June 10-13, 1999 Conference to Celebrate Significant Markers; Covey, Heifetz, Jaworski and Wheatley Among Featured Speakers

We invite you to join us as we celebrate our 9th annual international conference, our 10th year in Indiana (Bob Greenleaf’s native state), and the Center’s 35th year of existence! Yes, 35 years ago the Center for Applied Ethics was founded, later renamed the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership. Over the past 35 years the Greenleaf Center has served to inform and support hundreds of thousands of servant-leaders around the world.

Come join us in Indianapolis, June 10-13, as we continue to celebrate servant-leadership. We expect 1,000 community, corporate, and academic leaders to convene under the conference theme Navigating the Future: Servant-Leadership and Community Leadership in the 21st Century. This year’s conference is a special, one-time-only, joint collaboration between the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership and the National Association for Community Leadership.

Featured presenters this year include: Kuana Bordas, founder of the National Hispanic Leadership Institute, principal of Mestiza Leadership Services in Denver, and contributing author to Reflections on Leadership; Stephen Covey, author of The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and co-chairman of the Franklin Covey Company, the largest leadership development organization in the world; Ronald Heifetz, author of Leadership Without Easy Answers, and director of the Leadership Education project at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government; Joseph Jaworski, author of Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership.

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Fortune Magazine Recognizes Several Servant-Led Companies

By John Noble,
Greenleaf Centre-United Kingdom

There is an airline whose pilots help clean up the aircraft so that they can minimize turn-around time and take off on schedule. A large bank holding and credit-card-processing concern refers, in mission terms, to its “culture of the heart.” And a major employee-owned mechanical construction servicing company has a CEO, who says, in response to a question, “We are in business to make this a great place to work.” These extraordinary organizations filled three of the top four places in the recently published Fortune magazine 1999 assessment of the “The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America” and all three operate in keeping with the principles of servant-leadership. Synovus Financial and TDIndustries were named #1 and #2, and Southwest Airlines was named #4 in the January 11, 1999 edition of Fortune magazine.

Representatives from all three businesses were in Texas recently to talk about the link between servant-leadership and their business success. This event, which took place at TDIndustries at their Dallas plant on February 19, had something of the feel of a post-Business Oscar ceremony party, with a large audience drawn from a wide range of age, background and experience, from several CEOs of large corporations to a number of students of servant-leadership from McMurry University in Abilene, Texas. On reflection, the main difference between this event and the Hollywood Oscars was that all three presenters were winners and on this occasion the humility was genuine.

Sonny Deriso of Synovus Financial, the company allocated first place in the Fortune list, gave the opening presentation. It was entirely in keeping with the whole mood of the event that his first inclination was to pay tribute to our hosts, TDIndustries, pointing out that it was they who had first called to express their congratulations after the publication of the Fortune list, and it was they who had provided the model.

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1999 Conference
(Continued from page 1)

Berkana Institute; and Lea Williams, author of Servants of the People: The 1960’s Legacy of African American Leadership, and executive director of the Women’s Leadership Institute at Bennett College in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The 1999 conference also offers four blocks of concurrent sessions, with topics such as organizational problem-solving; servant-leadership in healthcare, business, and higher education; scenario-planning; law-enforcement and servant-leadership; spirituality in the workplace; life-work balance for servant-leaders; the art of listening, and other servant-leadership tools; spirituality in current films; defining and assessing servant-leadership in organization; and servant-leadership in the top 2 of Fortune magazine’s “100 Best Companies to Work for in America.”

This year the Greenleaf Center will offer three pre-conference workshops. The popular workshop Servant-Leadership: A Foundation for Effective Organizational Change explores servant-leadership within the context of organizations. Leadership Development is Spiritual Development is designed around the premise that our life and work as a leader flows from our inner life; this was a sell-out workshop in 1998. We will also premiere a brand new workshop, Ten Characteristics of Servant-Leadership, at the conference. This is an interactive, skill-based workshop in which participants will examine some of the basic characteristics of servant-leadership drawn from Greenleaf’s essay The Servant as Leader, and from various writings by Larry Spears. All three of these workshops are suitable for all audiences.

The early-bird (by April 30) member rate for the full conference is only $395, and includes Friday and Saturday lunches, as well as the opening reception on Thursday night, the authors night/booksigning reception on Friday evening, and a bonus visit to the Indianapolis Children’s Museum on Saturday night. Pre-conference workshops are priced separately, and include lunch for the day of the workshop.

You can phone (317-259-1241) or fax (317-259-0560) us with a request for a brochure; you can also find conference information and a registration form at www.greenleaf.org.
Fortune's Best Companies  (Continued from page 1)

which others now seek to emulate. Sonny described the Synovus route to success by quoting their four expectations: Live the Values; Share the Vision; Make Others Successful; Manage the Business. His colleague, Stephanie Alford, Director of the Leadership Institute, spoke of her work — "the best job in the world" — of the basis of trust on which the values were based, and the strong culture of doing the right things. For Synovus, growing people and serving others is very much part of the business strategy.

Jack Lowe, the CEO of TDIndustries, gave a brief outline of the company’s history, tracing the business success that has resulted from their introduction of servant-leadership principles. The commitment to people-development is the very foundation of the company and is perhaps most clearly and simply set out in the opening sentence of the TD Mission statement: We are committed to providing outstanding Career Opportunities by exceeding our Customers’ Expectations through Continuous Aggressive Improvement.

Jack handed over the remainder of the TD presentation to Bob Ferguson, who both informed and entertained us through a series of illustrations and stories. Importantly, we were given a clear insight into a culture where quality, shared commitment, diversity and continuous learning are built on a solid base of trust and servant-leadership.

Ann McGee-Cooper shared with us just some of the stories of the legendary Southwest Airlines, the company whose culture is built on trust and integrity, and whose day-to-day operations seem in a large part informed by fun. This is the airline whose customers become devoted fans and whose employees are co-conspirators in a crusade for outrageous levels of customer service, commercial success and a safety record that is second to none. To say that the Southwest workforce is empowered is tantamount to saying that Mozart wrote good tunes!

The stories that surround Southwest Airlines are so out-of-the-ordinary that it is more likely than not that the most outrageous and seemingly far-fetched are those that just happen to be true.

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 Robert K. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership exists to support those who, through the practice of servant-leadership, seek to create organizations in which individual stakeholders become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous; and in so doing, build a better, more humane society which welcomes the full diversity of the human family.

The Greenleaf Center’s Goals

1. To make all institutions aware of servant-leadership and to deepen their understanding and practice of it.
2. To create a larger base of caring people from which servant-leadership can arise (i.e., CEO’s, trustees, aspiring leaders and followers, external consultants).
3. To achieve widespread recognition, understanding and acceptance of spirituality in the workplace.
4. To create a new understanding and practice of moral persuasion toward organizational transformation, and to follow the methodologies of exemplary servant-leaders.

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.

What Others Say

"Servant-leadership 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." The New York Times

“Bob Greenleaf was a prophet before his time. Reading his wonderful essays will uplift your heart and increase your effectiveness.”

Ken Blanchard, co-author, The One Minute Manager
Servant-Leader Books in Review

Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies


Reviewed by Dan LeSeure

Dan LeSeure is a veteran corporate manager and long-time Greenleaf Center member. He currently acts as manager of application development at Country Companies Insurance Group in Bloomington, Illinois.

Anyone can learn to build a visionary company—a company that endures for decades and earns far beyond the Dow Jones average—but there's not one simple formula. Visionary companies share several traits, and few of the visionaries display every trait consistently throughout their history.

Built to Last searches out the sources of vitality that make the difference between the visionary companies and all the rest. These are the companies that are clear leaders—in product innovation, employee satisfaction, and sales—year after year, sometimes for more than a century. They are not only successful: they are geometrically successful. Over the period 1926-1990, they had returns 16 times greater than the general market. Yet profit was not their driving motive.

Collins and Porras surveyed 700 CEOs asking for their choices of the most visionary companies. They took the 20 most-frequently-cited firms and eliminated any company founded after 1950—to ensure they had a long history of success—which left them with a total of 18. Then they selected 18 comparison companies, each from the same industry with approximately the same founding date, so they could identify what was different about the visionaries. The comparison group was not a bunch of dogs: they outperformed the Dow by a factor of 2.

Collins and Porras found that visionary companies engage in what might be called clock-building rather than time-telling: "Those who built the visionary companies wisely understood that it is better to understand who you are than where you are going-for where you are going will almost certainly change." In other words, the company itself is the greatest creation: "...The continual stream of great products and services from highly visionary companies stems from being outstanding organizations, not the other way around."

Compared to the control group, these companies have a clearly defined set of core values and a very simple, clearly stated purpose. Together, core values and purpose make up the company's core ideology. Examples of core ideologies include: respect for individual initiative and growth, innovation, absolute integrity (3M); provide superb safety and quality, be aeronautical pioneers, tackle huge challenges and take big risks, practice integrity and ethical business (Boeing); alleviate pain and disease, individual opportunity and reward based on merit, decentralization = creativity = productivity (Johnson & Johnson); improve the quality of life through technology and innovation, balance responsibility to customers, employees, society, and shareholders, individual responsibility and opportunity, honesty and integrity (General Electric).

Visionary companies clearly follow values that echo Robert Greenleaf's ideas:

- Service first, and success will follow.
- Focus on the individual and the organization will improve.
- Live by timeless values—and create dangerously.

The visionary companies carry out these core values through six common strategies:

- They choose the "Genius of AND" over the "Tyranny of OR." They have a purpose beyond profit, yet they pragmatically pursue profits. Merck created a drug to kill the parasite that causes river blindness and gave it away when no one could afford to buy it.

- They set Big Hairy Audacious Goals. When IBM decided to build the 360 mainframe computer in the early 1960s, it committed more resources to the task than the U.S. government did for the Manhattan Project to build the first atomic bomb.

- They have cult-like cultures. Nordstrom's inculcates its sales reps with enthusiasm and total customer service. Disney teaches its recruits a whole new language: employees are "cast members" and a job is a "part."

- They try a lot of stuff and keep what works. R.W. Johnson Jr. often said that "Failure is our most important product." Wal-Mart's famous greeters started with one store manager who wanted to find a way to reduce shoplifting.

- They rely almost exclusively on homegrown management. General Electric has produced top-flight management for 60 years, all from the inside.

- They never rest on their laurels. William Procter & James Gamble promoted continuous improvement in the 1850s. William McInerny built continuous improvement into 3M in the 1910s. Hewlett-Packard co-founder David Packard incessantly used the term in the 1940s. These are the traits that, taken together, make the difference between visionary companies and all the rest.

A story from Packard sums up the moral: "[In 1949], I attended a meeting of business leaders. I suggested at the meeting that management people had a responsibility beyond that of making a profit for their stockholders. I said that we...had a responsibility to our employees, to recognize their dignity as human beings, and to assure that they should share in the success which their work made possible. I pointed out, also, that we had a responsibility to our customers, and to the community at large. As well, I was surprised and shocked that not a single person at that meeting agreed with me. While they were reasonably polite in their disagreement, it was quite evident they firmly believed I was not one of them, and obviously not qualified to manage an important enterprise."

Would he receive the same reception today? Not among Robert Greenleaf’s followers!
Voices of Servant-Leadership
Essay Series

On the Right Side of History
by John C. Bogle
(essay), $5.00

John C. Bogle is Senior Chairman of the Board of The Vanguard Group, Inc., and of each of the Vanguard mutual funds. Mr. Bogle founded The Vanguard Group in 1974. Today, The Vanguard Group is one of the two largest mutual fund organizations in the world.

In this inspiring essay, Mr. Bogle examines the implications of servant-leadership and outlines how the servant-as-leader concept has impacted the competitive world of American business. Using the specific example of the burgeoning mutual fund industry—and The Vanguard Group as its fastest-growing major firm—Bogle charts a course that follows the development of servant-leadership during the latter-part of the 20th century. Bogle notes that in the mutual fund industry, and throughout the business world, the central idea of serving others first is being proven in the marketplace. He contends that servant-leadership is on the “right side” of history, and that its power and influence continue to grow. This essay has been adapted from Mr. Bogle’s presentation at the Greenleaf Center’s 1998 International Conference on Servant-Leadership.

The Unique Double Servant-Leadership Role of the Board Chairperson
by John Carver
(essay), $5.00

Boards control most group undertakings in the world—whether governmental, nonprofit, or business. They are our most ubiquitous, visible, powerful instance of group servant-leadership—or lack of it. With respect to a “moral ownership” (if not always a legal one) the board is a group servant-leader. With respect to the board, the chairperson is a servant-leader. The chair, therefore, holds a double servant-leader role. The proper exercise of this twofold servant-leader function is crucial to resolving the problem of agency, particularly as embodied in honoring owner prerogatives and achieving organizational effectiveness. And because of that unique double leverage, the role of board chairperson properly construed is the most pervasive instance of institutional servant-leadership in our culture.

John Carver is the world’s most published author on the governing board role, having authored or co-authored three books and over 150 articles on the topic. As creator of the groundbreaking Policy Governance model, he is widely considered the most provocative international authority on governance.

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USF Leadership House Receives National Attention

Leadership House, a residence hall at the University of South Florida-Tampa, is the first of only two living units in the country modeled on Greenleaf's parable The Teacher as Servant. (The other is Hampton House, located at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana.) This living experiment in leadership development takes place in the context of a public university which has a current total enrollment of 33,000 students, making it the 13th largest school in the southeast.

On February 24th, four students from the house—Kevin Miller, Jamie Smith, Nicole Wittlin and Jennie Bruno—along with Frank Hamilton, program faculty for the house, traveled to Biloxi, Mississippi, to present a program on the USF Leadership House at the Southeast Housing Officer Association (SEAHO). The program, entitled "The Leadership House Concept: Living the Servant-Leader Parable" was well received. The students each took a piece of the program and discussed why the house was important to them. They were the only undergraduates at this conference, which was composed of college and university residence housing officials. As a result, two more universities have expressed an interest and scheduled a visit to the house in order to facilitate establishing one on their campus.

Leadership House was further recognized by the American College Personnel Officers Association (ACPA) as a model program at ceremonies on March 23. The model residence unit was awarded a plaque in honor of its selection, and a description of the Leadership House program will appear in ACPA's annual Model Program Booklet, which is disseminated to college personnel officers throughout the United States.

To learn more about Leadership House, contact Frank Hamilton at 813-974-4945 or hamilt0@ coba.usf.edu.

Dr. Betty Castor, President of USF, chats with former resident Geoff Gordon and program faculty Dr. Bill Locander during a recent tour of Leadership House.

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