Recent Celebration Attracts Servant-Leaders Worldwide; RKGC To Sponsor Annual Servant-Leadership Conference

by Larry Spears, Executive Director

Over 140 servant-leaders came together in Indianapolis, in June, to both honor the memory of Robert Greenleaf and to share in an examination of the meaning and applications of servant-leadership.

The June 14-15 “Celebration of Robert K. Greenleaf and Servant-Leadership” attracted participants from 20 states and two foreign countries. Those in attendance came from the worlds of business, higher education, religion, foundations, and the not-for-profit sector in nearly equal numbers. They were united in their common interest in, and commitment to, the servant-leader idea.

The Celebration represented the Greenleaf Center’s formal remembrance of Robert K. Greenleaf, who died in the Fall of 1990 at the age of 86. The program had been designed with several goals in mind. These included the Center’s desire to bring people together to share in both the life and work of Bob Greenleaf, and to examine the servant-leader idea. It also provided an opportunity for informal networking among people who share a common dream of helping to create a more servant-led world.

The Celebration commenced Friday evening with a reception and dinner, followed by a program in remembrance of Robert Greenleaf. It included the viewing of a new videotape which is now available through the Center, titled “Robert K. Greenleaf: Servant-Leader.” A number of people offered their perspectives upon the life and work of Greenleaf, including: Newcomb Greenleaf, RKGC Trustee and Bob Greenleaf’s son; Robert Lynn, faculty member, Bangor Theological Seminary; Jeffrey McCollum, Education Director, AT&T Consumer Products Education Division; Edward Ouellette, retired United Church of Christ minister; Gerald D. Rapp, Senior Vice-

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Robert K. Greenleaf Posthumous Recipient of 1991 National Community Leadership Award

The National Association for Community Leadership (NACL) has posthumously named Robert K. Greenleaf as the 1991 recipient of the National Community Leadership Award. Announcement of this award was made by NACL’s Executive Director, Wendell Walls, at the June 14 “Celebration.”

The award will be presented at NACL’s 1991 Annual Leadership Conference in Denver, September 14-16. RKGC Trustee and Robert Greenleaf’s son, Newcomb Greenleaf, will accept the award.

In making the announcement, Walls said, “For the past year our association has been working on a project to develop methods, and to infuse the concept of community trusteeship—holding one’s community in trust—into the curriculum of our member programs. Much of this work has been inspired by, and based upon, Robert K. Greenleaf’s writings on servant-leadership.”

This award, now in its third year, is meant to honor individuals whose work in community is such that they have made a significant impact on the development of community leadership across the nation and beyond.

Award recipients in 1989 were F. Browning Pieston, a prominent advocate of Native American causes; and, Wilma Mankiller, first female chief of the Cherokee nation. John Gardner, founder of Common Cause, was the 1990 recipient of the National Community Leadership Award.

“One is tempted to express regret that Robert K. Greenleaf will not be

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Message from the Chairman

by James B. Tatum

The recent “Celebration of Robert K. Greenleaf and Servant-Leadership” was a time of quality. The renewal which occurs for people when they come together in openness was so apparent. It was a time of connecting the past with the present, and a time of preparation for the future.

The vision we hold in common—of seeing a serving, caring society worldwide—always seems to be assured when a group of believers come together. What Power!

I felt good about some responses received as a result of my column in the last newsletter. One letter in particular from a gentleman who receives the newsletter, but who has not read any of Greenleaf’s essays, was especially helpful. Thank you.

The Robert K. Greenleaf Center’s board made a commitment at the last meeting to sponsor annual Servant-Leader conferences. It is a certainty that the next one will focus on the pragmatic side of: “How does Servant-Leadership translate into everyday operations of our institutions?”

A major thrust will be in the business arena as practitioners will be about the business of showing that it is possible to be “tough-minded and warm-hearted” at the same time.

I am sure you also will be interested to know that the Robert K. Greenleaf Center is exploring the idea of sponsoring workshops on the Servant Leader concept. To what extent such offerings are made depends upon fundraising efforts. The old saying: “Where there is a will there is a way” seems appropriate, however.

The recent Celebration produced a great deal by way of networking. It is difficult to choose from amongst the ideas expressed, but for this moment I choose to leave you with an expression from the Firethorn Institute: “(O)ur nation’s best hope for material, economic and technological progress rests, not upon process design, scientific advances or strategic astuteness, but upon the resources of character and spirit we develop within... upon the community of leadership we develop to unite these now disparate spheres... and upon our ethic of leadership contribution in service of common good.”

Leadership Award

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present to accept this award,” said Walls. “But, in fact, he will be—in the hearts of those who knew him, and in the minds of those who have come to know his writings and his vision, and in the works of all who aspire to servant-leadership.”

Larry Spears, Executive Director of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center, commented that, “Robert Greenleaf would probably have been a little embarrassed at the thought of receiving an award for his thinking and writings. But, I believe he would also have been most pleased to know that his writings on servant-leadership are having an ever-widening influence in helping to develop a worldwide community of servant-leaders for the 21st Century.”

NACL is a membership organization which includes over 350 community leadership groups nationwide. It’s corporate mission involves transforming and strengthening the communities of America through the development of civic leaders.

The Robert K. Greenleaf Center and NACL have recently formalized a reciprocal relationship, as part of the Greenleaf Center’s ongoing exploration of inter-institutional cooperation.
Message from the Executive Director

by Larry Spears

I saw myself on graduation, and continue to see myself as an unfinished, seeking person. I don’t ever expect to conclude that I have found it. The zest in life for me is in seeking and growing. Accomplishment is important, of course. But I know that sustained accomplishment will come only as seeking and growing are my prime concerns. This leads me to accept a very difficult idea: that in growth there is likely to be a measure of failure; not so much failure that life is a net loss and one is overcome by it, but enough that one knows what failure is, and has compassion for the failing persons one sees around oneself all the time. One must learn those lessons that are best learned in suffering from and overcoming the shock of failure.”

from Teacher as Servant: A Parable by Robert K. Greenleaf

Upon first reading Greenleaf’s only published fictional work, Teacher as Servant: A Parable, I must confess that my own initial, cursory notes read, as follows: “An interesting attempt to convey the servant-leader notion in fictional form; however, dialogue is definitely not in the Hemingway tradition!” At the time, I was intent simply on ploughing through each and every essay, article, book and videotape by Greenleaf in a determined attempt to quickly grasp the meaning of servant-leadership.

Well, a year has passed since I first breezed through Teacher as Servant. I recently completed a more careful, second reading of it; and, this time I was shocked to discover how much I had missed the first time around. With this latest reading the true depth of Greenleaf’s one fictional work has begun to unfold for me.

Teacher as Servant was first published in 1979. It did not command much attention from book reviewers at the time of publication. Unlike Servant-Leadership, Greenleaf’s other, non-fiction book, Teacher as Servant was an early commercial failure.

It is clear to me, through reading various letters written by Robert Greenleaf, that the limited sales of Teacher as Servant was a source of some disappointment for him. This appears not to have been a result of any perception of personal rejection; rather, it had clearly been his hope that Teacher as Servant would attract the attention of a handful of teachers and faculty members who might be moved to follow the example set by “Professor Billings,” and possibly usher in a new age of leadership—a “golden age of servant-leadership.” The story, while fictional, does draw heavily upon Greenleaf’s observation of one university program which did exist during the 1960’s.

Teacher as Servant provides a detailed educational model of how servant-leadership can work within an institution. However, as a novel, it is also able to delve into the emotions, beliefs, and unspoken thoughts which all of us who believe in servant-leadership undoubtedly feel.

Like Martin Hedges (Teacher’s narrator), I, too, am learning that sustained accomplishment comes only when seeking and growing are my prime concerns. That lesson is a key to servant-leadership, and it is one more reason why our collective efforts are so important.

If you haven’t read Teacher as Servant: A Parable, I invite you to do so. Like so much of Greenleaf’s work, it challenges, inspires, encourages and comforts in equal measures.

Teacher as Servant: A Parable is available through the Greenleaf Center at a cost of $9.50 ($7 plus $2.50 shipping and handling).

Who is the Servant-Leader?

The servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived?

from The Servant as Leader by Robert K. Greenleaf

The Greenleaf Center’s Mission

The Center’s mission is to fundamentally improve the caring and quality of all institutions through a new approach to leadership, structure, and decision-making. Servant-leadership emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; motivating a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decisionmaking.

The Greenleaf Center’s Goals

1. To help deepen an understanding of the original ideas of Robert K. Greenleaf and the principles of servant-leadership, via the preservation and promotion of his writings.
2. To nurture colleagues and institutions by providing a focal point, and opportunities to share thoughts and ideas on servant-leadership.
3. To produce and publish new resources by others on servant-leadership.
4. To connect servant-leaders in a network of learning.

Originally founded in 1964 as the Center for Applied Ethics, Inc., the Center was renamed the Robert K. Greenleaf Center in 1985. The Center is an international, not-for-profit institution headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana.
Celebration
(Continued from page 1)

President and General Counsel, Mead Corporation; James Tatum, RKGC Board Chairman; and, Wendell Walls, Executive Director, The National Association for Community Leadership. Malcolm Warford, President, Bangor Theological Seminary delivered a moving eulogy. The program concluded with a video retrospective look at the art of Esther Elizabeth Hargrave Greenleaf, Bob’s wife and friend, who died in 1989.

Following Friday evening’s look back at the past, Saturday’s program looked forward to the future of servant-leadership through a series of three panel discussions.

The first panel, “The Meaning of Servant-Leadership,” sought to define the term, and to examine both the institutional supports and impediments which are encountered in establishing servant-leadership. Panelists included: Rev. Philip Amerson, Minister, Broadway United Methodist Church, Indianapolis, IN; Walter Blass, President, Strategic Plans, Warren, NJ; Diane Cory, Ann McGee Cooper & Associates, Washington, D.C.; Diana Leslie, Trustee Renewal Project, Indianapolis, IN; and Patsy H. Sampson, President, Stephen College, Columbia, MO. The panel moderator was Sister Joel Read, President, Alverno College and RKGC Trustee, Milwaukee, WI.

“Servant-Leadership in Practice and Action,” the second panel, provided a first-hand look at how servant-leadership actually operates within different institutions. Panelists included: Bill Bottum, Chairman, Townsend & Bottum Family of Companies and RKGC Trustee, Ann Arbor, MI; Patsy Fulton, Chancellor, Oakland Community College, Bloomfield Hills, MI; Jack Lowe Jr., CEO, TDIndustries and RKGC Trustee, Dallas, TX; Patrick McDonough, President, Marietta College, Marietta, OH; Richard Smith, Director, Organizational Development, Schneider Engineering Corporation, Indianapolis, IN; and, Del Tarr, President, Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, MO. The panel moderator was Joseph DiStefano, faculty member, The University of Western Ontario and RKGC Trustee, London, Ontario.

The third panel, “Spreading the Word on Servant-Leadership,” offered a look at six organizations which are working in various ways to carry forward the servant-leader idea. Panelists included: Craig Dykstra, Vice-President for Religion, The Lilly Endowment, Indianapolis, IN; Anne Hoover, Trustee Renewal Project, Fort Wayne, IN; Charles Joiner Jr., Director, Center for Values Based Leadership, Dayton, OH; Andie Marshall, Director, The Stanley K. Lacy Leadership Program, Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce, Indianapolis, IN; Kathy Tyler Scott, Director, Trustee Leadership Development, Indianapolis, IN; and, Larry Spears, Executive Director, The Robert K. Greenleaf Center, Indianapolis, IN. The panel was moderated by Bill Bottum.

The afternoon concluded with the recognition of past Trustees and staff members of the Greenleaf Center.

The response to this event was strongly positive. This may be seen in the following evaluation comments which were among those which came back to the Center:

“Your assembly was composed of all ages but there was an obvious youthful attitude—the marquis of servant-leadership. Control makes people old, and control did not appear to be attending this convocation! What a revolution to have a haven for unbridged thinking to take place. There rarely are sanctuaries for such activity!”

“Thanks for pulling together a weekend that was enjoyable and inspiring beyond any expectation that I had.”

“The overall spirit of sharing between total strangers opened up a line of communication uncommon at such gatherings. I didn’t feel different because the ‘assembled diversity’ seemed to celebrate individuality—not demand conformity. I felt at home and safe to be myself and have my own opinions and learn from the opinions of others.”

“The opening session on Saturday provided an excellent foundation for what was to follow. The panel presentations were superb; I have taken the time to write to a number of panel members expressing my appreciation for their contributions.”

“You had a group of special people. As I left I felt as though someone had let me read the first chapter of a book and then closed the book. I want to know the rest of their stories.”

Following the Celebration, it was decided that the Greenleaf Center will begin to sponsor an annual conference on servant-leadership. Our next conference will be held in Indianapolis on October 2-3, 1992. Mark your calendars now!

The Greenleaf Center wishes to express its appreciation to the AT&T Foundation, Lifeworks Foundation, The Lilly Endowment, Meac Corporation, and an anonymous donor for their financial support of this event. We also thank all of our program participants, as well as everyone who attended.

Editor’s Note: See this issue’s Letters column for additional reactions to the conference.
Letters

Editor’s Note: Letters is intended to offer the insights and observations of Greenleaf Center supporters. The inclusion of any letter is done so with the approval of its writer. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space limitations or other factors. Readers are invited to submit letters for possible inclusion in this column.

Congratulations and thank you on the June Celebration of Robert K. Greenleaf and Servant Leadership. Truly, it was a wonderful gathering of friends. One of my favorite moments during the meeting was a conversation overheard in the ladies’ room. One woman commented about how good it was to visit with kindred spirits. Another combed her hair and sighed into the mirror, “Now I don’t feel like I’m out there all alone.” Testimony to the power of community!

Ann Daly
United Way Volunteer Action Center
Indianapolis, IN

Minute for minute your recent “Celebration” was the best program I have attended in years.

James Shannon
Wayzata, MN

Thank you for putting together the celebration of Robert K. Greenleaf’s work and creating an opportunity for those of us affected by his work to meet each other. It was an enriching and renewing experience. I left bubbling over with ideas.

Jeffrey McCollum, Education Director
AT&T Consumer Products
Education Division
 Parsippany, NJ

Before time slipped away, I simply wanted to drop you a note to say thank you for your efforts in facilitating the recent Servant Leader Celebration. From my perspective as a newcomer to the scene, you should know that there are few opportunities where higher education, business, church, and nonprofit leaders can come together to dialogue. This was an excellent one.

Mark D. Lindemood, Executive Director
University Development
Ball State University
Muncie, IN

I want to indicate how delighted I am to know of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center. It makes me think that I have found some unknown friends. And it was all due to seeing your advertisement in Ministry magazine. Let me take you up on your offer to send additional copies of your brochures and newsletters to give to friends and colleagues. May I modestly suggest 100 of each. I will actively pursue friends and acquaintances who have indicated an indebtedness to the servant-leader concept and I think would willingly give support as well as be involved in this fellowship.

Richard T. Hinz, President
Southeastern District
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
Alexandria, VA

Congratulations on the expanded format of The Servant Leader and the healthy fleshing out of the role of the Greenleaf Center. The thrust of multi-directional, reciprocal involvement and interaction of your various constituencies will greatly energize the implementation of the ideas Bob Greenleaf sought to share: a fitting memorial indeed.

Thomas C. Palmer
Fort Worth, TX

We at the World Community Foundation (WCF) look forward each quarter to your newsletter, The Servant Leader. Not only is it one of the best written and informative, but also one of the better designed newsletters we receive. We avidly read your publication for ideas and inspiration. In each issue we garner new ideas and thoughts. Thank you for providing the WCF with this wonderful example.

We thought that your readers might like to know that the Winter, 1990-91 edition of the WCF’s newsletter, DayBreak NOW!, contained an article by Mildred Torres-Speeg, titled: “Parenting for Peace—A Force for Good,” in which she quotes Robert K. Greenleaf. We invite your readers to request a copy of that article by writing to us at: World Community Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 4854, Albany, GA 31706.

Hugh F. Laing, Jr.
World Community Foundation, Inc.
Albany, GA

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 _________________________
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PHONE ___________________________
OCCUPATION/EMPLOYER ____________

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

NAME ___________________________
ADDRESS _________________________
CITY/STATE/ZIP ___________________
Servant Leadership in the News

Editor's Note: In our last issue of The Servant Leader (Summer '91) we reported on the recent appearances of seven articles in the public press on Robert K. Greenleaf, servant leadership and the Greenleaf Center. That number has now grown to 12. Our last issue contained excerpts from three of those articles. In this issue we are excerpting an article titled: "The Attorney as Servant-Leader," by Irving R. Stubbs.

This article examines leadership as it applies to the profession of the law. In this examination, there are implications related to the image of the legal profession. We are more interested, however, in calling attention to ways to strengthen individual practices through the highest possible quality of services to clients, and ways to increase the satisfaction of practicing law as a result of helping clients and their communities work more effectively for the benefit of all.

As Greenleaf sees it, the leader who tries to operate (as a servant-leader), who operates with service as a foundation—be it a tour guide, basketball coach, educator, business person or attorney—tends to bear some of these markings:

* Listens first and well;
* Accepts what is found and expresses empathy with no trace of rejection (which requires tolerance of imperfection);
* Has a helpful way of sorting out and prioritizing the more from the less important;
* Exhibits a high degree of intuitive insight and confidence in that insight;
* Thrusts into the uncharted and unknown, becoming an effective discoverer;
* Defuses anxiety when more certainty is wanted than actually exists in the situation;
* Is an historian, an analyst of the present, and a prophet;
* Displays an ability to tolerate and sustain a wide span of awareness regarding what is happening in the immediate and expanded environment;
* Exhibits a capacity for detachment and reflection;
* Possesses an armor which confidence provides when facing the unknown;
* Is able to persuade through an ability to convince rather than through coercion;
* Acknowledges a sense of motivation resulting from individual growth.

As Greenleaf asserts: 'There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led, if implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share.'

Lewis F. Powell, Jr. comes to many minds as an outstanding example of the attorney as servant-leader.... A former law firm colleague of Powell's, John Hale Shenefield, reflected that Justice Powell taught him that being a lawyer, in the larger sense, meant public service. Servant-leaders as role models communicate their values and make impressions on others that tend to last.

Moving in a servant-leadership direction may require some stronger self-management of personal egos, some moderation of inclinations to take charge, some reduction of the mystique of the legal advice system, some willingness to admit there may not be only one right answer and some recognition that the client's preferred approach just as likely may secure the right end as that of the legal advisor. Practicing this type of leadership may require putting forward untested recommendations which may serve the client's interests more favorably than 'off the shelf' proposals. It even might result in client recognition that the attorney's authority is finite, and that the client's needs may be served better by a less high-powered resource.

[It] appears most clients welcome demonstrations of servant-leadership by their lawyers. This kind of relationship makes stronger, more competitive and competent clients. This kind of role has a powerful appeal to one's better nature and results in a much higher degree of work satisfaction.

From "The Attorney as Servant-Leader," by Irving R. Stubbs, Legal Economics, September, 1989