

# U.S. Naval Academy Leadership Conference Conference Report



## *Leader Development: The Cycle of Success*



January 30-February 2, 2011  
Annapolis, Maryland

# 2011 Leadership Conference Attendees

## **Akademia Marynarki Wojennej (Polish Naval Academy)**

Aleksander Warynicki  
Mikołaj Wisniewski

## **American University**

### **Margaret Marr**

Kathryn Baxter  
Lauren Hickey  
Amanda Merkwae

## **Auburn University**

### **Shaun Newman**

Joshua Carson  
George Hirner  
John Mullaney  
Ryan Shinnick

## **Boston NROTC Consortium**

### **Jeff Ransom**

Christopher Joseph Curtis  
Drew Gresh  
Ian Leatherman  
Laura Lu  
Cameron McCord  
William Thibault  
Christian Yoo

## **Bucknell University**

### **Mike Toole**

Sara Bowen  
Spencer DePhillips  
Amelia Fish

## **California Maritime Academy**

### **Lance Watson**

Michael Epperson  
Dane Goddard  
Andrew Jebananthan  
Suzanne Swader

## **Case Western Reserve University**

### **Shannon French**

Sarah Hutnik  
Eric Pellish

## **Citadel, Krause Center for Leadership and Ethics**

### **Wes Smith**

Caleb Bowers  
Caroline Lytle  
Michael Rowland  
Nicholas Stilwell

## **Christopher Newport University**

### **Elizabeth Gagon**

Katie Dye  
Jordan Mellington  
Matthew Ware

## **Colgate University**

### **Ann-Marie Guglieri**

Maureen Colligan  
Nate Eachus  
Ashley Walsh

## **College of the Ozarks**

### **Nick Sharp**

Curtis Davis  
Nancy Fry  
John Matthews

## **Duke University**

### **LT Matt Burich**

Mark Baden  
Conrad Kerr  
Travis Rapp  
Kaitlin Smith

## **École Navale**

### **Sophie Le Bris**

## **Hampton University**

### **Battinto Batts**

Monte Flowers  
Domiique Primer

## **Louisiana State University in Shreveport**

### **Wayne Hogue**

Ben Berroteran  
Jeffery Goins  
Spencer Parker

## **Maine Maritime Academy**

### **Capt Jeff Loustaunau**

Paul Hudson  
Michael McMahon  
Tyler McSwain  
Heather Moore

## **Marietta College**

### **Dr. Robert McManus**

Marci Estock  
Taylor Landrie  
Caleb Muller

## **Marquette University**

Ryan Mahon  
Megan Timm  
Bradley Wilson

## **Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Gordon Engi- neering Leadership Program**

### **LtCOL Leo McGonagle**

Scott Landers  
Noel Morales  
Russell Rodewald

## **Morehouse College**

### **Dr. Melvina King**

**Dr. Carter Savage**  
Nathan Edwards  
Tariq Murphy

## **North Carolina State University**

Cress Clippard  
Joshua Millwood  
Jeffery Reider

## **Pennsylvania State University**

### **Bob Beaury**

Joseph Giordano  
Abbie Swoboda  
Grier Wilt

## **Pennsylvania State Univer- sity Schreyer Honors College**

Angela Brosnan  
Sara Chroman  
Dan Jenson  
Jinghao Lu

## **Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**

### **Annie Virkus**

John Cutillo  
Myrian Smith  
R. Andrew Yeskoo

## **Siena College**

### **Fred Decasperis**

Challen Banach  
Michael Brady  
Sarah Szewczyk

## **Southern Methodist University**

### **Carol Clyde**

Alex Mace  
Bethany Mackingtee  
Luciana Prifti  
Jake Torres

## **Texas A&M University**

### Laura Kennedy

Kalan Scott  
John Welkener

## **Tufts University**

### Jennifer Dann-Fenwick

Konrad Gessler  
Yamila Irizarry-Gerould  
Anna Patten

## **United States Air Force Academy**

### **Chief Bob Vasquez**

Alex Choi  
Megan Hoskins  
Travis Penner  
Sammy Tongoi

## **United States Coast Guard Academy**

### **David Stutt**

Matt Hurtt  
Natalie Rothman  
Jennifer Tammien  
Alex Webber

## **United States Military Academy**

### **MAJ Victor Deekens**

Colby Brunette  
Ben Ordiway  
Rachel Stuhlmiller

## **United States Merchant Marine Academy**

### **Antoinette Waller**

Alison Anderson  
Charles Jones  
Claire Matt  
Nathan Roznovsky

## **University of California, Los Angeles**

### **Jason Davenport**

Chelsea Harlan  
John Borneman

## **University of Maryland**

### **Daniel Ostick**

Maddy Bersch  
Neil Costello  
Debbie Kobrin  
Sebastian Van NESTE

## **University of Nebraska- Lincoln**

### **Betsy Klemme**

Jamie Dick  
Shannon McCoy  
Cally Thompson

## **University of the Pacific**

### **Corrie Martin**

Sarah George  
Silvia Guzman  
Caelan Urquhart

## **University of Texas at Austin**

### **Howard Prince**

Amin Habnia  
Ryan Wilhelms

## **University of Texas**

### **Christian Rivera**

Andrew Adams  
Colin Doherty  
John Goodrich  
Stephen Mercer

## **University of Richmond, Jepson School of Leadership Studies**

### **Kerstin Soderlund**

Colin Billings  
Patrick Coughlin  
Taylor Gorter  
Mario Lipari

## **University of Southern California**

### **Joshua Ragadio**

Connor Binnig

## **University of Pennsylvania Fox Leadership Program**

### **Chuck Brutsche**

Emma Ellen-Golan  
Laura Steel  
Jesse Wofford

## **University of Pennsylvania Wharton School**

### **Avia Legatt**

Patrick Glover  
Christian Hoogerhyde  
Colin Lee

## **University of Virginia NROTC**

### **Richard Skinnell**

Tiana Daubach  
George Lyle  
Katherine Miyamasu  
Philip Robbins

## **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**

### **William Stringer**

Caton Jarrett  
Connie Kwon  
Benjamin Moore  
Amanda Schultz

## **Yale University**

### **Rodney Cohen**

James Campbell  
Robert Michael

## *Thank You*

The United States Naval Academy, the Department of Leadership, Ethics and Law, along with the Hart Foundation and the USNA Class of '38, were proud to sponsor the 2011 Leadership Conference at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland January 30-February 2, 2011.

## *This Program*

This program is an after action report of the conference. We have included speech and discussion overviews of all the speakers in the hope that your learning will continue through the experiences and lessons of this conference.

## *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 undergraduate students of leadership.

## *Background*

Since 1984, the Naval Academy has hosted an annual leadership conference for senior cadets and midshipmen from each of the service academies. In 2002, the conference expanded to include students from civilian universities and broadened its scope to include leadership topics relevant to government, business, and academia, as well as the military. Made possible through the generous support of the Class of '38 and Mitch and Linda Hart, the USNA Leadership Conference now includes more than 200 participants from over 40 military and civilian colleges. In 2006, the Leadership Conference incorporated a student generated and professionally published conference report that addressed key issues related to the conference theme. In recent years, the Leadership Conference has varied presentation formats and increased the amount of small group interaction and discussion in order to foster learning experiences among attendees.



# THE 2011 UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

January 30-February 2, 2011  
Annapolis, Maryland

## *“Leader Development: The Cycle of Success”*

### CONFERENCE REPORT

by *Midshipman First Class Sarah Grant*

## *Theme for 2011*

The success of any organization depends on a host of complex and dynamic factors, yet leader development, often overlooked or disregarded, plays a critical role. In an era of increasing competition and growing opportunity, yet also a time of decreasing resources and greater organizational challenges, the role of human resources and the intangible qualities of leadership become vital to every organization.

Often regarded as a hallmark of leader development programs, the U.S. Armed Forces also face challenges to improve organizational leadership and build its leaders. The USNA Leadership Conference attendees will investigate these issues by hearing from experts and experienced senior leaders who have made leader development a priority in their organizations.

Issues for discussion include: the relationship between leader development and organizational success; the most important organizational and individual elements of leader development (best and worst practices and the role of consultants vs. internal programs); the obstacles and factors preventing organizations and leaders from placing more emphasis on leader development; the ways in which leaders create and build a culture of leader development in organizations; and the changes and priorities required for effective leader development in response to future demands and challenges.

### THE FOCUS OF THIS YEAR'S THEME

When the staff for the 2011 Leadership Conference began discussing possible topics on which to base the conference, we focused on the fundamentals of leadership and the elements that are universal among all thriving organizations. At the heart of every successful business, military unit, team or office is a well-rounded leader who understands how to challenge, inspire and empower his or her people, and we felt that there could be no better use for this conference than to engage college students in a discussion of how to develop the traits and tools necessary to become a transformational leader within any organization. We are the nation's next generation of leaders and it is therefore incumbent upon each and every one of us to seize any and all opportunities to develop ourselves and those around us to meet the numerous and diverse challenges of the future and perpetuate the *“Cycle of Success.”*

As the title of the conference suggests, and as many of our speakers emphasized, leader development is a continuous process and is critical to the long-term success of any organization. Leaders must be lifelong learners and optimists, always keeping an open mind and eagerly seeking new challenges and opportunities. Smart organizations ensure their success by investing in the development of their people and creating a culture of passion, initiative and teamwork. We were fortunate to have speakers who were extremely well versed in these areas.

What follows is a summary of the lectures and notable events during the 2011 United States Naval Academy Leadership Conference. The conference staff sincerely hopes that what is represented here has helped develop us as people and leaders and has allowed us to consider and embrace the role of leader development in any organization. It is now our turn to carry forward *“The Cycle of Success.”*

**M**r. Dan Akerson, Chairman and CEO of General Motors Corporation, was the Forrester Speaker for the Leadership Conference. In his inspiring speech to the Brigade of Midshipmen and the participants of the USNA 2011 Leadership Conference, Mr. Akerson told the audience that great leaders do not hide from reality, but rather they confront reality and face challenges head on.

In keeping with the theme of the Leadership Conference, Mr. Akerson explained how he was able to build on his leadership training and experiences as a Midshipman and military officer and evolve into the seasoned and successful businessman he is today. He said that the capacity to lead is in all of us, but we must be prepared to make the tough but right decisions and persevere through adversity. Referencing his arrival at General Motors Corporation after the past few tumultuous years, Mr. Akerson said that the “call to serve does not always come at a convenient time,” but true leaders will step up to the challenge and welcome the responsibility. Leadership truly is a privilege, a responsibility, and for those in attendance, a calling.

He noted several key traits that leaders must possess, among which are wisdom, humility, boldness and integrity. Wisdom and humility are important, he said, because leaders must be constantly aware of their environment and be neither afraid to take decisive action, nor unwilling to admit their mistakes. Wisdom is not just about professional competency, but also about understanding yourself, your people and the task that needs to be accomplished. Boldness is another key trait, he said, because leadership is a risky business and requires confidence and a tireless will to succeed. Leaders are those who push boundaries and challenge a group of people or an organization to be more productive, more creative and more tenacious than they thought they could be. Finally, and most critically of all, is integrity. This is a trait that must define a person in all aspects of his or her life, not just in the workplace. As Mr. Akerson stated, “If your wife cannot trust you, why should I?”

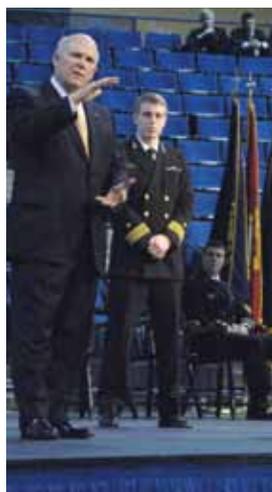
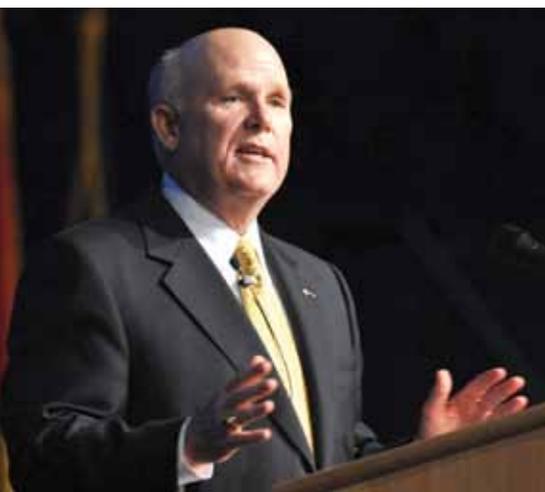
Mr. Akerson concluded his talk by thanking the Brigade of Midshipmen and the Leadership Conference participants, who he said had all taken the first step to becoming leaders by committing themselves to learning the trade. His comments were met with a roaring applause and a great appreciation from all those in attendance.



**Mr. Daniel F. Akerson**

**General Motors Chairman  
and Chief Executive Officer**

*Daniel F. Akerson became GM Chairman effective January 1, 2011 after serving as CEO since September 1, 2010. Prior to joining General Motors, Akerson was a managing director of The Carlyle Group and the head of global buyout. He served on the firm's executive committee and was based in Washington, D.C. He joined the GM board of directors July 24, 2009. Akerson is a seasoned executive with extensive operating and management experience, having served as chairman, chief executive officer, or president of several major companies, including General Instrument, MCI, Nextel, and XO Communications. His corporate management experience, private equity track record, and deep understanding of Carlyle's global operation provided a strong foundation for his leadership of Carlyle's buyout activities in Asia, Europe, Financial Services, Infrastructure, Japan, and the United States. In addition to serving on GM's Board, Akerson also serves on the Boards of the American Express Company and the U.S. Naval Academy Foundation. Akerson graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1970 with a bachelor of science in engineering. He earned his master's of science in economics from the London School of Economics.*





## Mr. Marcus Buckingham

### Leadership Author and Consultant

*Using Marcus Buckingham's nearly two decades of experience as a Senior Researcher at Gallup Organization, he has challenged entrenched preconceptions about achievement to get to the core of what drives success. Definitive treatment of strengths in the workplace can be found in Buckingham's best-selling books: First, Break All the Rules; Now, Discover Your Strengths; The One Thing You Need to Know; Go Put Your Strengths To Work; and The Truth About You. His newest book, Find Your Strongest Life, addresses the numerous studies revealing a drastic decline in female happiness over the last 40 years, and offers strategies for reversing this disturbing trend. In his role as an author, independent consultant and speaker, Buckingham has been the subject of in-depth profiles in The New York Times, Fortune, Fast Company, Harvard Business Review, USA Today and The Wall Street Journal. He has appeared on numerous television programs, including "The Today Show" and "The Oprah Winfrey Show," and is lauded by such corporations as Toyota, Coca-Cola, Master Foods, Wells Fargo, Microsoft and Disney as an resource in informing, challenging, mentoring and inspiring people to find their strengths and sustain long-lasting personal success. Marcus Buckingham graduated from Cambridge University in 1987 with a master's degree in social and political science.*



A world-renowned leadership author and consultant, Mr. Marcus Buckingham expertly stepped into the role of opening speaker with an engaging and lively presentation that connected with all participants.

Mr. Buckingham started by drawing a distinction between managers and leaders, and then proceeded to explain the differences between the two and the importance of both in a successful organization. Managers, Mr. Buckingham said, understand how to take advantage of the strengths of each individual under their command and produce maximum performance from the group. They are able to find the unique traits and strengths in their subordinates and capitalize on it to produce a whole that is greater than the sum of the individual parts. He likened managers to expert chess players: they must know the capabilities of each piece on the board and employ them in accordance with how they can best serve the overall objective.

He then discussed a central tenet of his leadership philosophy, which is that in trying to achieve success over the long-term, leveraging and building on strengths is far more important than correcting weaknesses. He displayed several charts showing the preoccupation that many people have with minimizing and trying to overcome weaknesses, when their time would be much more productively spent improving upon existing strengths. This tendency to focus on weaknesses, he said, stems from the fact that people are more fearful of their weaknesses than they are honoring of their strengths; this is, however, unproductive for individuals and detrimental for organizations. Attempting to escape weaknesses is a losing battle because over time, individuals grow and become more and more who they are as individuals, strengths and weaknesses and all.

Mr. Buckingham then transitioned into his explanation of what it means to be a leader, which is in many ways the opposite of what it means to be a good manager. Leaders, he said, focus on what is universal rather than what is unique among individuals. They are able to rally people to a better future and inspire optimism and hope. They are able to overcome people's natural anxiety and fear of the unknown and set a clear course to success. Mr. Buckingham stressed four points on which all leaders of organizations must be clear: Who, precisely, do we serve? What is our core strength? What is our core score or metric? What actions can we take today?

He concluded his remarks by saying that leaders and managers are both distinct and necessary for the success of an organization. The first step towards becoming a leader or manager worthy of being followed is to take an honest assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses and take steps towards maximizing individual strengths to the benefit of the whole.



## Leadership Conference Panel Discussion 1—*The Origins of Leadership*

*Moderator: Professor Brad Johnson, Leadership, Ethics and Law Department, USNA*

The first panel, *The Origins of Leadership*, introduced participants to the fundamental principles of leadership and the experiences and traits that define visionary leaders. The panel, moderated by Professor Brad Johnson, explored the idea of whether leaders are born or made, what lessons about good and bad leadership can be drawn from life experiences, and how individuals transform themselves into leaders worthy of being followed.

Dr. Kathie-Ann Joseph discussed her experiences as a member of a surgical team at Bellevue Hospital Center in New York City during the immediate aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Dr. Joseph described how her team was able to come together to provide emergency medical care to injured patients arriving from the World Trade Center site and act quickly and decisively in accordance with their training. She stressed the importance of preparing leaders for adversity and the unknown, because that is when leadership is truly tested. One must be able to make sound decisions on the fly and execute the necessary courses of action effectively amidst the chaos.

After Dr. Joseph, the participants heard from Colonel Bryan McCoy, USMC, currently on the staff of United States Central Command and formerly the Commanding Officer of 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment through two tours in Iraq. Col McCoy first stated that he believes leaders are both born and made; leaders must be born with the instinct and desire to lead and possess certain fundamental traits like integrity and self-confidence, but they must also embark on a continuous cycle of self-improvement throughout their careers and develop a high social IQ and deep understanding of the human condition and group dynamics. Leadership, he said, is about creating belief in one's vision, which can only be accomplished by instilling in those one leads a sense of confidence and common purpose.

The third speaker, Mr. Ryan Setzer, built on Colonel McCoy's discussion and said that leaders must be born with certain characteristics, but also need to diligently develop their strengths in order to be successful. Action and initiative, rather than natural proficiency, are what guarantee one's destiny, and leadership is a mindset before it is a skill-set. Leadership, he stressed, is about accomplishing results through the efforts of others; vision alone is not enough, one must also possess strong people skills and an ability to influence others to join in working towards the vision.

Brigadier General Howard Prince spoke next, and presented comments that were particularly relevant to the college-age participants in attendance. He suggested that we take every opportunity to widen our horizons, seek novel experiences and develop new interests. Social experiences in college, he said, are a critical part of leadership development and should not be neglected in preference for job-oriented training. Leadership is not ultimately about trying to effectively apply theoretical principles, but rather about acquiring a deep understanding of and appreciation for human behavior and psychology. Dr. Prince concluded by saying that mentorship is a crucial part of leader development and that everyone in attendance should both seek out mentors to emulate and should seek to be a mentor to the next generation.

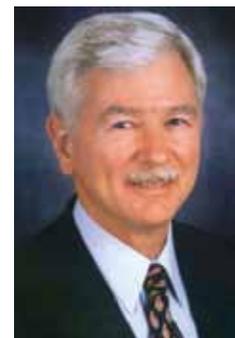
The panel was a wonderful opening to the conference and incited a great deal of student participation and thoughtful dialogue in the small group discussions.



*Dr. Kathie-Ann Joseph*



*Colonel Bryan P. McCoy, USMC*



*Brigadier General Howard T. Prince, USA (Ret.)*



*Mr. Ryan Setzer*

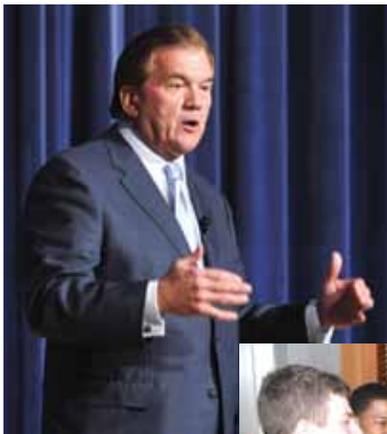




### **The Honorable Thomas J. Ridge**

**Former Governor of Pennsylvania, Former Secretary,  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security, CEO, Ridge Global**

*Tom Ridge is president and CEO of the international consulting firm Ridge Global, headquartered in Washington, D.C. He served as the nation's first Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security from January 2003 through January 2005, and as the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security from October 2001 through December 2002. Previously, he was governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from 1995 through October 2001 and a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1983 through 1995. A Vietnam combat veteran, Secretary Ridge works with multiples organizations to assist our nation's veterans, serves as chairman of the National Organization on Disability and co-chairs the Flight 93 National Memorial. He also serves on public and private boards, including the Institute for Defense Analyses and the Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress. He holds a B.S. from Harvard University and J.D. from the Dickinson School of Law.*



**T**he Honorable Thomas J. Ridge took the stage as the conference's first daytime speaker. Mr. Ridge is the current president and CEO of Ridge Global, former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security and former Governor of Pennsylvania. Mr. Ridge began his remarks to the participants by emphasizing that leadership is individualized and all have their own style. Leaders must know what their style is, and how their style is affected by their strengths and weaknesses, in order to successfully take charge. Those who are unsure of what they are doing and how they are doing it will not be followed for long, if at all.

Authority does not come for free, he said, and all leaders must be willing to be held accountable for their actions and decisions. Leadership is a privilege and responsibility, a sort of agreement between the leader and the follower. Mr. Ridge explained a concept that is common in the military, of "leading from the front." Leaders must set high expectations and standards for their subordinates, but must also be prepared to meet and exceed those expectations themselves, or else be labeled a hypocrite. The leader must be the example to which his or her subordinates look up, or risk having a hard time finding people willing to follow.

Clarity of purpose is also critical, he said, because the vision sets the tone of an organization. Unity and harmony of effort are vital in achieving organizational success, and these come both from strong leadership and open communication and trust within the team. All must know that they are valued and that their contribution matters to the leadership and the success of the organization itself. Mr. Ridge then continued his focus on communication by saying that listening is a core leadership trait that is too often overlooked. Too many people talk, but not enough listen. Leaders do not always have to heed or even agree with what their peers and subordinates have to say, but they must still listen and consider what they hear when deciding to act. All have unique experiences, knowledge and traits that they bring to the table, and it is through embracing a diverse set of ideas that one is able to make an informed decision.

Mr. Ridge then stressed the importance of empowering subordinates and not micromanaging. Make sure they are prepared and up to the task, but then get out of their way, he said. This is the only way to ensure growth and productivity from within an organization, but also requires that the leader be willing to take risks and tolerate mistakes. Learning, which is a critical piece of leadership, is all about taking calculated risks and accepting that one might fail on occasion, and having a positive attitude that lets one get right back up and learn from the failures. This mentality should hold true for one's whole life, he said, because leadership development is never complete and there is always something more to learn.

Leaders must have confidence, but not arrogance, and the will to lead. Training and experience in leadership comes over time, but the fundamental necessity is a right attitude. One must have a deep understanding of oneself and one's capabilities before one can begin to see and appreciate the unique characteristics of others. One should be a little bit anxious, but never afraid or self-conscious. Quoting Adlai Stevenson, Mr. Ridge said "It's hard to lead a cavalry charge if you think you look funny on a horse."

## Leadership Conference Panel Discussion 2—*Developing a Culture of Leadership*

*Moderator: Professor Joseph Thomas, Distinguished Military Professor of Leadership, Lakefield Family Foundation, USNA*

The second panel, *Developing a Culture of Leadership*, discussed the importance of institutionalizing a focus on leader development within an organization. The panelists' experiences ranged from military command, to senior government service, to management of global business enterprises, and fostered a wide-reaching and engaging discussion. The panel was moderated by Professor Joseph Thomas, Distinguished Military Professor of Leadership at USNA.

CAPT Angela Cyrus, USN, Director of Admissions for the United States Naval Academy, opened her remarks by describing the image of an organizational chart, in which there are boxes for each person and official linkages indicating the hierarchy within an organization. CAPT Cyrus urged the audience to consider the “white space” in between these boxes, where the relationships, interactions and energy of an organization exists. Leadership, she said, can just as readily come from white space as from the boxes at the top of the chart. The key to leadership is an understanding of the role of personal power and the ability of each individual, regardless of rank or title, to influence others.

Ari Fleischer, former White House Press Secretary and current President of Ari Fleischer Communications, Inc., spoke second and emphasized the importance of empowering subordinates and ensuring they are prepared to execute the mission at hand. Trust and open communication between leader and subordinate is vital, especially when a crisis hits. Leaders, he said, must be able to stay calm and steady in the face of adversity in order to engender confidence among their subordinates. Leaders set the model that subordinates emulate, and must therefore be always cognizant of the personal and professional example they set in the workplace.

Third on the panel was Ms. Deirdre Gehant, director of the Federal Reserve System Leadership Initiatives. Ms. Gehant started by saying that organizations can create a culture of leadership and initiative by being clear that personnel development is one of their primary goals. Leader development programs must be institutionalized, or they will not endure over the long-term. Ms. Gehant also emphasized the importance of both learning from history and the “silverback gorillas” of an organization, while also being open to the future and new ideas. If everyone in the organization is instilled with a common vision and sense of purpose and is given the opportunity to have his or her voice heard by upper management, useful and creative ideas will begin to flow from all sectors.

The final speaker of the panel was Walt Havenstein, Chief Executive Officer of Science Applications International Corporation, who discussed both the universal and situational-dependent aspects of leadership. Mr. Havenstein said that leadership development is a lifelong process, but is deeply affected by the particular circumstances in which a leader finds him or herself. Because leadership is about rallying people to a common vision that is both ambitious and appropriate for the organization, leaders must understand the soul of the organization and what its ultimate aims are. Culture, he said, is shaped by what is celebrated, so leaders should take care to embrace the characteristics and actions they want in the workplace, and act quickly to correct those that are detrimental to the group. Mr. Havenstein used the military as an example of this principle, and said that the purpose of field grade officers, those of higher ranks, is to carry on tradition, while the role of the junior officers and junior enlisted is to do the actual fighting. Everyone has his proper role and must act to the best of his ability in accordance with that role in order to guarantee the perpetuation of a tradition of success.

The Q&A for the second panel delved into the importance of allowing and encouraging open lines of communication between subordinates and the leadership. Subordinates will do the right thing and invest themselves in the success of their organization if they know the boss respects their opinions and is willing to listen to what they have to say. Mr. Fleischer stressed that decision-making is the essence of leadership and that while leaders are ones who ultimately must make and take responsibility for any decisions, they should be sure to hear and consider all perspectives before acting. Only when many ideas and opinions, including those that clash, have been heard can the leader make the soundest judgment possible. The panel was in unanimous agreement that shutting down constructive debate ultimately harms the organization as a whole.



*CAPT Angela  
Cyrus, USN*



*Mr. Ari Fleischer*



*Mrs. Deirdre  
Gehant*



*Mr. Walt Havenstein*







## Vice Admiral Dirk J. Debbink, USN

Chief of Navy Reserve  
Commander, Navy Reserve Force

*Vice Admiral Dirk J. Debbink graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in systems engineering in June 1977. He completed his master's in business administration at the University of Chicago in June 1990. During his initial period of active service, he served aboard USS Fanning (FF-1076) and as Flag Aide to Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Japan in Yokosuka, Japan. Debbink transitioned to the Reserve Component in 1983. During the next 19 years, he was assigned to numerous selected reserve billets, supporting Navy and Joint Forces Active Component commands in the United States and overseas. Selected for flag rank in 2002, he has served in Reserve Component flag billets in the Pacific and Navy Region Midwest, including Reserve Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff, U.S. Pacific Fleet. He was called to active duty as Deputy Chief of Navy Reserve in October 2007. Additionally, he served on the Secretary of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board from August 2006 to July 2008. Debbink became the Chief of Navy Reserve on the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations in Washington, D.C. on 22 July 2008. As a drilling Navy Reserve Sailor prior to his call to active duty, he was chairman of a regional design/build general contracting firm in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin.*



VADM Dirk Debbink, Chief of the Navy Reserve and Commander, Navy Reserve Force, was the second luncheon guest speaker of the conference. VADM Debbink focused his remarks on situational leadership, technical proficiency and the importance of ethical decision-making in one's career.

Few people, he said, are born leaders, but many are born to lead. They have the desire and core traits necessary to become leaders, but they must be developed. Instinct only goes so far, and putting the effort into acquiring training and experience and engaging in self-reflection and self-improvement is critical. One must always take responsibility for one's own life, regardless of whether in a leadership position at the time or not. Leadership is not just about a title, but rather about one's attitude towards the world and one's ability to inspire others even without formal authority.

VADM Debbink continued to say that as a leader, one should always seek to make leaders out of those one leads. Organizational success requires a continuous stream of people prepared to step up into leadership roles, so the goal of any leader should be to mentor and train his or her replacement. Leadership is not about making oneself irreplaceable, but rather about setting conditions under which one's subordinates can flourish and become self-sufficient. A deep understanding of what it takes to lead can only come through experience, so people should be pushed into leadership roles early and often in their careers. Some will rise to the occasion and some will need more guidance, but they will all learn something about themselves that they can use going forward.

Before taking the helm of any organization, it is critical to understand the culture, purpose and status of that organization. In order to move into the future, one must have an appreciation for the past and any legacies that remain in the soul of the organization. Leaders should make sure to keep in mind the state in which the unit exists when they arrive. Has the organization had a trend of success? Are they in a turnaround period? Do they need to regroup and get realigned? Or are they just starting out? Different situations, VADM Debbink said, call for different types of leaders with different skill sets. For units that had a history of success, continuity and consistency is important. For organizations just starting up, however, a strong and dynamic vision and activist leadership may be more beneficial. Leaders need to identify the nature of the organization they are leading, and have the technical competency to be versatile and adaptable in the face of change and adversity.

VADM Debbink concluded his remarks by stressing the importance of ethical decision-making. Leaders can bounce back from a failed idea or business move, but it is almost impossible to recover from a breach of integrity. Subordinates will only follow leaders they trust, and few will trust someone with questionable integrity. Those one leads must know that one will be willing to make the hard but right decision, and that he will not sacrifice the well-being of the organization to advance himself or cover up a mistake. People who are willing to cut corners may meet with some immediate success, but over the long-term, leaders who foster a culture of responsibility and ethical conduct will guarantee greater accomplishment and a positive organizational legacy.

## Leadership Conference Panel Discussion 3—*Best Practices & Future Opportunities in Leader Development*

*Moderator: CAPT Mark Adamshick, USN, Director, Division of Leadership, Education & Development, USNA*

The third and final panel, *Best Practices & Future Opportunities in Leader Development*, explored the transition from theory to practice and how leaders can take what they know about the importance of leader development and apply it effectively in their organizations. The panel was moderated by CAPT Mark Adamshick, Director of the Division of Leadership, Education & Development at USNA, and included four experts from a variety of backgrounds who have successfully applied their talents and energy to the betterment of those with whom they work and their organizations as a whole.

The first speaker on the panel was Mr. Dave Brandt, head coach of the Navy men's soccer team. Mr. Brandt spoke from his years of experience as an undeniably successful coach at Messiah College, which he led to six national tournaments in nine years. He began his remarks by explaining what is meant by a compelling sense of purpose. Leaders, he said, must set a distinctive vision that allows the members of a team or organization to connect and separate themselves from the competition. Winning or turning a profit, while an important goal of a sports team or business, respectively, is not a compelling purpose because it is too common. True vision will create a unique and pervasive identity and attract like-minded people. Culture, more so than a winning record, is what endures and creates a legacy. Coach Brandt concluded by drawing a distinction between authority and leadership: the authority to tell someone what to do means one is in charge, but being a leader requires the ability to inspire, regardless of formal title or rank.

CDR Keith Hoskins, USN, the 3rd Battalion Officer at the United States Naval Academy and former member of the "Blue Angels" Naval Flight Demonstration Squadron, encouraged the participants to never pass up an opportunity to lead. Leadership ability must be honed over time and through practice, and there is no time like the present to begin the cycle of development. He then concurred with Coach Brandt's remarks, saying that the mission statement of an organization must be relevant and tailored to the audience. Leaders must be able to instill a sense of ownership among subordinates, which comes from everyone understanding and enthusiastically moving towards a common purpose. For individual leaders, honest self-evaluation and consistency are crucial. Reinforcing the theme of Marcus Buckingham's presentation, CDR Hoskins emphasized that leaders should always lead from their strengths and stay true to themselves.

The third panelist to speak was RADM Robert Shumaker, USN (Ret.), who served a long and distinguished career as a naval aviator, including eight years as a POW in Hanoi, Vietnam and a tour as the Superintendent of the Naval Postgraduate School. RADM Shumaker commented that the first step in becoming a leader is actually aspiring to lead. Leaders do not hesitate to rise to the challenges put before them and accept greater responsibility. One cannot lead without the necessary and proper will. The self-confidence and self-awareness required to lead also involves knowing where one is going and where he intends to take his subordinates. Furthermore, RADM Shumaker stressed that leaders must be optimists. No-one will follow the pessimist without a plan.

Mr. Tim Sullivan, founder and managing director of Madison Dearborn Partners, LLC (MDP), rounded out the third panel and described how the potential for success of an organization arises from three main places: the leadership at the top, the team of people surrounding the leadership, and the culture of the organization. The knowledge and competency of the leadership at the top of an organization or business is critical, as is the knowledge and competency of the team that surrounds the leader. Mr. Sullivan posed the question: Does the leader surround him or herself with people who provide complementary strengths and balance out weaknesses, or do they just pick yes-men? Leaders, he said, must be willing to both bring in outside critics to appraise their organization and open channels through which subordinates can voice feedback and suggestions. Those in positions of leadership should also seek to "cross-fertilize" experience and continually challenge subordinates with new roles and tasks. Growth and success require a certain amount of risk-taking and a willingness to fail and stand right back up and try again.

In the Q&A session, the panelists discussed the balance of planning and improvising, and the ability to effectively do both, that is required for leadership; the evolution of leadership education and trends for the future; and the importance of mentoring and training one's relief so that the cycle of success can continue once one is gone.



*Mr. Dave Brandt*



*CDR Keith Hoskins, USN*



*RADM Robert H. Shumaker, USN*



*Mr. Tim Sullivan*





**Colonel Arthur J. Athens, USMC (Ret.)**

**Director, Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership, U.S. Naval Academy**

*Colonel Arthur J. Athens, United States Marine Corps Reserve (Ret.), is the Director of the U.S. Naval Academy's Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership. During his time as an active duty Marine Corps Officer, he held significant staff or command positions with multiple Marine Aircraft Wings. Following his move from active duty in 1994, Colonel Athens served as Executive Director of Officer Christian Fellowship, and subsequently he served as the Commandant of Midshipmen of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.*



Colonel Art Athens, USMC (Ret.), drew the Leadership Conference to a close with a dynamic speech concerning the different styles of leadership, urging all the attendees to take on what they had learned and discussed at the conference and apply it to their lives. Col Athens challenged everyone to choose one or two ideas from the conference to focus and act upon immediately. He also advocated telling someone what each had chosen to change, stressing that change was more likely if there someone to hold each person accountable.

Col Athens went on to discuss the “sweet spot” of leadership. He compared leadership to a tennis racket—everyone has a sweet spot that is best for leading, and although leaders must be proficient in using the other parts of the racket if the situation requires, they should try to use their individual sweet spot whenever possible. Col Athens’ remarks played off of a common theme throughout the rest of the Leadership Conference, the fact that many people try to focus only upon improving their weaknesses when it is often more beneficial to develop strengths. Col Athens asserted that “the energy to go from incompetent to mediocre is excessive, but the energy to go from good to great is reasonable.”

Col Athens then listed and described the four different sweet spots of leadership: artisan, guardian, rational and idealist. An artisan operates in the present as a superb tactical thinker, confidently acting on impulse and excelling in emergency situations but lacking strategic vision. A guardian has a more logistical mindset, focusing on structure to achieve stability and relying on the chain of command to achieve goals. Rational leaders are great strategists, often ignoring technical details in order to focus on the greater vision. They do not rely on the chain of command; they focus upon competence and understanding and how to best accomplish things in the long term. Idealists, who are much rarer in military and political leadership, lead from human potential and inspiration, striving for the growth and development of all. They are skilled diplomats, relying on empathy to achieve compromise and work towards a goal.

After outlining the different sweet spots, Col Athens explained the steps for leading from the sweet spot. The starting point was for leaders to determine their sweet spot, through personal reflection upon the situations in which they excel most and asking others for feedback on their leadership style. The second step was to lead from the sweet spot, utilizing strengths to bring together an organization and work towards the goal. The final step to lead from the sweet spot was to surround oneself with different people to fill in one's gaps. By recognizing that everyone is different and has different strengths to offer, a leader can create an organization of members with complementary strengths to better achieve an ultimate vision.

Col Athens concluded by reminding everyone that humility is essential to leadership, and by focusing upon personal strengths and working together with unlike people, a leader’s full potential can be unlocked and the organization benefits.

## Questions for Reflection

- What key traits should leaders possess, and how can you develop them in yourself and others? Why are social skills and integrity so important to leadership? What can you do to develop your social IQ and gain a deeper understanding of human nature?
- Do you naturally lead from your strengths or from your weaknesses? How might putting more effort into developing your strengths improve your leadership ability and performance? In what type of leadership roles can your strengths be best exploited to the benefit of your organization? Why is it important for leaders to self-reflect and understand their strengths and weaknesses?
- Why are communication and encouragement of open discussion important? How receptive are you to the ideas of those around you? Do you empower your subordinates and show them that their work and ideas matter?
- What is the impact of a strong and clear vision? How can you as a leader affect the culture of your organization for the better and increase ownership and productivity at all levels? What does “leading from the front” mean to you?



# Sponsors of the Leadership Conference 2011

## 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 2011 *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

*The class of 1938 has traditionally addressed the conference theme from a “back-then” viewpoint.*

### *Leader Development: The Cycle of Success*

I have devoted my remarks in this short piece more than once to stating that, in my years at the Academy, leadership was learned by experience rather than through formal course structure. This deserves re-statement, but I emphasize that Leadership Development was neither overlooked or disregarded. Its value was unappreciated.

Strippers rose to positions of leadership by demonstrating a grasp of broader responsibilities. Our interplay with senior enlisted personnel had to await our arrival in the Fleet. Then, when it really mattered, we were thrust into leading perhaps 100 men, demanding an acute appreciation of the consequences of misjudgment.

Without the benefit of formal training, as all of you whether headed to a military or civilian career will enjoy, I note that I reached command in six years, albeit under wartime conditions. What difference would attendance at a Leaders’ Conference in 1938 have made?



**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

The U.S. Navy in 1803 was only 28 years old and was still learning how to be an effective fighting force. The officer who led this effort to establish many of the Navy’s procedures, rules and regulations was Commodore Edward Preble who commanded the 3rd Squadron with the USS Constitution as his flagship during the First Barbary War against the pirates in the Mediterranean.

The young officers who benefited from Commodore Preble’s firm leadership and training became successful fighting sail captains and influential leaders of our young Navy for the next half century. They included over 15 famous officers like Isaac Hull, Stephen Decatur, William Bainbridge, David Porter, and Thomas Macdonough, all of whom proudly claimed the unofficial title of “Preble’s Boys.” This is our Navy’s earliest example of the importance of the “Cycle of Success” resulting from effective leader development.



# *Sponsors of the Leadership Conference 2011*

## **HART FOUNDATION**

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

**M**illedge A. Hart, III a native Texan, is a 1956 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. Following service in the 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.

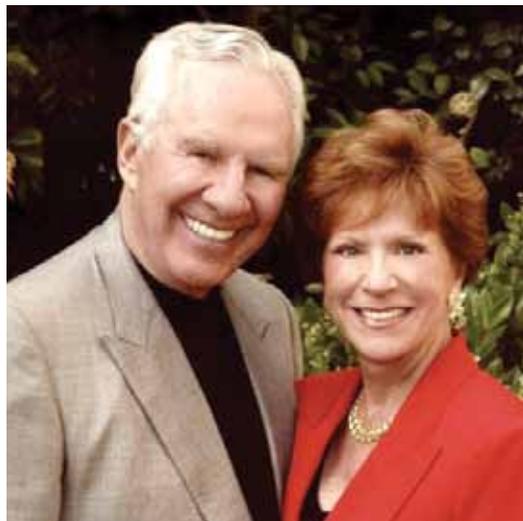
Later in 1978 Mr. Hart founded, and remains Chairman of the Board of Rmax, Inc., which manufactures rigid isocyanurate insulation. Rmax currently has plants in Dallas, Texas; Greenville, South Carolina; and Reno, Nevada. Its products include residential sheathing and residential and commercial roof insulation, 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; retired from Board in 2008 after 30 years of service), served on the following Committees: Executive Committee and Chairman of the Information Technology Advisory Council
- Docucorp International, Chairman of the Board and served on the following Committees: Compensation, Governance and Nominating Committee Chair, and Audit Ex-Officio
- Southern Methodist University former Board of Trustee, Campaign Leadership Council, and various Committees of the Board: Executive, Academic Policy Trustee and Investment Committee Chairman
- Southern Methodist University Willis M. Tate Distinguished Lecture Series: Nominating Committee (former Chairman)
- Southern Methodist University Hart Global Leaders Forum (endowed and funded) and sponsorship of the Hart Presidential Scholars
- Southern Methodist University Lyle School of Engineering Executive Board Member and Campaign Steering Committee
- Episcopal School of Dallas, Board of Trustees and Chairman of the Endowment Committee (Former Chairman of the Board and Founding Director)
- Duke University, Trustee Emeritus, Sanford Institute Board of Visitors. Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy and Hart Leadership Program benefactor (endowed this undergraduate program in 1986)
- Baylor Health Care System Foundation Board
- 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 2011*

## **HART FOUNDATION**

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

**L**inda Wertheimer Hart is Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Hart Group, Inc., a diversified group of companies involved in insulation manufacturing and investments. She is also Chairman of Imation Corp. (NYSE: IMN), a global digital storage products, audio and video electronics and accessories company. In addition to being a director of each of the Hart Group companies and Chairman of Imation, Ms. Hart is currently, or has been, a member of a variety of outside Boards, including the following:

- Imation Corp. (*Non-Executive Chairman of the Board; Former Lead Director; member and Former 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 (*merged*) - (*Chairman, Compensation Committee; member, Audit Committee*)  
(*WordPerfect Corporation sold to Novell, Inc.*)
- SICPA Industries of America, Inc.
- Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington D.C. (*CSIS*) *Board of Trustees (Member, Executive Committee; Chairman, Real Estate Committee)*
- World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth Board of Advisors
- New York Stock Exchange Legal Advisory Committee (*Former Chairman; Ex-Officio member*)
- Women's Leadership Board, Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government
- Southwestern Medical Foundation Board of Trustees
- 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 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*)
- Dallas Opera Board (*Member, Finance Committee*)
- Duke University Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy
- Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce Board
- AFI Dallas International Film Festival 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
- Vail Valley Music Festival Executive Board

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.

# **LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2011**

## **Conference Report**



*Sponsored by  
Mitch and Linda Hart  
and  
USNA Class of '38*

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**Lieutenant Bryan Kendris, USN, Conference Coordinator**

**Lieutenant Bridget Seymour, USN, Conference Assistant Coordinator**

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