued and enlarged in new directions.” It seemed important to me to share with him some of the many positive things which have happened to the Center in 1990—and to convey my own sense of the ongoing revitalization of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center.

Bob had not seen the Center’s new office in Indianapolis; however, we visually walked around it through a series of photographs. I described the area and building where we are located, and showed him the half-dozen literature cabinets filled with hundreds of copies of his books, essays, and videotapes. He was clearly moved by this visualization of our office, and he stared for a long time at one picture of a lithograph created by his late wife, Esther, which hangs on the Greenleaf Center’s wall.

Greenleaf carefully examined xerox copies of ten display advertisements which had recently been placed within a variety of national magazines. As he heard about the significance of this project—and particularly when he was told that his work and ideas would be reaching over a half-million readers through these publications, he chuckled and said, “good work.”

I read to Bob the laudatory quotes about his work, from a half-dozen people, which are contained within our new information brochure. A look of amazement swept across his face. It seemed likely to me that he had either forgotten these expressions of appreciation from others; or, perhaps he had simply not ever had them all read to him at one time. We sat quietly for some moments and he said, “I don’t know what to say.”

There was, of course, nothing which he needed to say. It was I who had come to do the saying on behalf of many of us—to remind him of the legacy which he has left each of us—and to thank him for his life’s work. I told him of the many expressions of gratitude for his writings, and I expressed appreciation for my own opportunity to serve the Greenleaf Center. He listened as I also told him of the hundreds of people whom I have met who have been profoundly influenced by the servant-leader concept; and I said to him that I believed that his ideas were likely to become increasingly influential in the coming years. He stared intently for a few moments, and then audibly sighed.

Our single meeting was of great importance to me. It has also been suggested that it may have been of considerable importance to Bob Greenleaf as well, providing him with a reminder of his positive influence, and of the many lives which he touched during his 86 years—as well as communicating the increasing vibrancy of the Center which he founded in 1964 as the Center for Applied Ethics. I like to think that we both benefitted from our meeting that week before he died.

I stood up and took Bob’s hand in mine, and thanked him for our time together. He stared thoughtfully at me and said, “Thank you for coming, Larry.” As I walked out of his room I turned around for one final look. Bob had picked up the Greenleaf Center’s newsletter and was slowly turning the page.

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Center Hosts Fall Program on Servant-Leadership in Action

The Greenleaf Center sponsored a special program on October 20, 1990. “Servant Leadership in Action” brought together 25 people in Indianapolis for a discussion and analysis of the successful implementation of the servant-leader concept.

This program included the viewing of a videotape focusing on TDIIndustries, a Dallas-based heating and air conditioning installation firm which has been following the servant-leader concept for over 15 years. The video was an episode in the “Hard Decisions” series on the VISN Network. Jack Lowe, Jr., TDI’s Chief Executive Officer and a Trustee of the Greenleaf Center, spoke about the role of servant-leadership and the positive effect which it has had on his company and its employees.

Jack Lowe, Jr., CEO, TDIIndustries, described the actual practice of servant-leadership within this Dallas-based company.

Readers who are interested in obtaining a copy of this videotape may do so through Trinity Video, 74 Trinity Place, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10006. Order Hard Decisions #212—“Servant as Leader”. Please send your check in the amount of $46.20, to be made out to Trinity Video; allow three weeks for delivery. This particular episode is scheduled to run again on the VISN Network in January. Check your local listings for dates and times.
I met Bob Greenleaf in the spring of 1956 while being interviewed for a position at AT&T. I joined AT&T in June of that year and reported to Bill Sharwell, who in turn reported to Bob. Until his retirement Bob was Director of Management Research. He had considerable influence with the higher-level executives at AT&T, an influence that was invaluable to our struggling group of psychologists. Psychologists, of course, have had and continue to have much interest in leadership. The literature on the subject is extensive. The concept of servant leadership is unique.

Thank you for sending me a copy of *Servant: Retrospect and Prospect*. I will read it with great interest.

*Donald L. Grant*
*Roswell, GA*

May I offer you my best wishes as you assume your new duties. I am sure you will find ample opportunity for the employment of your abundant ability and energy. As a longtime "servant leader" I can only applaud the efforts of the Center.

*Jude P. Dougherty, Dean*
*The Catholic University of America*
*Washington, DC*

I have, for years, been impressed by the work of your Center and engaged the attention of my late-husband, Norman, in it. You may be sure that your recent materials are being shared with others in active leadership positions.

*Elsie H. Landstrom*
*Conway, MA*

Glad someone is back at putting juice into Servant Leadership.

*Bob Sigmon*
*Raleigh, NC*

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### Demonstrate Your Commitment to Servant Leadership—

**Become a Member of the Greenleaf Center**

The Robert K. Greenleaf Center invites you to join with us as a sponsor and member. Your tax-deductible contribution entitles you to receive our quarterly newsletter; discounts on future conferences; and, notification concerning other significant servant leader publications and symposia. Most importantly, your support will enable the Robert K. Greenleaf Center to continue to carry forward our important educational work in servant leadership.

Please enroll me as a member of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center. Enclosed is my check for:

- **$25** Individual Sponsor
- **$100** Corporate/Institutional Sponsor
- **$500** Sustaining Sponsor
- **$1,000** Leadership Sponsor

$________ for my sponsorship plus a donation to further support the Greenleaf Center.

**NAME**

**ADDRESS**

**CITY/STATE/ZIP**

**PHONE**

**OCCUPATION/EMPLOYER**

Also, please send information on servant leadership and the Greenleaf Center to:

**NAME**

**ADDRESS**

**CITY/STATE/ZIP**
A Good Plumber

by Newcomb Greenleaf

My father wrote his own epitaph:

Potentially a good plumber, ruined by a sophisticated education.

We don't know how seriously he intended this, but after mulling it over we've decided to use it. It seems apt on at least two grounds.

The first is that it's a nice expression of Bob's quirky and humorous modesty, turning the usual notions of achievement upside down. But beyond that, the epitaph says something rather profound about a source of his power, a power which enabled him to touch so many people deeply, a source which I still struggle to understand.

In point of fact, he remained a reasonably good plumber, good enough to do all but the most difficult jobs around our house. And he enjoyed it—he did not at all shrink from unhooking a drain, installing a new faucet, or changing the washer in a leaky one.

He was also a fine carpenter. Many pieces of furniture in our house were his creations, hardwood tables beautifully assembled and meticulously finished. One of them remained in his last room at Crosslands.

Bob was also comfortable working with electricity. He had begun his telephone career as a lineman. He was casual when working with the wiring to the point that he often got shocked. I remember several occasions when jouls of 120 volts knocked him to the floor, blows which he regarded with apparent equanimity.

My grandfather had been a master machinist who ran the shops at Rose Poly in Terre Haute. While Bob was by day a thinker and leader, in the evenings and on week-ends he returned to his roots and worked with his hands. This transition was vividly and abruptly manifest in his dress. When he returned in the evening to Short Hills from 195 Broadway, he was the impeccably dressed AT&T executive, wearing a conservative suit. Invariably, his first act was to race upstairs and change into his work clothes. Then, in the summer, he would head for the large vegetable garden, which provided much of our cuisine during that season. In the winter he would head for his shop in the basement.

I was not so keen on weeding the garden, but I loved being with him in the shop. It was a magical center of my boyhood, both because of what it contained and because of the extraordinary mastery which Bob displayed over the many crafts he practiced there. Whatever need arose, he had the right tool (from Bunsen burner to jigsaw to oscilloscope), the right part (stowed systematically away in an immense warren of drawers and boxes), and the skill to do the job well.

I have sometimes wondered if Bob hated the conservative suits required by his job at AT&T, and removed them so promptly so that he could be his "real self" again. But I don't think that that was it. The AT&T self was the real Bob, but only part of him. I think that he saw his dual nature, plumber and intellectual, and realized that both halves needed nourishment.

Because AT&T took up so much of his day, he came home with an urgent need to restore the balance by manual labor. I see that balance as the power source to which I referred earlier. His idea of servant-leadership came, of course, from his work in large institutions, but I think that it also came from his work with his hands, from his loving attention to detail and careful examination of how things function, on the most basic material plane.

Robert K. Greenleaf

(Continued from page 1)

he wrote on the servant-leader concept. In the 20 years since, over 200,000 copies of this work have been sold worldwide.

Robert K. Greenleaf was also the author of two books on the subject, Servant-Leadership and Teacher as Servant, both published by Paulist Press; additionally, he authored numerous separately-published essays, including: The Institution As Servant, Trustees As Servants, Servant: Retrospect and Prospect, The Servant As Religious Leader, Seminary as Servant, My Debt to E.B. White, Old Age: The Ultimate Test of Spirit, The Leadership Crisis, Life's Choices and Markers, Education and Maturity, Have You a Dream Deferred, and Spirituality As Leadership.

"The world has lost an intellectual and moral giant," said Jim Tatum, Chairman of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center's Board of Trustees. "His legacy to the world will continue to be felt by future generations through both his writings and by the ongoing work of the Greenleaf Center. It is up to all of us who share his vision of servant-leadership to continue to carry it forward—and to make our common dream a reality."

Greenleaf was preceded in death by his wife, Esther Elizabeth Hargrave Greenleaf, whom he married in 1931. He is survived by a son, Newcomb Greenleaf; two daughters, Madeline Greenleaf Jaynes and Elizabeth Greenleaf; and by seven grandchildren. The Greenleaf family has requested that memorial donations be made to the Robert K. Greenleaf Center.