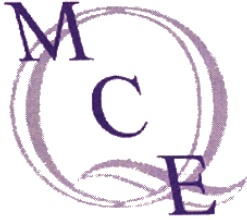


# Mayberry Newsletter

The W. E. Mayberry Center for Quality and Performance Excellence

Tennessee Technological University • College of Business • Fall 2012



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## Mayberry Tributes to President Bell

The Mayberry team dedicates this issue of the Mayberry Newsletter to Dr. Robert Bell, founder of the Mayberry Chair of Excellence, for his leadership, vision, continuing guidance, and warm friendship during the Chair's 16-year existence. Dr. Bell launched the Chair while serving as Dean, TTU College of Business, prior to his outstanding 12-year tenure as TTU's President, just concluded in July 2012. Through this tribute, Chair participants, including students, faculty, Mayberry Board, as well as national and Tennessee leaders, wish to express their thanks to Dr. Bell and acknowledge his many direct and behind-the-scenes contributions.

Although the Mayberry Chair was formally launched in 1996, Dr. Bell, over prior years, was an early proponent of quality management in business education. He was an active participant in the Baldrige National Quality Program (BNQP) and a major leader in founding and building an effective Tennessee counterpart (TNCPE) to the National Program.

### Tribute by Dr. Reimann

I met Bob through his volunteer service to BNQP, a Program I served as first Director (1987-1995). As I neared my retirement from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), Bob approached me about my possible interest in becoming a TTU adjunct. I found the idea interesting, and, after retirement, made an interview visit to TTU

to explore the idea further. The visit was very appealing---from both personal and professional standpoints. Drs. Bell and Pickett made me feel welcome and energized by the opportunity. Moreover, their personal interest and flexibility in outlining the Chair's purposes made me believe that together we could design and build something unique for COB, TTU, and Tennessee.

Now, after 33, two- or three-week stints at COB/TTU, I consider myself truly fortunate to have had the opportunity to embark on this new phase of my life working with and getting to know many wonderful new colleagues and friends. The very high expectations I had that led me



to accept Bob's TTU welcoming offer have been exceeded again and again in so many ways.

The Mayberry Chair agenda Dr. Bell's concept enabled has taken more interesting turns than either he or I could have imagined, thanks to the involvement and advice of many other people, especially Dr. Natarajan, Mayberry Professor, who has given much time and energy to Mayberry Chair activities and evolution.

Chair activities include:

*Student participation*

Such participation includes Graduate Assistant activities, services to and involvement in TNCPE, attending Baldrige Award National Conferences in Washington, D.C., industry visits, interactions with the Mayberry Board and its agenda, and course credits given for TNCPE service;

*Mayberry Advisory Board*

The Board has brought more than a dozen business leaders from across the U.S. to work with students in classes, forums, and dinners. These services have enriched student curriculum, provided perspective on business issues, and advice on career choices and progression;

*Newsletter*

The Newsletter has given the Chair Program the opportunity to link to associates in and beyond TTU, to explore and develop numerous topics in performance management and assessment, and to keep associates informed of our activities;

*Lecture Series*

The Lecture Series has brought business leaders to COB/TTU to present topics in modern business, for faculty as well as students;

*Cookeville activities*

This has involved presentations and

interactions involving Cookeville schools, business, and healthcare;

*TTU strategic planning*

The Chair team has been involved in TTU strategy development;

*ISEE Support*

The Chair team has been involved in strategic planning and in creating TECH-REDI, a new regional economic development unit of TTU;

*Paper Presentations*

This includes papers for TNCPE, SAM, and DSI; and

*Visits to other schools*

This has included Northeast State, ETSU, Belmont, Lipscomb, Cleveland State, and Hiwassee.

The personal side of my COB/TTU experience has been equally positive. My wife (Claire) and I have made many new friends, among the most revered over our entire lives. These have occurred mainly via the many personal interactions initiated by Gloria and Bob Bell and the Picketts---Gary and Cita. Many pleasant hours have been spent with other new friends. These include the Volpes, Barkers, Natarajans, Bangers, Armstrongs, Elkins, Medleys, and Lelia Gibson. Not only did Claire have many wonderful, guided trips to Tennessee destinations, through Cita Pickett, Claire was able to create and deliver a variety of enrichment programs for schools in Cookeville and beyond. For me, the continued association with "Dr. Nat" has been professionally enriching and personally enjoyable. The Mayberry Chair Program has also enjoyed the continuing support of Deans Jordan-Wagner and Niebuhr.

As TTU President, despite numerous responsibilities, pressures, and competing time demands, Bob always made time for Mayberry Chair people and activities and for me. For these many warm and enriching experiences, I am deeply grateful.



Dr. Reimann presenting a certificate from Dr. Hertz

### **Tribute by Dr. Natarajan**

I have known and interacted with Bob Bell for the past 24 years, foremost as his faculty colleague in the College of Business (COB) and later as member of the Mayberry Chair of Excellence. During those years, I have witnessed a remarkable progression of his leadership roles from the Associate Dean and Director of the MBA program to the Dean of COB to the President of TTU.

Building relationships and partnerships and leveraging them for the good of the organization has been one of his strengths. From its inception, he partnered with the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (then known as the Tennessee Quality Award) playing a crucial role in its early days. He encouraged me and other faculty colleagues to get involved and serve as examiners for the State award. The partnership with TNCPE continues to this day.

His involvement in the Baldrige program as an examiner for the Baldrige award led to his association with Dr. Riemann, the first Director of the program and the setting up of the Mayberry chair of Excellence in the college. He was one of the very few Deans who took the time to serve as Baldrige examiner multiple times. His vision for the Mayberry Chair was a unique one. Generally, Chairs in B-Schools have research as their focus but the Mayberry Chair was different, from the beginning it was conceived as a service Chair. Under the leadership of Chairholder Dr. Reimann, its mission was (and still is) to promote excellence concepts and practices. This created the opportunity for the involvement of students and myself in Chair's activities. Professionally, it has been a very rewarding and productive last 15 years for me. I will always cherish my association with Dr. Reimann and other wonderful

folks with whom I have interacted with in connection with the Chair. Needless to say without Bob Bell's vision it would not have happened.

Bob never believed in artificial boundaries between disciplines. Even before the Mayberry days, he and I have collaborated in many projects. He was always willing to visit my MBA Operations Class and participate in case discussions, providing a different perspective on the issues. He has team taught many courses. In the class room he would engage students and use simple examples and anecdotes to communicate difficult concepts. I always enjoyed working with him.

Bob has retained his interest in teaching and nurturing students – even as the President, he taught classes in Johnson Hall and found the time to write papers with students and make conference presentations with them.

Bob's leadership style was low key, down-to-earth, effective and very suited for the academic setting. It is said that leading a college faculty - a fiercely independent minded group - is more challenging than herding cats! As a leader, he never sought compliance but capitalized on the particular strengths and capabilities of faculty for institution building. He has left an enduring legacy for the COB and TTU.

### **Tribute by Jack Swaim (Chair of the Advisory Board)**

I first met Dr. Bell during a Baldrige training session in the mid-1990's. It was my privilege to have him as part of the class where we deepened our knowledge of the Baldrige Criteria through deep review of a case study. I was struck by his quick grasp of the Baldrige values and how to apply them in real-world situations in order to improve organizational performance. More significantly, I was struck by his ability to listen

to other points of view and then to help classmates learn through self-discovery. Toward the end of the session, he approached me to discuss the idea of the potential role of an advisory board to support the Mayberry Chair and the COB. The Mayberry Board was an exciting proposition for a new way to add value to the COB, TTU, and other organizations throughout Tennessee and beyond. The various activities of the board are well documented by now and include many memorable interactions with students, faculty, small businesses leaders, and others. But in particular, two impressions stand out. First, the board members were surprised and delighted by the learning that we gained through our various activities; we expected to give, but we had not expected to receive so much. Second and more importantly, I and the other board members were overwhelmed by Dr. Bell's personal dedication and commitment. Despite his demands as dean and then President, he always made time for presence with us to catch up on personal lives and to support the Mayberry goals. His time was not just about being together, but it went beyond that as he put potential distractions aside such that we really felt his presence with both head and heart. He is truly a role model leader and friend who has enriched our lives beyond measure.

### **Tribute by Brian Bowman and Cass Larson (The First Mayberry Graduate Assistants)**

Leadership is one of those nebulous concepts that inevitably conjure up vivid images based on our individual experiences. It's a very elusive and sought after competency that makes the right things happen in all areas of life. Individual definitions of leadership may vary, but most people have an ability to recognize good and bad leadership when they see it. Bad leaders don't inspire, good leaders do. Bad leaders don't communicate, good leaders do. Bad leaders make you angry and



want to run screaming from the room...you get the point.

Then, there are those rare few... the great leaders. Leaders with a humble presence that inspires, empowers, enlightens, and motivates-sometimes without saying a word. Leaders that make you feel like you not only can change the world, you will! Our story of one of those few great leaders begins at TTU at the start of the 1996 fall semester... the first two Graduate Assistants for W. E. Mayberry Chair of

Excellence. All we knew was that we would be working with Bob Bell, or Dean Bell as we called him then, and Dr. Curt Reimann, the first Director of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award--a little intimidating at the time.

Little did we realize that we were about to have an amazing opportunity to learn from two great leaders; an opportunity that would shape our careers and our lives. Our initial introduction to Bob came at a lunch at a local 'Southern food' place he frequented, and in one of

the teambuilding pre-semester events for MBA students. In the following weeks, we began to meet periodically with Bob to plan for Dr. Reimann's first official visit, set up the Mayberry office, and begin thinking about an Advisory Board. We read volumes about quality and performance excellence, began thinking about our focus and purpose, and spent hours discussing and debating the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence. In short, we had no idea what we were doing as Graduate Assistants, but we tried hard at everything.

We didn't fully realize it at the time, but Bob was teaching us to be leaders. He was inspiring us to learn, challenge our own thinking, make mistakes, and grow. We usually met in a conference room next to his office...an informal affair and Bob often had his shoes off. In those discussions, Bob would always listen patiently, give us things to think about, and provide directional guidance but never explicit instruction. Those discussions were like meetings with a friend over lunch. And, we learned to lead.

In the classroom, Bob had a relaxed and confident presence and loved to teach often by simply asking questions and gently prompting students to engage in a discussion. He would make sure the key points came out, but it is clear that the journey is as important as the result when it comes to understanding a topic. It was a wonderful way to learn because it was a conversation, not a lecture.

By the end of our first year we had a regular schedule of programs and events with Dr. Reimann, we co-authored the criteria for the new Global Competitiveness category of the Tennessee Quality Award (now TNCPE) program, and became Examiners for that program. Our experiences translated into short-term success in the classroom and long-term



President Bell receiving the Ned McWherter Leadership Award

success as business leaders in our respective careers. We also came to learn (mostly from others) that it was Bob who worked tirelessly to establish the Mayberry Chair and recruit Dr. Reimann to be the Chairholder.

We recently attended a retirement dinner for Bob where we heard countless stories of people whose lives have been similarly impacted. A lot has changed in the 16 years since we became the first Mayberry G.A.s, but great leadership has not. Great leaders like Bob Bell set the example by their actions. They express their commitment through establishing a culture that enables transformative success and, most importantly, they never lose sight of the single most critical element of great leadership...it's all about the people you lead, not you. Humble, caring, and selfless are words that don't often appear prominently in articles that talk about characteristics of a great leader, but they do describe Bob well and are at the root of great leadership.

President Bell (Bob), thank you for being such an inspirational leader. Sincerely, Cass and Brian.

*Cass is Director of Structuring & Portfolio Management, supporting commodity purchases at the Tennessee Valley Authority; Brian is now a Partner with C3 Consulting, LLC, providing leadership in the organization and working to help clients in Middle Tennessee through growth and change.*

#### **Tribute from Dr. Harry Hertz (Former Director of the BNQP)**

Dear Bob, On behalf of the Baldrige National Quality Program (BNQP), I want to thank you for your many contributions to BNQP over its nearly 25 years, and to its larger purpose---improving the performance of organizations across the United States. Your

successful leadership as President of TTU and as Dean of its College of Business, as well as your services to BNQP, to the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence, and to Tennessee communities, reflect your vision and a sustained dedication to our national purpose. Your spirit of service and continuing support have inspired and enabled many colleagues to enrich our work and their lives. In my view, yours has been an exemplary career of service--one which you, your family, and countless colleagues should enjoy with justified pride, as you enter the next stage of opportunities to serve. I wish you and Gloria a happy and healthy retirement.

#### **Tribute by Katie Rawls(President and CEO of the TNCPE)**

When I joined TNCPE in 2004, Bob Bell had already been one of our most passionate supporters for more than a decade – and his support has never wavered. You might say he was one of our founding fathers, serving on a study group convened in the early '90's by Johnny Hayes (Tennessee's Commissioner of Economic Development) to develop the concept for a state quality award program modeled after the national Baldrige Program. When the Tennessee Quality Award was launched in 1993, Bob was named to the board of directors. Since that time, he has promoted performance excellence across Tennessee through his service as a volunteer examiner, a team leader, a board member and a judge. He has encouraged all types of organizations (and several TTU departments) to submit applications to the TNCPE award program. And in 1996 he put Tennessee Tech on the performance excellence "map" by recruiting Curt Reimann, the founding director of the Baldrige National Quality Program to accept the Mayberry Chair of Excellence. Bob even carried the message of continuous improvement and performance excellence abroad, helping to create a quality program on the island of Mauritius!

During his most recent tenure on the TNCPE board (2006-2011), Bob chaired our Governance committee and made a lasting contribution to our long-term sustainability by designing a Leadership System (based on Baldrige principles) to guide the board. The system is simple yet elegant, calling on board members to make a commitment each year as to the role they will play on the TNCPE board – and then evaluate their own performance at the end of the year. We've been proud to share this "best practice" with other state Baldrige-based programs and other nonprofit organizations.

It was no surprise that in 2006 the board's executive committee unanimously selected Bob to be the inaugural recipient of the Ned McWherter Leadership Award. This award was created to recognize one individual each year who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in the pursuit of performance excellence beyond the confines of his own organization. Gov. McWherter got a huge kick out of presenting his namesake award to Bob – one of my favorite mementos is a photo that sits on my bookshelf of Bob receiving the award from the governor and me at the TNCPE Awards banquet.

Over the years I have been proud to consider Bob a trusted advisor and friend. I appreciate the high standards he sets for academic excellence, and his consistent focus on meeting the needs of students and the TTU community. He has been an outstanding leader for Tennessee Tech and the Board of Regents. Although he has retired, I will continue to look to Bob for a steady hand, a calm voice, and an unerring sense of what's the "right" thing to do in a tough situation. And for the record – I promise to wait at least six months before re-engaging him in TNCPE!

## **Business Education Integration: Context Criteria, Performance and Strategy**

by Dr. Curt Reimann

In our previous article on business education integration [Mayberry Newsletter, 2011], we examined a common criticism of business education---that discipline knowledge is poorly integrated. We were prompted by a then-recent HBR article [“No, Management is Not a Profession”] which concluded that “some business skills can’t be taught in a classroom. They have to be learned through experience.” This article goes on to say that “business education is more about acquiring the skills of integration than about mastering a set body of knowledge”, and “the key is to recognize that integration is learned rather than taught: it takes place in the minds of MBA students, who link the various elements of the program.” The HBR article also cites Henry Mintzberg’s view that MBA programs straitjacket managers by encouraging development of narrow functional expertise rather than the integrative skills that define effective management. In an earlier HBR article “How Business Schools Lost Their Way”, Bennis and O’Toole express the view that “the integration of discipline-based knowledge with the requirements of business practice is left to the students.” Overall, these authors express a common theme: students’ understanding of how disciplines link and how disciplines relate to or-

ganizational practices are critical parts of integrative knowledge.

As part of our own work, we sought to understand integration better in terms of its meaning, characteristics, and possible avenues for improvement. Two key points we made were:

- In practice, disciplines can be linked and used in many ways, so that unless there is larger context for such linkages, the study of linkages would not alone provide an effective avenue for understanding or improving integration; and
- Discipline linkages, per se, are seldom of direct interest in the organizations and in the positions most business school graduates ultimately occupy. Such linkages are defined by and driven by specific work requirements of the graduates’ organizations.

From this line of reasoning, we posed an alternative view---that inadequate understanding of discipline linkages is a symptom of the integration problem, not its cause. Our view that took shape was rooted in our belief that building students’ capacity for “sense-making” of business disciplines and of varieties of organizations’ uses of such disciplines would be enhanced via better integrating contexts, learned and used in school. In other words, the larger issue may be that students have inadequate contexts or frameworks for acquiring and “making sense” of knowledge, facts, and opinions. Such sense-making, or ongoing construction

of understanding, is what we perceive to be the essence of experiential learning. Building on these overall perspectives, especially the importance of contexts, the remainder of our previous article was directed toward outlining and briefly describing context criteria, which were then used to assess a context, organizational performance, relative to these criteria. In this article we further pursue integration, context criteria, and contexts. We do this via use of perhaps the most common of integrating vehicles in business education---business strategy. Following this, we summarize our conclusions regarding context criteria, performance and strategy contexts, and curriculum considerations.

### **Context Criteria**

Our previous article on integration and contexts led to draft criteria we believe good contexts should meet. These are:

- Authentic;
- Experiential;
- Systems Oriented;
- Broadly Applicable;
- Open and Dynamic;
- Tied to Well-Defined Bodies of Knowledge; and
- Easily Adapted to Business Education Tools.

First, we ascribed basic meaning to each of these seven areas. Then, using organizational per-



formance (our primary area of interest) as a trial context, we examined how well this context meets each of these criteria. Although we were encouraged by this initial attempt, we were also sensitized by nuanced meanings of “integration”. We had cautioned, for example, that “academic practitioners and those who employ business graduates might not necessarily agree, except in very broad and general terms, on what integration means in practice”. (In discussions with colleagues over the past year this concern was reinforced.)

### Meaning of Integration

To build upon our earlier context work, we begin by making more explicit our meaning of integration. We propose the following: “Effective use of discipline-based knowledge to support organizational purposes, strategies, requirements, and practices.”

In proposing this meaning, we seek to convey its four important characteristics:

- Applications-orientation—covering all organizations, not just businesses;
- Spans the range from broad organizational purposes to practices, which is intended to fit most business graduates’ roles and levels in organizations over their careers;
- “Effective” implies appropriate, competent, and productive; and
- Business education connection is anchored via “discipline” knowledge.

### Strategy as a Context for Integration

Strategy is a common business education, “capstone” offering. In addition to providing students with very important new knowledge, strategy is often highlighted for its major role in integrating students’ knowledge gained from their prior, overall business educational experiences. Here’s how we view strategy relative to the above context criteria:

#### *Authentic:*

Strategy and related direction-setting are central and enduring requirements for all organizations. However, planning purposes, types, frequencies, and processes tend to vary greatly from organization to organization, depending upon many organization-specific factors.

#### *Experiential:*

In practice, strategy and strategic planning are carried out mainly by senior leaders and Boards, but the implications of strategy tend to reach most positions inside organizations. As customers and citizens, however, translating our limited-contact experiences with the many organizations we encounter into inferences about their strategies is generally not simple.

#### *Systems Oriented:*

Well-developed strategic plans, especially those involving new directions, need to take into account

and “orchestrate” all parts of the organization. Strategic understanding at lower levels in organizations tends to focus on unit and sub-unit requirements and changes.

#### *Broadly Applicable:*

Organizations in all sectors carry out strategic planning. As indicated above, there are great variations in all aspects of strategy, strategy development, and strategy deployment.

#### *Open and Dynamic:*

Strategy development and planning are on the leading edge of change. The tools and techniques of strategic planning, including environmental scans and “SWOT” analyses, are intended to ensure that organizations remain open to the full range of factors that affect their futures and how to respond.

#### *Tied to Well-Defined Body of Knowledge:*

Strategy development concepts and methods constitute a well-developed body of knowledge.

#### *Adaptation to Business Education:*

Strategy concepts, methods, and cases make up a rich literature to support business education. In addition, the business media regularly provide

a wide and rich array of current examples to enhance course content and student experiences.

Clearly, and not surprisingly, the strategy context fits the proposed criteria very well. Moreover, as strategy is a commonly-used “capstone” offering, it occurs after students have completed other, narrower, discipline courses. This place in the business education sequence is critical to ensure that meaningful uses of and connections with other business disciplines are achieved via a strategy orientation.

### **Performance as a Context for Integration**

In our previous article we concluded that “Overall, a context based on performance would appear to be an effective choice for building (students’) capacity for long-term integrative learning.” However, under our body of knowledge discussion of performance, we noted that “although performance management is a rapidly emerging body of knowledge, it is gaining in use and taking shape largely outside the academic arena.” Performance management is not yet an academic discipline in mainstream use.

In further discussions with colleagues, a concern expressed has been that “performance” itself is not well defined. Although “performance” is a broad term, as we described it in our article, it is bounded in ways similar to

other academic disciplines. In particular, the components of performance management we gave tie to organizations’ strategic goals and requirements. In addition, many of the body-of-knowledge tools and techniques of performance management, such as metrics, process analysis, and assessment, are widely used in organizations to track and improve performance.

Conclusions and Discussion

### **Strategy and Performance as Contexts: A Comparison**

Performance and Strategy---basic, major, and enduring preoccupations of organizations---match up well against all dimensions of the proposed integration-context criteria. Both are inherently holistic and “cross-cutting” which means that all business disciplines arise, but do so as means, not as ends.

In terms of long-term experiential breadth and depth, performance would appear to be a more visible and intuitive vehicle than strategy. As discussed in our earlier article, organization leaders’ and employees’ performance is tied to organizational performance. Accordingly, performance appraisal systems are now widely used to set compensation. Also, as consumers and citizens, performance is a significant part of what we actually experience or observe about organizations. Inferences about strategy may be difficult to draw unless we know much detail about the scores of organizations we encounter. Factors such as competitive and market forces

and the bases for the strategic choices organizations make would not be evident without research.

### **Curriculum Coverage of Performance**

Because performance is anchored in strategy, and both are holistic, strategy would appear to be the best business education vehicle for teaching performance concepts. However, the great breadth and depth of topics to cover within strategy make it difficult to adequately “drill down to” performance. In addition, covering performance without first ensuring good treatment of strategy deployment, would not be effective. Overall, with strategy as the primary vehicle to address integration, there are very hard tradeoffs between breadth (covering many types of organizations and types of strategies) and depth (showing details of strategies and strategy deployment). Covering performance under strategy requires great depth.

Embedding performance concepts broadly across curriculum is a difficult challenge because performance derives from overall organizational strategy and such strategy is not easily studied within individual disciplines. Hence, discipline-based coverage of performance is likely to be limited to generic performance



indicators, not necessarily ones tied to organizational strategy. However, generic performance indicators, such as response times, accuracy, and customer feedback, could be used to build and maintain awareness of performance across curricula.

### Uses of Context Criteria

Context criteria could be of value in overall curriculum development, design of individual offerings, and preparing for Assurance of Learning requirements.

In particular, criteria help ensure attention to and reinforcement of integration as a major objective in design. More importantly, perhaps, criteria should aid design by focus on targeted applications of business education to organizations and their requirements for success.

Within business education, there is a dynamic tension between discipline competence on one hand, and organizational competence on the other. The two are not the same. Use of context criteria to focus on organizational requirements, especially requirements related to

performance, might help bring about better delineation and balance across these two important concepts of “competence”.

### Dean Bell and his College of Business Team



L-R: Drs. Norm Williams, Gary Pickett, Bob Bell, Virginia Moore, and Charles Caldwell

## On Wings of Eagles

by Dr. Bob Bell

I was asked to present a “last lecture” at TTU last spring. I’d like to share a few excerpts from that lecture here in this Mayberry Newsletter. I want to thank Dr. Reimann and Dr. Natarajan for inviting me to share these thoughts in the newsletter, and I certainly want to thank Curt and Nat for the outstanding work being done through the Mayberry Chair of Excellence program at Tech. I also want to note that these “comments” stem from an oral presentation to an audience, and were not intended to be “academic” in nature.

I have to begin by paying tribute to Dr. Randy Pausch. I think many of you know of Dr. Pausch, an outstanding scientist and engineer, co-founder of the entertainment technology center at Carnegie Mellon University (and one of the most popular professors on campus) who learned that he had terminal liver cancer at age 47. His “last lecture” made this phrase famous. I want to pay homage to Randy for the wonderful positive attitude he held up to the very end. But the title is also appropriate for an end to the presidency at TTU.

I’d also like to emphasize that this wasn’t my last lecture—I hope students at TTU will see a lot more from me before my last one is delivered; and I am teaching some wonderful students here at Tech this fall.

I chose to title my last lecture “On Wings of Eagles.” This title seems appropriate for a university like Tech—the home of the Golden Eagles! The theme comes from someone who lived a long time ago—a prophet named Isaiah, whose work is respected by most of the major religions of the world. He was speaking to a defeated people (or at least a highly challenged nation)...and we have certainly been “highly challenged” these past twelve years.

Part of the message (found in chapter 40) says—and I’m paraphrasing a bit..... “those who maintain their hope in the Lord will mount up with wings like eagles” Isaiah’s message is about hope; vision; keeping the faith, even in the toughest of times; it’s a great message about living, it’s a message about soaring on wings like eagles, and it’s a message I’ve used to close every commencement ceremony since I’ve been president.

Over the years, TTU has been lifted on the wings of eagles....some very visible, some working quietly behind the scenes, but eagles every one. Some were presidents. Most were faculty, custodians, and secretaries. And many were supporters like those reading this newsletter. Golden Eagle alumni have also lifted Tech... some carried Tech’s flag literally around the world like astronauts Barry Wilmore and Roger Crouch, who were the first recipients of honorary doctoral degrees from their alma mater.

An outstanding univer-

sity (ok, I’m biased!), TTU has been blessed over many years. It carries a reputation for excellence—I dare to say it has a reputation for excellence that is the best (or among the best) in the state. The university was founded by a group of church and community leaders who knew that the town of Cookeville and this region needed higher education. Jere Whitson referred to the type of training he envisioned as preparing for “practical work.” A little later, Dixie College was replaced by Tennessee Polytechnic Institute, again focused on practical work. And this university today is known for producing alumni who “know how to work” and who have “dirt under the fingernails.” I think the founding fathers would be proud.

When one reads the histories of this great university, we are struck by the persistent sense of financial challenge....and a sense of how this university adapted to changing times. Today, we again have been stressed by financial challenge, and we again are in an era of profound change. We’ve endured one of the most difficult economic situations in modern history. And we’re in a period where the nation expects (and needs) significant change in higher education. My presidential era was a period where the focus was on college going, or “access”—getting students into higher education. Tech’s next president will serve in an era focused on “completion”—making sure more get out in a timely fashion. Students, you will be under more pressure to stay with the major you’ve chosen and also under pressure to complete college more quickly than students in preceding classes have. There’s also a great deal of emphasis today in legislative bodies on ‘relevance’—less “fluff” in the curriculum—an

idea that fits well at a university founded on beliefs in “practical work.”

But, even in tough times, Tech has prospered, maintained the vision, enhanced a national reputation for excellence, and moved forward. In the past 12 years, we’ve seen: 12 years of record growth ; a new nursing building and the naming of the Whitson-Hester school of nursing; the Millard Oakley STEM Center and Ray Morris Hall; two new governors schools focused on technology leadership; two new residential complexes, and five learning villages; a new athletic performance center; the acquisition of Prescott Central Middle School ; 14 acres of campus expansion with the acquisition of Foundation Hall ; and the acquisition of Southwest Hall, the former regional health center.

It has been a team effort in a high tension environment, and there are many people to thank.....the faculty and staff, alumni and university supporters, the university leadership team, our legislative and congressional delegations...and many others. Everyone has gone above and beyond the call of duty, even in exceedingly difficult economic times. And we have persevered. It’s good every now and then (especially in difficult times) to “count the blessings,” and be reminded of some points of excellence: in the 2011-2012 academic year, Tech had 11,768 exceptionally talented students; over 70,000 alumni (22,000 of whom graduated in the past 12 years); the university is ranked as among

the south’s best in U.S. News and World Report and Princeton Review; it is named as one of the 50 best college buys in American public universities; payscale.com recognized Tech as an excellent university, with an outstanding engineering school; Tech alumni complete college with the lowest debt of any public university in the south; Tech graduates have the highest salary expectations of any public university in the state of Tennessee. All programs are nationally accredited.

Tech is a unique, complex university—a comprehensive, multipurpose college with a technological mission, a mission driven-commitment to the Upper Cumberland region of Tennessee, and a reputation for excellence. We have faced a lot of challenges together..... And this university will face many more.

Today, we are challenged with the Complete College Act, and pressure to graduate more students than ever before. We know we have to reinvent ourselves—great universities cannot become stagnant or lethargic—we must do vital revisions to an outstanding curriculum, and we must continue to think about new, improved methods of serving our students and the public interests of our region and our state.

This university has a great deal to celebrate, and maintains great strength because it has solid core values. It is nationally known for high quality; it provides access to talented students from all across our state and nation (and literally around the world) yet also is the gateway higher education center for students in rural Middle Tennessee.

During my presidency, I’ve spoken often about what I felt were Tech’s core values: technological leadership for our state and nation;

enrollment (serving talented students); maintaining a caring campus (citizenship/service); maintaining high quality. Tech’s mission statement fits well with the current and future expectations for higher education organizations: we are the state’s technological university, with a history focused on relevance and “practical work”. Today, we might call ourselves the state’s STEM campus. But we are also a comprehensive university with important teaching, research, and service responsibilities, and with program offerings designed to attract, educate, and refine students who will contribute in a wide range of fields.

At the heart of our mission is our student body....past, present, and future. Gloria and I have loved—literally loved--the wonderful interactions we have had with students at tech. Whether it be teaching a class, visiting with them in church (or at Spankies!), travelling with our student athletes, or working with them on a farm in tornado relief efforts in Macon county,

Students are the reason Tennessee Tech was created. Teaching is and always has been our core mission. They are bright and incredibly talented, and they have a lot to look forward to in life. Even though they are living in a different world than the one I grew up in.....some things remain constant, so any last lecture has to impart a small portion of advice (hopefully appropriate for any major here at Tech). When I was in college, the nation faced unprecedented economic threats; we were at war (Vietnam instead



of Afghanistan and Iraq); external threats (cold war and the Soviet Union, rather than religious terrorism) and, in politics, we were a strongly divided nation. Students today have also experienced these kinds of environments, but I contend that those kinds of challenges shouldn't deter them. They have a bright future ahead of them, and our country and our world need them, the next generation of technological leaders and engaged citizens.

Even in this difficult economy, they will venture out on their first job (or their first job after completing their degree). I believe there are some essential skills and attitudes students need to take with them, regardless of your major. So, with apologies, some advice to students:

\*First, you need some strong technical ability related to the position you are in and related to your preferred career; that's a given. \*Second, you need an ability to communicate, and not just with an iPhone or a text message. Real communication will require strong interpersonal skills, an ability to listen and write well, and an ability to speak effectively. \*Third, you need to be team-ready, able to work in and lead teams....teams that may have members from significantly different walks of life than yours. Randy Pausch made an important point during his last lecture, and I quote: "I know you're smart. But everybody (around here) is smart. Smart isn't enough. The kinds of people I want on my research team are those who will help everyone feel happy to be here." \*Fourth, Tennessee Tech students are famous for their work ethic.

You need to hit the work site ready to work hard...harder and longer than others if need be. You're good....you just have to show it. Dr. Pausch emphasized that to his students also: "fundamentals, fundamentals, fundamentals. You've got to get the fundamentals down because otherwise the fancy stuff isn't going to work." \*Fifth, you need to be ready to take advantage of opportunity, when it knocks. Often, it will knock when you least expect it. It may be at an inconvenient time in life. But the train is in the station, and it will pull out soon, whether you are on board or not.

Unfortunately, unseen, unexpected challenges often come along with opportunities. It won't always be easy. Life throws some curve balls at almost everyone, and you may run into a brick wall or two. In fact, I promise that you will hit those walls. Randy Pausch encountered a number of real brick walls during his career, and he shared his thoughts about them at his last lecture: "the brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. They are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. Because brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough. They're there to stop other people."

Now, just a few thoughts on leadership. Randy Pausch was a leader of a number of engineering teams, and I've had the good fortune to be a leader of several teams and organizations too. For just a few minutes, I want to share a few observations about leadership and decision making.

Leadership is an influ-

ence process. There is nothing linear about it. While it is not "random" or "whimsical," it is definitely not a linear model. Leaders get things done with and through others. Often, it seems to me that people confuse supervision with leadership. They describe leadership as a "downward" process, where the leader influences those that report to him. This is, indeed, a part of leadership, but I don't believe it is the most important part. I believe the most important actions a leader takes are those attempting to influence people who do not report to him or her. Leaders must influence upward, influencing the boards and individuals the leader reports to. Leaders must influence outward, communicating with and reaching out to colleagues who are also in the organization, but not reporting to the leader. And, in business and many other organizations, leaders must influence customers and external constituencies. Leadership is truly a "strategic influence" process, and is much more than supervision.

I love whitewater rafting, and Gloria and I and the kids have done the Ocoee, the Nolichucky, the Nantahala, the New, the Snake, and we've been over 7-foot falls on the Chattooga. It seems to me that leadership (at least my experiences) has a lot in common with whitewater rafting; \*it is exciting, with high energy; \*it's a team sport, and we're all in the boat together, with lots of communication; \*your team depends on your effort.

\*everyone will be bounced around a lot, but you've got to know when to paddle,...and when to just hold on. Knowing when to paddle—when to push forward—and when to hold on is an important leadership trait. \*the leader (and the team) also have to keep the boat pointed downstream, toward the goal. And, above all, in whitewater, you have to stay in the boat and hold on to your paddle. My paddle has had T.E.C.H. written on it....core values for technological leadership, enrollment growth, a caring campus, and high quality. The paddle steers the boat, and it provides forward motion, or can be used to slow the boat down if it is moving in the wrong direction. Hold on to your paddle.

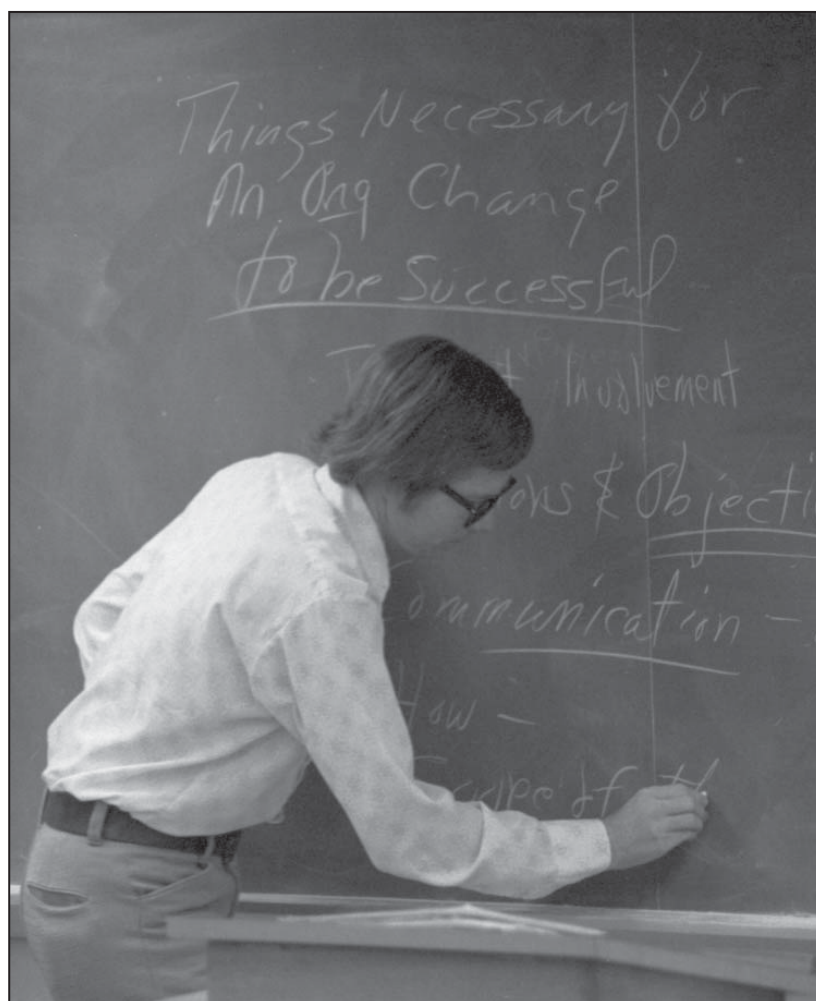
Leaders have to make decisions....in fact; I believe they should absolutely enjoy making decisions. But often their decision environment is whitewater, with lots of moving parts, some bumpy roads ahead, and stuff you can't see under the surface. That's when a team works best. Team input is invaluable, but the leader must also understand that they have the ultimate responsibility...and possible may shoulder blame...for the decision. I've learned to make hard choices, after encouraging a lot of advice and input. I've learned that not all decisions have happy outcomes, even though they are the best decision you can make in the circumstances. I've learned to have patience, to trust advice, even though the alligators are screaming for speed. Having been a business dean, my concept of speed often had a faster-burning fuse than those of some of my colleagues....but overall, I've learned that teams—shared

governance strategies in higher education lingo—often result in vastly superior and widely acceptable decisions.

Now, just a brief message about my plans. Everyone familiar with performance excellence/quality literature recognizes the phrase "it's a journey and not a destination." That's certainly true in my case. My journey continues, and I look forward to many more years of teaching students and serving the university in other roles as president emeritus. I also look forward to continued community service, and currently serve as chairman of the Highlands Regional Economic Development Initiative, on the boards of Cookeville Regional Medical Center, the Cookeville-Putnam

Chamber of Commerce, the Middle Tennessee Council of Boy Scouts of America, and Blood Assurance Corporation. Whether it is health care, economic development, or boy scouts, there is still a lot of "whitewater," and the performance excellence challenges are significant.

Gloria and I are blessed beyond measure to serve as president and first lady. We have immensely enjoyed these past twelve years...and a total of 36 years at tech, and we will have treasured memories of the journey forever.



## Activities and Accomplishments

- Dr. Curt Reimann serves as Chair of the Quality Management Subcommittee of the Veterans Board on Dose Reconstruction (VBDR). VBDR, created by Congress, serves the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the Department of Veterans Affairs. VBDR addresses veterans' exposure to radiation in WWII and in atomic testing following WWII.

- Dr. Curt Reimann served on the Jury Panel for Dubai's 6th Cycle of Mohammed Bin Rashid Maktoum (MRM) Business Award, on April 23, 2012.

- Dr. Reimann was a speaker in the 6th Cycle MRM Business Award Closing Conference, on April 24, 2012. His presentation was titled: Business Excellence: How It All Began: Learning From Role Models and Framing Future Challenges"

- Dr. Reimann was the Key-note Speaker in a session: "Special Talks for Chief Executives", at the Thailand Productivity Institute, in Bangkok, on April 27, 2012. His presentation was titled: Building on Business and Organizational Excel-

lence: Progress, Needs, Opportunities, and Challenges"

- Dr. Reimann serves on the advisory board of the TTU School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Extended Education (ISEE).

- Dr. Nat Natarajan serves as the Associate Dean of the College of Business and chairs the Assurance of Learning Committee in the College. In 2011-12, he chaired two TTU committees on Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards for Institutional Effectiveness and Financial Audits for the SACS Five year review.

- Dr. Nat Natarajan published the paper, "Factors influencing the outsourcing decisions: a study of the banking sector in India" (with Professor Ravi Jain) in Strategic Outsourcing: An International Journal.

- Dr. Nat Natarajan presented the paper, "Modeling Strategic Decisions: Case of Airlines in India," at the 42nd National Annual Meeting of the Decision Sciences Institute (DSI), Boston, MA,

November 19-22, 2011. The paper was published in the conference Proceedings.

- Dr. Nat Natarajan presented the paper, "Innovations in Developing Economies: Challenges and Opportunities for Developed Economies," at the 2nd Annual European Decision Sciences Institute (EDSI) in Wiesbaden, Germany June 24-25, 2011. The paper was published in the conference Proceedings.

- Dr. Nat Natarajan serves on the editorial board of the Journal of Quality Management.

- Josh Simer, the Mayberry Graduate Assistant 2010-11, served on the 2011 Board of Examiners of the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE). In April 2011, he attended the Quest for Excellence conference in Washington D.C.

Mayberry Advisory Board

- The Mayberry Advisory Board met on Tuesday, November 1, 2011. The board members also participated in a panel discussion organized by the MBA students. Earlier they interacted with COB students during the reception and dinner on October 31.



College of Business and TTU officials with Mayberry Advisory Board Members



## College of Business Maintains Prestigious AACSB Accreditation

The College of Business at Tennessee Tech University has maintained accreditation for both its business and accounting programs by AACSB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. Founded in 1916, AACSB International is the longest serving global accrediting body for business schools that offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in business and accounting.

Only 643 schools of business, or less than 5 percent worldwide, have earned this distinguished hallmark of excellence in management education. To maintain accreditation a business program must undergo a rigorous external review every five years, at which the program must demonstrate its continued commitment to the 21 quality standards relating to faculty qualification, strategic management of resources, interactions of faculty and students, as well as a commitment to continuous improvement and achievement of learning goals in degree programs.



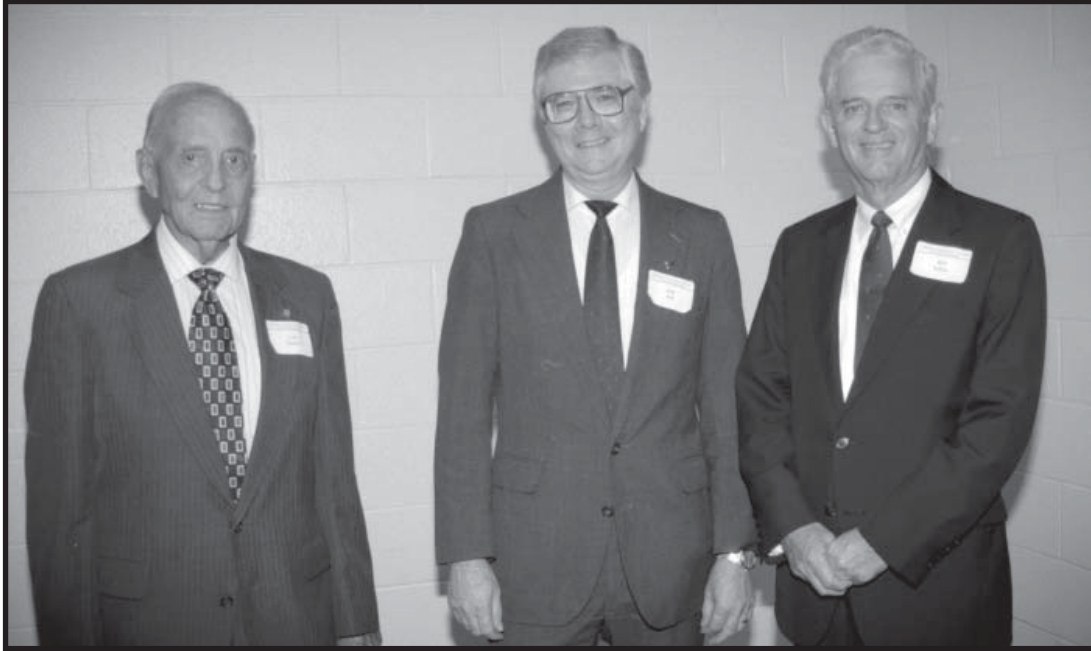
“It takes a great deal of self-evaluation and determination to earn and maintain AACSB Accreditation,” said Jerry Trapnell, vice president and chief accreditation officer of AACSB International. “Schools not only must meet specific standards of excellence, but their deans, faculty, and staff must make a commitment to ongoing improvement to ensure continued delivery of high-quality education to students.”

### Welcome President Oldham

The Mayberry Chair of Excellence welcomes the new President of TTU. Philip B. Oldham joined the university July 1, 2012, as its ninth president. Oldham previously served as provost and senior vice chancellor of academic affairs at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, a position he had held since 2007.



## College of Business Former Deans



L-R: Louis Johnson, Bob Bell, and Bill Arthur

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Newsletter prepared by Dr. Nat Natarajan and Dr. Curt Reimann. It is also available on the Mayberry website: [www.tntech.edu/mayberry](http://www.tntech.edu/mayberry) Your comments are welcome.

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