

Everyday Leadership

From the Marietta Times, November 2009

I was on the road a lot last week. Thursday was Pittsburgh, Friday found me in Columbus, and Saturday I drove to Cleveland State University and back. The Cleveland trip was to honor the 2009 graduating class of Leadership Ohio. In conjunction with the graduation, Marietta's own, Alice Chapman, received the 2009 Leadership Ohio Community Hero Award. She and her husband were able to drive up for the event.

In June, Alice took time out of her Saturday to tour the Leadership Ohio class around the Ely Chapman Center. Her stories about the children she helped were so moving one class member had tears racing down her cheeks. When the class voted on the most impressive person they had met during the eight site visits that spanned Ohio, Alice was first on the list.

I wrapped up the graduation by congratulating the class members and stressing the importance of staying involved in Leadership Ohio as board members or recruiters of future members. Finally, I related a story that happened on my way to Cleveland.

I was just north of Cambridge when I noticed a large bird take flight from a 75 feet high road-cut cliff. As I always do, I tried to identify it while keeping my position on the road. During my other trips that week, I had spotted a couple of ospreys and numerous red-tailed hawks.

This bird was much larger and less graceful in the air. Then, another bird of equal size ran off the top of the cliff and glided across the interstate. Two more followed and I knew the species, wild turkey. I watched the first two land like a 747, tail down and head up. The last two landed behind me out of my sight.

That lead turkey was spooked by something on the ridge or spied a patch of delicious berries or seeds on the far side of the road. In a split second, she made a decision. With legs pumping and wings buffeting the ground, she made a leap of faith. She fixed her vision on the desired landing spot and with faith in the leader, the other three turkeys followed.

This Leadership Ohio class was a lot like that first turkey. They not only talked about leadership, they demonstrated it by examining each site visit and making suggestions to customize the next visit and make it better. They saw a financial need for Leadership Ohio and organized a successful golf outing. They set their vision, took flight and landed right where they planned. They not only studied leadership, they put the principles into action. The whole Leadership Ohio board was impressed with this class. I can't wait to see what the class of 2010 will be able to achieve.

R. Glenn Ray, Ph.D., is the president of RayCom Learning, which helps leaders who want to create an environment where people communicate clearly and choose to commit to organizational goals. To learn more about RayCom Learning or Ray's new book *Tons of Stone above my head: Coal Mining Stories with Leadership Lessons*, visit his Web site www.raycomlearning.com. Ray can be reached at 1-888-574-5370 or at rayray@RayComLearning.com. Everyday Leadership appears each Wednesday on the Business page.