

# U.S. Naval Academy Leadership Conference

## CONFERENCE REPORT

### Building the Bonds of Leadership

*"people don't care what you know until they know that you care"*



5-7 February 2007  
ANNAPOLIS, MD

## 2007 Leadership Conference Attendees

### U.S. Naval Academy

Eli Edelkind  
Alan Aw  
Jason Kreutter  
Carter Stapleton  
Charles Yeargin  
Steven Colley  
Monica Amagna  
Adam Shields  
Taylor Couch  
Kristin Laraway  
Elizabeth Regan  
Nathan Stokes  
Charles Woner  
Marc Lawson  
Dave Cook  
Mike Modeer  
Nate Stein  
Kyle Aquino  
Brigitte Klene  
Mark Pulley  
Lyndsey Slyman  
Marshall Green  
Daniel Mulhern  
Patrick Shannon  
William Terminello  
Alex Mills  
Frank Lemene  
Kelly Haycock  
Mike Piazza  
Christa Stowe  
Nolan Anliker  
James Landreth  
Jake Norgard  
Luke Wolf  
Chris Hart  
Maurice Naylon  
Jamie Sharkey  
Chad Theriault  
Lauren McCabe  
John Inman  
Charles Scheller  
Craig Tieman  
Brandon Bonton  
Trevor Miller  
Babar Saleem  
Josh Castillo  
Nathan Lamb  
Bradley Pennington  
Brian Smith  
Anthony Tovado

### Boston College

Paul Santora  
Marina Pastrana  
Brian Mathews  
Ian Rogan

### Dickinson College

Christopher Ladd

### Duke University

Phillip Emery  
Reed Smith  
Sarah Welsch  
Adam Beauregard

### George Washington University

Meredith Kennedy

### Maine Maritime Academy

Jim Settele  
Jesse Ashmore  
Eric Graul  
Jeff Loustaunau  
Hilary Croston  
Janelle Roope  
Rebecca Smith  
Matt Munroe

### Penn State University

Rick Schuhmann  
Brian Cantolupi  
Kelley Boyle  
Mathew Fisher  
Jamie Elkisch  
Marian Dossou

### Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Elizabeth DeLouise  
Lynn Bresnahan  
Audra Bieg  
Courtney Sweeney  
Maggie Converse  
Joshua Reid  
Catherine Persoon

### Royal Military College of Canada

Janine Knackstedt  
Robert Hooper  
Chantel Lemay  
Lindsey Martens  
Ainslinn Joiner  
Andrew Cullum

### SHC/PSU

Lauren Seitz  
Russell Saltz  
Daniel Michelson-  
Horowitz

### Siena College

Deborah Kelley  
Ryan Watroba  
Andrew Kelly  
Brian Turner  
Meredith Toussaint  
Samantha Maurer  
Daniel Skiff

### Smith School of Business University of Maryland

Jennifer Armstrong

### Southern Methodist University

Carol Clyde  
Abbie Steffler  
Jessica Jones  
Brooks Powell  
Abby Hoak

### Spelman College

Venita Kelley  
Nile Johnson  
Rhonda Curtis  
Angela White  
Sherida Hill  
Angela Franklin  
Brittani Cook

### Texas A&M University

Nocholas Geier  
Gregory Czynewski  
Michelle Gates  
Saeh Wood  
Patrick Frain  
Thoman Powers

### U.S. Coast Guard Academy

David Garden  
Mathew O'Laughlin  
Lance Lynch  
Mathew Saldivar  
Megan Sullivan  
Nicholas Hartman  
Marc Benson

### U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

Zachary Bascara  
Laura Jarret  
Christopher Miller  
Michael Parrott  
Gary Drost

### University of Maryland

Amanda Lodovico  
Alison Taylor  
Jonathon Schenker  
Robert Mislavsky

### University of Nebraska

Betsey Klemme  
Katharine Erickson  
Emily Head  
Noah Knisely  
David Polmeyer  
Morell Wax

### University of Pennsylvania

Joe Tiernary  
Joshua Power  
Keri Wong  
Joshua Eisenberg  
Sunny Saxena  
Michael Rugnetta  
Jihyun Yi  
Brenden Darrow

### University of Richmond

Teresa Williams  
David Sienko  
Lisa Sinkovitz  
Joseph Lipari  
Christian Amendola  
Balu Chandrasekaran  
Jessica Fleskes

### Virginia Tech

Thomas Lenz  
Megan Vance  
William Stringer

### West Point

Paul Lester  
Alek McKenney  
Andrew Wempe  
Matt Uduoj  
Ryan Brence  
Patrick Devine

### Wharton School University of Pennsylvania

Jenny Zhang  
Sathvik Tantry  
Nicole Levi  
Shahbaz Alam  
Deborah Garber  
Joshua Eisenberg  
Isabel Ramberg

## *Thank You*

On behalf of the United States Naval Academy, the Department of Leadership, Ethics and Law, along with the Harts and the USNA Class of '38, thank you for coming to the 2007 USNA Leadership Conference. Your participation helped make it a success.

## *This Program*

This program is an after action report of the conference. In hopes that you will learn from the experience and take back leadership lessons, we have included speech overviews, discussion overviews, and a DVD of all the speakers.

## *Mission Statement*

- The U.S. Naval Academy Leadership Conference's mission is to bring together the best minds in the practice and study of leadership to exchange ideas, experiences and methodologies with both military and civilian students.

## *Theme for 2007*

“Building the Bonds of Leadership, *people don't care what you know until they know you care*” emphasizes our effort to explore fresh, relevant issues that tomorrow's leadership will undoubtedly face. There are clear examples in both military and civilian environments where a leader with strong professional bonds with their peers and subordinates are able to achieve goals at a high level.

Tomorrow's leaders are entering a fast paced, highly technological world where bonds have begun to be replaced by leadership through e-mail and text messaging. To be successful in this challenging work force, our leaders will need to find the tough balance between technological efficiency and developing meaningful professional relationships. Core questions that emerge include: How does one develop a strong bond? What boundaries and obstacles are in place to hinder this development? Why is this important part of leadership often avoided?

The USNA Leadership Conference 2007 is different from other student leadership conferences in that it directly engages the perspectives of conference attendees, who will become the future leaders of business, government, academia, and the military in order to provide a new voice in this growing conversation and body of research.

## *Sponsors of the Leadership Conference 2007*

### THE CLASS OF 1938 *438 Graduates / 120 Non-Graduates*

#### Of the Class of 1938 graduates:

- 34 Retired as flag/general officers (five 3-stars)
- 220 Retired as Captain/Colonel
- 421 Served in World War II
- 4 were interred as POW's
- 43 Died as the result of enemy action (42 in WWII, 1 in Korea)
  - in the battles at Pearl Harbor, Midway, Java Sea, Coral Sea, Okinawa, Solomon Island, Savo Island, and Kahili
  - in the sinking of the *Wasp*, *Cisco*, *Amberjack*, *Jarvis*, *Houston*, *Helena*, *Pillsbury*, *Grampus*, *Pickrel*, *Chemung*, *Capelin* and *Corvina*
  - in action on the *Truxton*, *Monaghan*, *Hazlewood*, *Sea Dragon*, *Cushing*, *Turner*, *Bunker Hill* and *Barbel*
  - 1 in the Fukuoka POW Camp
- 20 Died in the line of duty
- 86 Served through three wars: WWII, Korea, and Vietnam
- 78 Served 30 years or more (the longest career was 38 years)
- They were awarded a total of: 24 Navy Crosses, 70 Silver Stars, 146 Bronze Stars and 44 Distinguished Flying Crosses

The Class of 1938 also sponsors the U.S. Naval Academy's Midshipman Leadership Library.

## Leadership Conference 2007 *From the Class of 1938*

**Rear Admiral Maurice H. Rindskopf, USN (Ret.)**  
Class President, World War II Submarine Skipper,  
Former Director of Naval Intelligence  
and Distinguished Graduate Awardee 2007



### **This is a Leadership Vignette.**

A 24-year old Lieutenant Junior Grade reports to the new submarine *DRUM* shortly before Pearl Harbor Day and World War II. He is assigned as Torpedo and Gunnery Officer and Computer Operator in the Attack Team. He learns his technical skills with dispatch. He knows his enlisted personnel, keeps them informed especially in the heat of battle, and addresses their concerns on a regular basis.

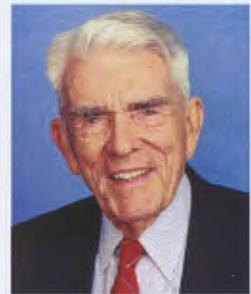
He participated in every one of the more than 1,000 dives the submarine conducted. The crew cheered when the Lieutenant Commander became their fourth Commanding Officer after nine war patrols and 2 1/2 years. The Chief of the Boat, the senior enlisted on board, cried when he was transferred prior to the ship's tenth patrol.

Now, fast forward 50 years and visit Mobile, Alabama where *DRUM* is a tourist attraction. Annually the crew who sailed the ship during the war assembles for a Reunion. They believe time has stood still with respect to their former skipper and think he is still 26. They address him as Cap'n Mike.

Effective leadership, in small or large organizations, is the difference between mediocrity and soaring achievement. *DRUM* was in the latter category.

Yes, you guess that the vignette is about the author.

**Rear Admiral Robert W. McNitt, USN (Ret.)**  
Former Class President, Former Superintendent Naval Postgraduate School,  
Former U. S. Naval Academy Dean of Admissions  
and Distinguished Graduate Awardee 2003



Creating bonds of leadership is the first task of a newly appointed leader. In 1955, Rear Admiral Arleigh Burke was promoted over 91 admirals senior to him to become the Navy's Chief of Naval Operations. He immediately showed his confidence in the existing fleet commanders and Washington staff by keeping them on the job until due for normal rotation. He increased their confidence in him, by consulting them carefully on the Navy's problems. Then, only weeks after being sworn in, he solved the most important one by obtaining the approval of President Eisenhower on a vital personnel issue over the strong objections of the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Defense.

Overcoming formidable obstacles, Admiral Arleigh Burke created bonds of leadership that enabled him to lead the Navy successfully into the nuclear age, while serving an unprecedented three terms and turning down an offer of a fourth. He and Roberta, his beloved wife of 72 years, are buried in the Naval Academy Cemetery. The DDG-51 ARLEIGH BURKE Class of Guided Missile Destroyers is named for the Admiral.



**Captain Dennett K. Ela, USN (Ret.)**  
Former Class Secretary and Engineering Duty Officer  
(Massachusetts Institute of Technology Postgraduate School)  
Leadership Conference Supporter Extraordinaire

*6 April 1915-11 November 2005*

## *Sponsors of the Leadership Conference 2007*

### HART FOUNDATION

#### **Milledge A. Hart, III "Mitch"** Chairman, Hart Group, Inc.

Milledge A. Hart, III a native Texan, is a 1956 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. Following service in the U.S. Marine Corps, Mr. Hart joined IBM Corporation as a marketing representative. In 1962, Mr. Hart joined Ross Perot as one of the founders of Electronic Data Systems Corp. In 1969, he became Executive Vice President of the company and became President in 1970, the position he held until his retirement in 1977.

Later in 1978 Mr. Hart founded, and remains, Chairman of the Board of Rmax, Inc., which manufactures rigid isocyanurate insulation. Rmax currently has plants in Dallas, Texas; Greenville, South Carolina; and Reno, Nevada. Its products include residential sheathing and residential and commercial roof insulation, as well as other specialty products.

In 1983, he formed Hart Group, Inc., a diversified group of companies involved in insulation manufacturing and investments. Subsequently, Hart Group, Inc. was founded in 1988.

In addition to being Chairman of the Board of the Hart Group, Inc. and Rmax, Inc., Mr. Hart serves on the following outside boards:

- The Home Depot, Inc. (one of the original founders), also serves as a member of the Executive Committee and Chairs the Information Technology Advisory Council.
- Docucorp International (Chairman of the Board, Compensation Committee and member of the Governance and Nominating Committee and Ex-Officio member of the Audit Committee)
- Lyco Energy Corporation (member of the Board of Directors, Audit Committee and Chairman of the Compensation Committee)
- Southern Methodist University Board of Trustees and various standing Committees of the Board (Executive Board, Academic Policy Trustee Committee and Chairman of the Investment Committee)
- Southern Methodist University Willis M. Tate Distinguished Lecture Series and Nominating Committee, Hart Global Leaders Forum (endowed and funded) and sponsorship of the Hart Presidential Scholars
- Episcopal School of Dallas, Member of the Board of Trustees, Chairman of the Endowment Committee (Former Chairman of the Board and Founding Director)
- Duke University, Board of Trustees (Trustee Emeritus), Sanford Institute Board of Visitors. Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy and Hart Leadership Program benefactor (endowed this undergraduate program in 1986)
- Recipient of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives - Dallas Chapter 1999 Outstanding Philanthropist
- Claridge Association (President)
- Strawberry Park Home Owners Association, President (Beaver Creek, Colorado)
- Beaver Creek Property Owners Association

Mr. Hart is also a member of World Presidents' Organization, Chief Executives' Organization, Inc., and was also selected as a member of *Who's Who in American Business* and *Who's Who in Texas*.



## *Sponsors of the Leadership Conference 2007*

### HART FOUNDATION

**Linda Wertheimer Hart**  
**Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,**  
**Hart Group, Inc.**

Linda Wertheimer Hart is Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Hart Group, Inc., a diversified group of companies involved in insulation manufacturing and investments.

In addition to being a director of each of the Hart Group companies, Ms. Hart is currently or has been a member of a variety of outside Boards, including the following:

- Imation Corp. (*Chairman, Nominating and Governance Committee; member, Compensation Committee*)
- Conner Peripherals, Inc. (*Chairman, Audit Committee; member, Compensation Committee*)  
- (*Conner Peripherals, Inc. sold to Seagate Technology*)
- WordPerfect Corporation (*Chairman, Compensation Committee; member, Audit Committee*)  
(*WordPerfect Corporation sold to Novell, Inc.*)
- SICPA Industries of America, Inc.
- New York Stock Exchange Legal Advisory Committee (*Former Chairman; Ex-Officio member*)
- Women's Leadership Board, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government
- DFW Directors Roundtable Advisory Board
- Southern Methodist University Hart E-Center Advisory Board
- Southern Methodist University Tate Lecture Series Board (*Former Chairman*)
- Southern Methodist University School of Law and Cox School of Business Executive Boards
- Southern Methodist University Hart Global Leaders Forum Board
- The University of Texas at Dallas School of Management Advisory Board (*Former Chairman*)
- The University of Texas at Dallas Development Board
- The University of Texas at Dallas Management School Foundation (*Former Chairman*)
- The University of Texas Southwestern Health System Board of Visitors (*Charter Member*)
- Dallas Citizens Council Board
- Dallas Symphony Association, Inc. (*Former Chairman of the Board*)
- Duke University Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy
- Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce Board
- Texas National Research Laboratory Commission Board (*Texas Agency-Superconducting Super Collider*)
- International Women's Forum Leadership Foundation Board
- Dallas Women's Foundation (*Chairman, Advisory Council*)
- Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation National Advisory Board
- Dallas/Fort Worth Regional Film Commission Board
- Vail Valley Music Festival Executive Board
- National Trustee, National Symphony Orchestra

For the 24 years prior to joining the Hart Group in 1990, Ms. Hart was engaged in the private practice of law in Dallas, Texas, specializing in corporate and securities matters. While continuing her legal practice in Dallas, Ms. Hart also served as outside consultant to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington, D.C. and as a Visiting Professor at Stanford Law School. She is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh (B.S. *cum laude* 1962) and Southern Methodist University Law School (L.L.B. 1965). Ms. Hart has been a member of the American Bar Association House of Delegates and has written and lectured frequently throughout the country on corporate and securities law subjects.

Ms. Hart served on the NYSE Special Study on Self Regulation, is Chairman Emeritus of the University of California Securities Regulation Institute, has been a member of the Legal Advisory Committee of the National Center on Financial Services of the University of California at Berkeley, the Trade and Investment Task Force of the Dallas Commission on International Development and the Executive Committee of the U.S. Government Business Forums on Capital Formation and was selected as an International Business Fellow. She is a member of the Committee of 200 and is Past President of International Women's Forum – Dallas.





# THE 2007 UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

February 5-7, 2007  
Annapolis, Maryland

*“Building the Bonds of Leadership: People don’t care  
what you know until they know that you care”*

## CONFERENCE REPORT

by

Midshipmen First Class Eli Edlikind  
Midshipmen First Class Marc Lawson

### THE FOCUS OF THIS YEAR’S THEME

“Building the Bonds of Leadership, people don’t care what you know until they know you care” emphasizes our effort to explore fresh, relevant issues that tomorrow’s leadership will undoubtedly face. There are clear examples in both military and civilian environments where leaders with strong professional bonds with their peers and subordinates are able to achieve high level goals.

Tomorrow’s leaders are entering a fast paced, highly technological world where personal bonds have begun to be replaced by leadership through e-mail and text messaging. To be successful in this challenging work force, our leaders will need to find the tough balance between technological efficiency and developing meaningful professional relationships. Core questions that emerge include: How does one develop a strong bond? What boundaries and obstacles are in place to hinder this development? Why is this important part of leadership often avoided?

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### The Importance of Building Bonds

We felt that this idea of developing bonds was the essence of leadership and that it had enough substance to bring about meaningful discussion and debate. Our goal was to help young leaders better understand the importance of developing professional relationships with their subordinates no matter how big of a leader they became.

Relationships are one of the most important aspects of leadership that one must build and nurture in order to become a great leader. A leader must hold a unique, but professional relationship with each subordinate. This bond is the cohesiveness that maintains unit integrity.

It takes time to build those personal bonds with subordinates. That demonstrated interest and devotion of time to the subordinate is well received and reflects in the leader, how much they care for their followers. The relationship that follows is normally one of mutual respect, trust, and dedication to the organization and its mission. The key outcomes of this developing relationship or bond are increased effort and efficiency, pushing both the leader and the follower to new levels, with neither individual wanting to disappoint the other. These bonds create a perpetual relationship between leaders and their men and women that is strengthened through new challenges and by overcoming new adversities.

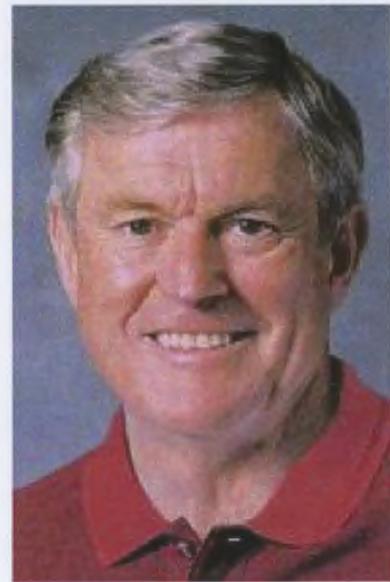
## Coach Dick Vermeil

Former NFL Football Coach  
Super Bowl Champion and Inspirational Leader

One of the most distinguished coaching careers in National Football League history officially concluded when Dick Vermeil announced his retirement from professional football on January 1, 2006. Vermeil had spent 15 seasons as an NFL head coach, including the last five campaigns with Kansas City, and was a member of the league's coaching fraternity for a total of 19 seasons. Vermeil's life's work can best be measured through the countless lives of individuals he has touched over the years dating back to his initial coaching assignment at San Jose's Del Mar High School in 1959. The best testament to Vermeil's ability to connect with his players and coaches is the fact that he owns the rare distinction of being named "Coach of the Year" on four levels: high school, junior college, NCAA Division I and the NFL. We felt this natural leader could relate to a diverse audience considering most people have been involved with some kind of organized sport or activity. He knew what it took to develop bonds with a wide variety of people especially since some of his players were making 5 times more than he and had enormous egos. Accepting a job, where from the very first day you have to prove to your subordinates that you know what you are doing takes courage. He had the courage to develop unique and personal relationships with each player, understanding the fact that it is more enjoyable when you can work with people who respect you and trust you. Through the development of these bonds with his players he achieved the most desired goal in all of football; the Super Bowl Championship.

His speech focused on seven points that make a strong leader. As a leader you must:

1. Build relationships – Give trust and earn it. Keep emotional contact with your people, and invest time in them.
2. Like people – Make people believe you care about them. You must love your people in order for them to fully trust you and maintain a unique relationship.



3. Be a good example – Actions speak for themselves. Show compassion and passion. Be an example for others to emulate.
4. Create a positive atmosphere. Develop quality people, be positive and optimistic, encourage people, recognize and praise, and believe in equality of everyone. Handle adversity while remaining positive – be happy to have tough competition. Competition can only make you better.
5. Define, delegate, then lead – Define the task, communicate it, and then ensure it gets done. Provide people an opportunity to feel they can help make a contribution and delegate to the right people. Leaders should always instill a sense of ownership of the unit within each individual. This creates a sense of pride and personal responsibility for each member of the team.
6. Bring energy to workplace – Push people beyond comfort and erase self-imposed limitations. Enthusiasm is contagious. You either take energy or give energy, be the person that is giving energy.
7. Be Sincere – Your people need to know that you are a genuine person. Simply going through the motions and telling people you care about them is not enough. Credibility is easier to lose than gain. Be supportive and humble. Take responsibility for mistakes and give credit to others.



Rear Admiral Robert S. Harward  
Deputy Commanding General for Operations  
Joint Special Operations Command

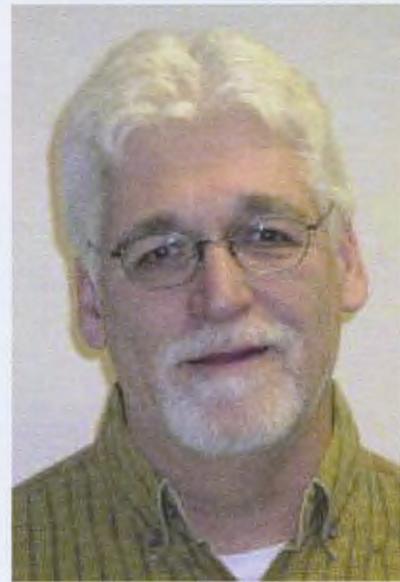
We wanted to bring a unique military perspective to the conference with Rear Admiral Harward and were lucky enough to be able to host him fresh from the front lines — he arrived from Afghanistan just four days before the conference. Rear Admiral Harward, USN, a 1979 USNA graduate, is a U. S. Navy SEAL. He has completed some of the hardest military training the world has to offer, served in one of the most elite units of the United States military, and had the opportunity to command all branches of the United States Special Operations Forces as well as many Special Operations Forces from our coalition partners. The United States Navy SEAL Teams are some of the most dynamic military units in the world. They operate in any environment and quickly adapt to accomplish their missions. Rear Admiral Harward's message was well received, especially amongst the military members at the conference.

Rear Admiral Harward explained that leadership is what you are supposed to do, not always what you want to do. The United States is at war and the goal of Al-Qaeda is to restore the Caliphate and expand their sphere of influence. This will continue to bring new challenges to our future leaders. Taking care of your people and taking the time to get to know them builds that bond of trust. Rear Admiral Harward cautioned not to ignore the seasoned subordinate, but respect their experience and accept their advice. Close subordinates can teach you a lot and assist in the maintenance of those strong professional bonds. Leaders do not always have the answer,

so be humble enough to say, "I don't know, but I'll find out." Humility is an important aspect in developing relationships. If you are humble, you can always learn from the people that you are leading. However, if you are arrogant and close minded, you will only have a negative impact on the efforts of your team.

Rear Admiral Harward gave the audience another view on the importance of developing strong bonds and relationships with the people you work with. Try to be blunt, and don't beat around the bush; it is much easier to work on a problem when all the facts are known regardless of the severity of the situation. Always make sure there is clear guidance and a mutual understanding of common goals. This is important to ensure that everyone is moving in the same direction.

**Reverend Joe Ehrmann**  
**Reverend, Coach,**  
**Family Man and Mentor**



Joe Ehrmann was a former NFL player with the Baltimore Colts and subject of the book "Season of Life" by Jeffrey Marx. He is the co-founder of The Door, a Baltimore inner city based ministry; the co-founder of Baltimore's Ronald McDonald House, which works to better the lives of children and their families; and the co-founder of Building Men and Women for Others, which is trying to redefine and reframe the social responsibility of sports, coaches, parents, and players. Joe Ehrmann's focus is on community organizations, promoting growth, teamwork, effectiveness, and individual responsibility. Several instructors and Midshipmen at the Naval Academy have read "A Season of Life" by Jeffrey Marx and use some of the principles contained in the book in their classroom and everyday life. Therefore, we thought his message and viewpoints would be an excellent addition to the conference.

A very important part of leadership is knowing and understanding the problems that your people are facing. Joe Ehrmann spoke to the conference about our generation's "crisis in masculinity and femininity." He made the audience question what it considers to be real measures of manhood and womanhood. This crisis of masculinity, femininity, and values in our society are something we will have to address and overcome as leaders. Our culture emphasizes certain aspects of people that are shallow at best. The highest value of a man, emphasized at a young age, is athletic ability and it is measured in size, strength, skill, and capacity to win. Other society focused metrics for manliness are sexual conquest and economic success.

Women are taught that beauty and body type define who they are and that it is acceptable to be pretty, but not smart. They are taught to wait for a prince charming that will make their life perfect. Others are taught, that to succeed in life and satisfy their needs, they must be manipulative instead of making their voice heard.

Joe Ehrmann told the conference that every leader should address these problems and help people to see past these issues. Life should be defined by our relationships and measured by how we have loved and are loved in return. We should live for a greater cause and know the world is a better place because he or she lived and loved. In the end, a leader should look inward in their people to see their full potential and provide clearly defined values that are understood by all.



**Robert W. Pittman**  
**Founding Member of Pilot Group, LLC**  
**Former COO of AOL Time Warner**

In searching for a unique and enlightening business perspective to the conference, we did not need to look any further than Robert Pittman. His leadership skills, direction, and personal drive have turned around numerous companies and made him the success he is today. Known as the founder of MTV, former Chief Operating Officer of AOL, CEO of Time Warner, Century 21, and Six Flag Theme Parks; he has made a significant impact on a number of industries and companies. Mr Pittman is currently serving on the Board of Directors for a multitude of well known organizations.

Mr. Pittman spoke from years of experience, taking on many different successful capacities. He focused his speech on innovative leadership and urged the conference to ignore conventional wisdom. Pittman urged the conference to “think outside the box” and think about how you get your information and make sure that you have reliable sources. Use those sources to understand your organization and get accurate feedback. While Pittman was at Six Flags, he disguised himself and swept the sidewalks to find out from the cleaning crews what their thoughts and concerns were. Pittman also advised to avoid committee decisions because they are not always accurate and may be a result of group think and not actual cooperation. Having said that, he also suggested using committees for the brain storming part of a decision making process rather than delegating it to make a decision.

A reoccurring theme throughout his speech was; “Build a culture for innovation.” Listen to when people say you can’t do something and make them explain why; then make that your road map to accomplishing the task. Expect mistakes, and encourage people to try. This tactic helps develop an atmosphere for innovation. If people are too scared to make a mistake, they will never try something new. Make quick decisions. The quicker you make a bad decision, the quicker you will be able to fix it. Don’t add to the conventional school of thought; make your own course. If something does not make sense, then do not abide by it. “Reverse Mentoring” — surround yourself with fresh perspectives. Subordinates can teach you and it should be acceptable to disagree with your superiors. Answer questions and confront problems quickly and timely. The last thing that Pittman said was to create clearly defined objectives for winning, a road map to success, consisting of goals and milestones.

**Colonel Arthur J. Athens, USMCR**  
**Distinguished Military Professor of Leadership**  
**U.S. Naval Academy**



Colonel Athens is a mentor to both students and faculty alike at the U.S. Naval Academy. He gives a compelling speech concerning the main tenants of leadership through a unique blend of stories and personal experiences. We knew that he would be able to incorporate the other speaker's themes into his speech to provide a dynamic closing to the 2007 Conference. He started the speech by saying that the best parts of these conferences are the relationships one makes while attending. Colonel Athens' discussion focused on the three C's to being a great leader:

- Competence
- Compassion
- Courage

Colonel Athens argued that a leader who has one or two of them will be good, but a great leader has all three qualities. It is very important for a leader to have humility. Admitting you are wrong or have been wrong only increases your credibility with your people. Don't be offended by criticism, instead, actively search for it. Identify the people who are not contributing and make them more involved and important to your organization. If your people believe that you are a servant leader, and your actions are in their best interests, you will maximize their efforts towards the organization's goals.

## **Discussion Group Topics for Future Study**

### **"Building the Bonds of Leadership"**

- What is the importance of building bonds as a leader?
- Think of a leader and evaluate them based on those seven principles given by Coach Vermeil.
- What are some unique strategies for mentoring?
- What responsibilities do followers have in the mentoring and relationship building process?

### **"Atmosphere's of Strong Bonds"**

- What are some unique leadership challenges in civil service, military, and business?
- What new leadership problems are being found in the Global War On Terrorism?
- Where is the line in professional relationships?
  - o How close of a bond is too close of a bond?
  - o Is it appropriate for professional colleagues to have private relationships? When? When not?
- At what point do private relationships become the business of workplace professionals?
- Think of a leader that you have had a strong professional relationship with. Try to define how this relationship is cultivated.

### **"Conventional Leadership"**

- What is unique about leadership as a coach of a sports team?
- What are some of the issues that cause our society as a whole to not be effective on a smaller level?
- How do you convince your team that your ideas are right?
- Recommended Reading: *"Season of Life: A Football Star, a Boy, a Journey to Manhood"* by Jeffrey Marx.

### **"Sincere Communications"**

- Is innovative leadership important, why?
  - o List some innovative leaders.
  - o How does innovation help one build better bonds?
  - o What new challenges does technology present for leaders?
- What mediums are used for leaders to communicate?
  - o How important is communicating for leaders?
  - o How do you evaluate communication mediums?
  - o What mediums are appropriate for different messages?
  - o How has the internet changed leadership models?
- Is technology changing the way we lead? (Internet, blogs, IM, cell phones, blackberrys)
- How is technology harnessed effectively to enhance "Bonds of Leadership?"

# LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2007 REPORT



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Mitch and Linda Hart  
and  
USNA Class of '38*