

**Keynote Speech given by Dr. James P. Gallagher, Ph.D., President of Philadelphia
University at the Inauguration of Dr. Manning
*October 28, 2000***

Good afternoon and thank you, Dr. Manning; Sara, Liz, Kevin and Megan; members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students and distinguished guests, I am pleased and honored to be a part of this important event – this wonderful new page in the proud history of Villa Julie College.



I didn't need Accu Weather to tell me that today is a bright day – one shining with great promise. It is truly a day of celebration.

When I look over and see my friends, Kevin and Sara, so eager to begin their new life here, I am struck by the quality of stewardship exhibited by your Board of Trustees and presidential search committee.

They fulfilled one of the most important obligations they have to this college – to seek out, recruit and appoint a talented president.

This is never an easy task as so clearly illustrated by the Yale University trustees well over 150 years ago.

When Yale was searching for a new president in the 19th century, one of the committee members was charged to list the qualities needed in the right man – notice they used the word “man.” Obviously they were not as enlightened as we are today.

Here is what that committee member said: “Our new president needed to be a leader, a magnificent speaker, a great writer, a good public relations person, and a man of iron health and stamina. We saw our choice as having to be a man of the world, but also an individual with great spiritual qualities; an experienced administrator, and able to delegate; a Yale man and a great scholar; a social philosopher, who though he had the solutions to all the world's problems, had still not lost the common touch. After lengthy deliberation, we concluded that there was only one such person.

But then a dark through crossed our minds.

We had to ask, “Is God a Yale man?”

Obviously, God did not graduate from Yale.

And even though the president chosen that year is not relevant here today, it is interesting to look back and see what our predecessors felt were important qualities for a president in the 1800s.

Many of the attributes described by that Yale Board member are just as important now as they were then.

We are here on this beautiful campus – because Villa Julie College is inaugurating just such a president today. In Kevin Manning, you have a leader who, in his wisdom, will not push from behind, nor pull from in front, but who will inspire you to work together to bring about – “A New Era for Leading in Learning.”



I can think of no one who is better suited to help you achieve your goals than my good friend, Dr. Manning. And that brings me to what I think today is all about – It’s about leadership.

Over the next few minutes, I hope to answer some fundamental questions that will offer you a new perspective about this very important topic.

First of all, what is leadership? Although it is a word you hear frequently, some feel that it cannot be defined. However, I recently read a description that I think captures the essence of the word.

Leadership is an invisible strand as mysterious as it is powerful. Leadership guides. It creates unity out of disorder. No combination of talents can guarantee it. It cannot be created where there is no spark. The qualities of leadership are universal: they are found in the poor and the rich, the humble and the proud, the common man, and the brilliant thinker; they are qualities that suggest paradox rather than pattern. The most precious and intangible quality of leadership is trust. It is a “sense of rightness” – knowing when to advance and when to pause, when to criticize, and when to praise, how to encourage others to excel. In its highest sense, leadership is integrity. And, where there are leaders, things happen. You are fortunate, because today we are here celebrating the arrival of a very talented leader, who I guarantee will make great things happen. And, this fact is worth noting – because great leadership is in short supply. In a report

published by the University of Maryland, entitled *Leadership Reconsidered*, more than a dozen prominent scholars and practitioners conclude that “leadership qualities are ‘eroding’ in the United States and we must look to higher education to reverse that trend.” In fact, the erosion of leadership skills in this country has become glaringly apparent to the American people. In one week’s time, we will elect the next President of the United States – the leader of the free world. And in poll after poll, the American people have identified leadership style and trustworthiness as the most important qualifications for a President. Our fellow citizens believe that leadership ability is more critical than even the issues at hand. What does this say about the role of a leader and what are our expectations?

Leadership Reconsidered stated that “it should enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; expand access and opportunity; encourage respect for difference and diversity; and promote the advancement of knowledge and personal freedom coupled with social responsibility.”

Doesn’t that sound like the mission of Villa Julie?

Just like the American people, those of us in higher education also believe that the development of leadership is critically important. And, in the academic world, we expect much of our own leaders.



Today, college presidents are no longer just the leaders of their institutions and an important presence in the larger academic world, but we also expect them to be public figures – to act as social change agents – to make a difference beyond the walls of their institutions – on a regional, national and global plane.

The role of leadership in education has grown exponentially as the world has become smaller through technology.

We have become what Marshall McLuhan referred to as the “global village.”

Let me tell you what that global village would look like if we could shrink the world’s population to 100 people, keeping the ratios the same:

- There would be 60 Asians
- 5 North Americans

- 8 South Americans
- 2 Africans
- 10 Europeans
- Only 8 would speak English
- 4 would be Christian
- 7 would be Muslim
- 6 would be Buddhists
- Nearly half would suffer from malnutrition
- More than half would live in substandard housing
- Only 50% of the children would be immunized
- 4 would be unable to read
- 3 would own a computer
- One (yes, only one) would have a college education

Many of you are probably quite surprised by this picture. Because we all tend to view the world as we are, not as it is.

When I first read this, it had a profound impact on my thinking about the challenges facing the world – and how, in a very complex society, we can all work together to effect positive change.

As a university president, this pocket-sized view of the world certainly dramatized for me the need and the responsibility we – as educators – have to foster leadership in every one of our students.

Think of your own campus and campuses around the country, and consider the ways there are every day to ignite the spark of leadership. The kind of leadership that seizes opportunities – both large and small. That sees the potential in every individual and in each moment.

I propose that the next generation of leaders is sitting in our classrooms right now – they are the one college educated person in our global village.

For that reason, “developing leadership” must be central to our higher education mission.

It begins with inspiration, encouragement and example.

And, it is about helping our students to see the world as it truly is.

That is the benefit of education. It transcends cultures, borders and barriers of understanding, and brings about acceptance.

In that way, we will become more than citizens in that global village, we will become true neighbors and friends.

In closing, Kevin, I'd like to leave you with words from one of my favorite presidents – Dwight D. Eisenhower, who by the way had something in common with Kevin and me. He was a lousy golfer.

President Eisenhower said..."No easy problems ever come to the President...If they are easy to solve, somebody else has solved them."