Servant-Leadership Conference Attracts 300 Participants; Peter Senge and David Durenberger Give Keynote Addresses

Over 280 servant-leaders came together in Indianapolis on October 2-3 for a very special time of learning and sharing at this year’s annual servant-leadership conference, sponsored by the Robert K. Greenleaf Center.

This year’s Greenleaf Center conference, titled “Winds of Change,” brought together more than twice as many participants as last year’s “Celebration of Robert K. Greenleaf and Servant-Leadership.” Participants came from 30 different states, plus Canada. They included representatives from 40 universities and colleges; 70 businesses; 12 hospitals; 10 religious organizations; and 25 cultural and philanthropic organizations.

The Greenleaf Center’s new workshop — “An Introduction to Servant-Leadership” — was offered as a pre-conference workshop. Nearly 100 people participated in what was, for most, a rich and satisfying experience. The day-long pre-conference workshop was co-facilitated by Robert Sigmon, workshop designer and facilitator; Grace Barnes, workshop program evaluator; and, Kelly Tobe, workshop program director.

Peter Senge, author of The Fifth Discipline.

The conference, itself, got underway with a Friday evening address by Peter Senge, author of the best-selling book, The Fifth Discipline. Senge’s address, titled, “Robert Greenleaf’s Legacy, Building Learning Organizations,” proved to be a deeply meaningful reflection upon the servant-as-leader idea.

“...For many years,” remarked Senge, “I’ve told people—don’t bother reading any other book about leadership until you first read Robert Greenleaf’s Servant-Leadership. I believe it is the most singular and useful statement on leadership I’ve come across.”

“Robert K. Greenleaf’s major contribution to society,” said Senge, “was in putting forward the idea that institutions could be based upon relationships, not things.” Senge went on to suggest that an ever-increasing number of people are embracing Greenleaf’s view of institutions.

Saturday’s program began with a panel discussion titled, “Servant-Leadership: Why It Matters.” Panelists included Sister Joel Read, President, Alverno College; Juana Bordas, President and C.E.O., National Hispanic Leadership Institute; Diane Cory, Adjunct, Innovation Associates; and Bill Bottum, Chairman of Townsend & Bottum Family of Companies. The panel moderator was RKGC Chairman Jim Tatum.

Following the panel program were a series of three concurrent sessions which examined various aspects and applications of servant-leadership. The first set of concurrent sessions included the following: “Servant-Leadership and Quality Issues,” led by Joseph DiStefano, faculty member at the University of Western Ontario; “Servant-Leadership and Trustees: The Trustee Renewal Project,” led by Dick Broholm and Diana Leslie; and, “A Look at The Greenleaf Center’s New Servant-Leadership Workshop,” led by Robert Sigmone, Grace Barnes, and Kelly Tobe.


The conference concluded with a capstone address by United States Senator David Durenberger (R., Minn.). Senator Durenberger’s address, “Helping Public Servants to be Servant-Leaders,” examined the personal meaning of servant-leadership for Durenberger, as well as outlining (Continued on page 4)
Message from the Chairman

by James B. Tatum

Near the end of the recent Servant Leadership Conference held in Indianapolis, a new friend posed the question, “What have you learned as a result of this conference?” In as much as I usually spend some time musing about an event like this, it was a premature question for me. However, the question elicited this response, “The fact that people are at different points in their journeys seems always to bring renewed affirmation of that reality in group processes like this one.” That was certainly not a profound answer to his question. It was, however, an important step for me to begin to identify some issues which demonstrated differences. It also gave me a chance to honor and celebrate diversity.

The opening panel of presenters (“Servant-Leadership: Why It Matters”) were Sister Joel Read, thoughtful educator, teacher, college president; Juana Bordas, writer, speaker, passionate feminist; Bill Botum, corporate servant-leader; and, Diane Cory, consultant, poetical realist. If you were there you know of the diversity—if you weren’t there, you can envision it by imaging the range of perspectives from these servant-leaders. It was a wonderful time to allow the heart to smile in celebration of our differences and our commonalities.

It was also true that there was a special spirit present which was sensed by most in attendance. The very fact that this was the case, and the fact that people see and feel things quite differently (people are at different points in their journeys) heightened my awareness, once again, of our differences in understanding the issue of spirit and spirituality.

Most of us can identify that something exists which is felt other than the material and the intellectual. We know that a special piece of connective tissue exists between people as they work together with common purpose. Perhaps the acknowledgement that something truly mystical is present allows us to acknowledge spirit and spirituality. People of diversity will, however, assess this phenomenon through the special filters created by their own experience. It is observable that with some frequency one person’s sense of the spirit is anathema to another. Rhetorically one could ask, “Does this mean that we are to be angry with each other forever and ever because the non-corpooreal side of ourselves is held to be absolute in our view? Is there nothing to learn in the spiritual realm from each other? Is there a definition of spirituality which allows the full spectrum of society to unite in service institutionally and individually?”

Robert Greenleaf had this to say on the subject, in his essay titled, Spirituality as Leadership:

I take the first [definition] listed, in the dictionary I consulted, in defining spirit: That which is traditionally believed to be the vital principle or animating force within living beings. But that definition does not help establish spirituality as leadership unless one adds a value dimension to it. I would prefer to say that spirit is the animating force that disposes one to be a servant of others. The test is that those being served grow as persons; while being served they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants. And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will she or he benefit, or, at least, be not further deprived? No one will knowingly be hurt by the action, directly or indirectly.

Servant-leadership is not the special domain of any one religious group, or any one profit or non-profit group. It is the domain of those who are caught up in the spirit of service! The bond which ties us together is beautifully over-arching as we heighten our awareness of the substantive and the mystical.

To deny the spirit is to deny the fullness of our growth and that of others.
Message from the Executive Director

by Larry Spears

[Editor's Note: The following is condensed from opening remarks at the 1992 servant-leadership conference.]

One leadership educator recently called the Greenleaf Center an “up-and-coming organization.” Similar views have been shared with us by many of you who are here tonight. This is a wonderful thing to have happen to any organization—much less one which has actually been around now for 28 years.

I have described the Greenleaf Center to others as being a young organization; but one which just happens to have a long history behind it. The Center is a splendid example of an institution which has undergone tremendous organizational renewal at middle-age, and has been transformed into a vibrant and growing body.

We strongly believe that the Greenleaf Center can best achieve its mission by taking a broad, educational approach through the use of a variety of public education programs, and by encouraging others to learn and practice servant-leadership at both the personal and institutional levels. We are pleased by the fact that other groups and organizations, many of whom are represented here tonight, are doing some of the deep tilling around specifically-focused research and applications aimed at further expanding the servant-as-leader idea.

The Greenleaf Center’s role is one of sowing the seeds of servant-leadership as broadly as we can, in the hope that some of them will take root within a growing number of individuals and institutions. The Greenleaf Center is trying to provide the introductory and foundational basis for understanding servant-leadership—and to serve as a networking agent for the many other groups and individuals who share our commitment to this idea.

Servant-leadership is gaining influence in a half-dozen broad areas of application. These include its use as an institutional philosophy and model in both for-profit and non-profit organizations; its use as the theoretical and ethical basis for trustee education; its use in the training and educational programs of community leadership organizations; and its application, in conjunction with experiential education programs, in what has come to be called “service-learning.” Also, a growing number of leadership and management courses now include Greenleaf’s book, Servant-Leadership, as required reading. A couple of college courses have now been developed specifically on servant-leadership. Finally, servant-leadership has been embraced by a number of people who are involved in the personal transformation movement, including both men’s and women’s self-awareness groups, twelve-step programs like Alcoholics Anonymous, and in Jungian psychology. The Greenleaf Center plans to continue to gather information on these and other applications of the servant-leader model, in order to make them more widely known.

The Center’s programs have now expanded to include frequent lectures and programs across the country; a one-day introductory workshop; our annual servant-leadership conference; the publication and distribution of a growing number of essays, books, and videotapes; the new Greenleaf archives research project; and, working with a network of writers and editors to encourage the publication of articles and books pertaining to servant-leadership.

Someone recently told me that our success in publicizing the servant-leader concept is helping to open doors for other organizations and individuals who are doing more specialized work around servant-leadership. We believe that the Center’s rapid growth in income, staff, programs, and public recognition is validation of the vision which we are following. We also believe that we are better served, and can better serve others, by taking servant-leadership as widely as we can. The Greenleaf Center may properly be seen as taking a “generalist” approach to servant-leadership as opposed to a “specialist” role.

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Conference (Continued from page 1)

some of the ways in which servant-leadership can serve as a useful model for public servants. “Leaders need friends,” said Senator Durenberger. He went on to list five building blocks which can aid public servants to be servant-leaders. He said that these include the basic issue of the person as the leader; deciding whom to serve; establishing committed relationships; an ability to balance competence and change; and, being guided by an overarching vision.

Durenberger remarked, “For me, Robert Greenleaf’s essay, The Servant as Leader, came along at just the right moment. It made a great difference in how I view and how I do my job. Making service a passion requires a constant effort at self-renewal.”

In the weeks since the conference, the Greenleaf Center has received many expressions of appreciation from participants in both the pre-conference workshop and the conference itself. One letter writer called it a “deeply spiritual event.” This is a view which seemed to be shared by many who have commented upon the conference.

This year’s conference was underwritten, in part, by the generous support of the following corporations and foundations: Centennial Hospital; IWC Resources Corporation; LifeWorks Foundation; Lilly Endowment, Inc.; The Locke, Purnell, Rain, Harrell Foundation; and the Santa Barbara Management Institute. The Greenleaf Center wishes to express its deep appreciation to these institutions for their support.

The Greenleaf Center plans to make available some of the sessions coming out of this conference on videotape, audiotape, or in written form, after January 1.

We invite you to plan to attend our 1993 servant-leadership conference, to be held in Indianapolis on October 15-16. Major addresses will be given by Greenleaf Center members M. Scott Peck, author of The Road Less Traveled and other books; and by Max DePree, author of Leadership is an Art and Leadership Jazz.

Gleanings from the Greenleaf Archives Project

by Anne Fraker,
Archives Project Director

In the Summer, 1992 issue of The Servant Leader, an announcement was made of the awarding of a two-year grant to launch the Greenleaf Archival Project. Work on this project began on September 1.

A preliminary skimming of the archival materials gives a picture of Robert K. Greenleaf as a thoughtful, complex person. In notes made in journals, dream accounts, and autobiographical writings, Greenleaf evidences a concern for his violent impulses; his searching for meaning in life; his great purpose; and, his great work. Greenleaf’s dream journals, which were written in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, contain these themes as well as those of his fear of himself; his need to trust himself; and, his search for his own feminine side.

Interestingly, one of the proposed titles for Greenleaf’s autobiography was Autobiography of an Idea. Through the accounts of his growing-up years and his experiences in various types of work, Greenleaf attempts to trace the development of the servant-as-leader concept. The familiar story of the sociology professor lecturing on big institutions is told, as well as earlier experiences in his father’s political activities, and Greenleaf’s own involvement in school politics. Greenleaf says that he felt he really “fit-in” only during his high school years. After that, he was his own group, so to speak.

In addition to evaluating the archival materials and related audio-visual tapes, another goal of this project is to locate other papers which should be a part of the archives. One step in meeting this goal has been taken as several individuals and institutions with whom Robert Greenleaf was associated have been contacted for assistance. If further materials are obtained, they will be read and annotated; then, they will be placed in the Greenleaf Archives along with his other papers.

This new archival project promises to be a richly rewarding experience as it will give people access to materials through his various notes, correspondence, and unpublished essays. Anyone having materials by or about Robert K. Greenleaf is encouraged to contact me at the Greenleaf Center.

Message from the Executive Director (Continued from page 3)

To our colleagues and fellow travelers along this servant-leader journey, we celebrate both our differing approaches and our common commitment to encouraging people to act as both servant and leader. The Greenleaf Center plans to continue in its crucial role as a front-line introducer of servant-leadership throughout society, and as a sower of good seed.

On a more personal note, I have come to the conclusion that servant-leadership is truly about a process of being open to changing one’s self, and of evolving as a human being. It is a journey, and not a destination. The attempt to truly act as a servant-leader is a life-long journey — and, for most of us, not an easy one. No one knows better than I just how far I am, personally, from fully modeling the servant-leader ideal in my own life. However, day-by-day, and step-by-step, I remain open to new learning, and to new revelations. In this regard, I feel good about my own evolution as a servant-leader. Also, as a still relatively-young man of 36, I have high hopes that the future will bring me much closer to my own vision of what it means to be a servant-leader. Some of you may hold forth the same hopes about your own journey — regardless of your age, or stage in life.

In a very short period of time we have grown from a one-person operation to a staff of seven. During this past year, I have come to believe that one of the most important traits of a servant-leader is to recognize and thank his or her colleagues. At this time I would like to recognize my fellow staff members: Jim Robinson, Karen Farmer, Geneva Loudd, Anne Fraker, Don Frick and Kelly Tobe. I feel truly blessed to be working with such a remarkable and committed group of individuals. Their energy, and their caring natures, have helped to make the Greenleaf Center into the dynamic organization which it is today.
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.

Bob Greenleaf was and remains one of my heroes. He was my good and cherished friend for more than 30 years. He was a wise counsellor whose advice I benefitted from on many occasions. He helped me in many and immeasurable ways when I was president of Earlham College and from the beginning of my association with Lilly Endowment. I brought him in as a consultant at Lilly and there, I am happy to say, he was quickly seen as a real treasure by my colleagues. His assistance to the Endowment continued long after I left. And his impact upon Earlham (College), particularly through its Institute for Executive Growth (which he conceived and got launched), remains evident through that still useful outreach program for businesses of that area.

Most of all, of course, I value him as a seminal thinker on the myriad problems of leadership, trustworthiness, and personal and corporate responsibility. Never preachy, never threatening, never arrogant or judgmental, he had an extraordinary capacity of helping people to broaden their vision, to sharpen their purposes, to firm up their resolve to renounce selfish aggrandizement and seek to become servant leaders. He was truly a wonderful, wonderful man.

Landrum Bolling
Washington, D.C.

The recent servant-leadership conference was a wonderful first-time exposure to the work and mission of the Robert K. Greenleaf Center. Actually, the Friday evening session was my only opportunity to attend, but if the remainder of the conference was as great as that session, wow! I look forward to following the work of the Center in the future through my new membership.

Carol S. Childress
Leadership Network
Tyler, TX

I have been a student of Robert Greenleaf’s writings for some time and have purchased many copies of his book, Servant Leadership. These copies can be found in many areas of Eli Lilly and Company among many individuals who are developing and expanding their view of leadership through practice. I do believe that in the long run the principles that Robert Greenleaf talked about will enable companies not only to survive, but to excel in an environment where expectations by stakeholders at all levels will demand participation of a more balanced nature.

Joe Cook, Group Vice-President Manufacturing, Engineering and Corporate Quality
Eli Lilly and Company, Indianapolis, IN

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The Robert K. Greenleaf Center invites you to join 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.

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Just a note to thank you and your staff for the excellent materials your Center make available. The people and organizations I work with consistently find them helpful.

Sharon Roe Anderson, Interim Director
Reflective Leadership Center
Minneapolis, MN

As an attendee of the recent Servant-Leadership Conference, I want to compliment you and your staff for arranging the event and the quality of speakers. The Conference was the best two days of personal development I've received in a long time. I look forward to next year's event.

Frank S. Moore, Manager
US Crops, Marketing Communications
DowElanco
Indianapolis, IN

I had a bit of “writer’s block” on my Trustee Renewal Project on Nominating Committee work, so coming to the October conference proved most renewing and brought me back in touch with the Greenleaf principles we want to espouse in the project. Congratulations to all, including speakers and presenters, who made this such a masterful, meaningful time.

Barbara Bugg
Barbara Bugg Consultants
Fort Wayne, IN
Servant-Leader Workshop Program Expands To Meet Increasing Demand

The Greenleaf Center is delighted and privileged to welcome three new facilitators who have joined the existing workshop team of Bob Sigmon, designer and facilitator; Grace Barnes, grant evaluator; and Kelly Tobe, workshop program director.

Jacqualyn Green is C.E.O. of Green Enterprizes, a counseling, consulting, and training division—based in Indianapolis, Indiana—that works with several Lilly Endowment-sponsored leadership groups, school systems, and social service agencies. Jackie holds a Masters in Social Work degree. As an experienced facilitator, she has incorporated servant-leadership ideas in much of her work. Jackie has been the recipient of several professional and community awards and especially enjoys working with groups relating to youth and diversity issues.

Gary Janka is both a consultant and Managing Director for the Santa Barbara Management Institute in Santa Barbara, California. Gary has worked in the field of management and business for 26 years. Sixteen years were spent as a hands-on manager, including the positions of: Corporate Controller, Director of Personnel, and Operations Analyst/Systems Designer. The past ten years have been spent working with a wide variety of businesses, non-profit and governmental agencies. Gary is trained as a sociologist and social researcher. He is currently enrolled in a Ph.D. program in Confluent Education, which deals with intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup behavior.

Isabel Lopez heads up Lopez Leadership Services in Aurora, Colorado. Her background includes positions in the corporate and non-profit sectors. A former corporate executive with 20 years experience, Isabel has supervised hundreds of people and managed multi-million dollar budgets. Isabel’s experience includes marketing, strategic planning, operations, employee assessment, quality measurements, labor relations, management training, and community and grass-roots development. Based upon servant-leadership ideas, the essence of her philosophy is when “the people say we did it ourselves.”

If you are interested in having the Greenleaf Center facilitate a servant-leadership workshop for your group, please call Kelly Tobe at (317) 925-2677. We will be happy to provide you with the best possible workshop and facilitator for your group.

Plan Ahead
Servant-Leadership Conference
October 15-16, 1993 • Indianapolis, Indiana
Major addresses by
M. Scott Peck, author of The Road Less Traveled and Max DePree, author of Leadership is an Art and Leadership Jazz

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