

IT TAKES ALL OF US

**Pat Buchanan
Ruby Luncheon, 1997**

It is truly an honor to receive the National Distinguished Service Ruby Award from Epsilon Sigma Phi and to have the opportunity to speak with you at this unprecedented gathering of Extension professionals. Being selected to receive this award is certainly a highlight of my Extension career and indeed a wonderful surprise. I am most appreciative of this recognition and wish to accept this award on behalf of my family and colleagues who have made me what I am today and have made this day possible.

Extension has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I have greatly valued the many leadership opportunities that 4-H and Extension have provided and the support I've received from many of you. I treasure the many friendships I've made with Extension colleagues across the Cooperative Extension System and recognize that I am standing here today, receiving this honor, because of the many activities we've undertaken together. It's impossible to recognize individually all those who have helped, so I've asked some of my present and former co-workers to attend this luncheon as representatives of the many Extension professionals I've worked with during my career. I'd like to acknowledge them at this time. Ruth Pirch, NEAFCS; Chuck Leifeld, NAE4-HA; Don Drost, NACAA; Sandra Lignell, Shirley Camp and Charlie Clark, Epsilon Sigma Phi; Pat Boyle, Journal of Extension; Tom Henderson and J. C. Shaver, former Missouri co-workers; Denny Campion, John vanEs, Jan Seitz, and Sharon Rohrig, my co-workers in Illinois; Dave Pyle--former Indiana and Illinois co-worker and Indiana 4-H member.

Also with us this afternoon are some of my family--my sister, Sue Wilson; my mom, Jo Jarboe; and my husband, Tom Buchanan.

As I prepared my remarks for this afternoon, I recalled all the many speech classes my father insisted I take, the many times I entered the 4-H public speaking and demonstration contests and the various attempts I made to be the best cherry pie baker in the state of Indiana by entering the cherry pie demonstration contest. I also thought about what my father said was the key to success as a speaker--Be sincere, be sensible and be seated. Hopefully, I can keep all of his philosophy in mind as I spend some time discussing with you my thoughts about the future of this organization and how it will take "All of Us" working together for Extension to continue being recognized as a premier source of knowledge for the residents of our respective states. We need to keep foremost in our mind that the future does not belong to those who are content with today. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The only limit to our realization of tomorrow will be our doubts of today."

We live in a very interesting time and in a wonderful place. Nothing seems to remain stable, nothing stays the same, and those of us who work for the Cooperative Extension System find ourselves under continuous pressure to change, reform and restructure.

And, even though we are aware of the current trends affecting higher education in general (Extension specifically) and attempt to program to address these trends, we are constantly faced with skepticism about and criticism of our organization from the inside. Externally expectations from clientele continue to rise as our budgets come under attack from legislators who attempt to find funds for the many needs facing our states and nation. On every side we find critics eager to attack Extension. To some extent we are in the same situation as the young naval student who was being quizzed by the old sea captain. "What steps would you take if a sudden storm came up on the starboard side?" "I'd throw out an anchor, sir." "What would you do if another storm sprang up aft?" "I'd throw out another anchor, sir." "But what if a third storm sprang up forward?" "I'd throw another anchor, captain." "Just a minute, son," said the captain. "Where in the world are you getting all these anchors?" "From the same place you're getting all your storms."

Or to put it another way, opinions and questions about Extension sometimes seem like a soap opera. We can go for months and not tune in to our favorite soap opera, and then six months later we look in again and the same stuff is still going on.

As we encounter the future, we need to step back and decide which battles to fight and which will merely drain our energy without accomplishing anything worthwhile. We must keep in mind what Lou Piatt, CEO of Hewlett-Packard said, "Whatever made you successful in the past won't in the future."

At the same time that we are worrying about the future of Extension as a whole, we all too frequently seem to find ourselves worrying about own personal future with the organization. During recent years, many staff have faced the prospect of finding a different job, relocating their family and beginning a new career. However, Extension professionals have a real passion for the work they do and see the value and worth of the programs they offer to the citizens of this nation. Even under times of personal stress, the priority of most has been to put the needs and interests of the people first.

As we face today's challenges and opportunities, it will take "All of Us" working together. It's true that Extension professionals are an incredible lot. We want to win and we have the will to win. However, the future will require all of us to have a collective will to win. As Ken Blanchard has said, "None of us is as smart as all of us."

Those of you in this room and your many co-workers back home represent a lot of talent. You have demonstrated your flexibility, adaptability and capacity to address the opportunities you have been given; however, the future will require "All of Us" to continue making quality and service a way of life so we can win the competitive advantage. We can't be afraid of uncertainty or failure--and we certainly can't stew over the way things used to be. We're going to have to keep trying, keep changing and keep learning.

As you think about how it will take "All of Us" to be successful, it's also important to keep in mind that the diversity and the uniqueness of our co-workers and the Extension professional organizations are our strengths. When diverse people are brought together

to interact in a positive way, the results can be truly exciting. I think we've all seen an excellent example of this as we have participated in the Galaxy Summit this week. The Public Issues Seminar and the Galaxy Summit have certainly helped to develop a greater sense of community among us. We have gained respect for individual and organizational differences and learned to value the integrity of each person.

Charlie Plumb was a U.S. Naval Academy graduate and a very successful jet fighter pilot in Vietnam whose plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile after 75 combat missions. He ejected, parachuted into enemy territory, was captured and spent the next six years in a Communist prison. He survived that ordeal and now lectures about lessons learned from that experience. One experience Charlie relates is of meeting the sailor who had packed his parachute for that final mission and how important it is to recognize the people who pack your parachute. To me, this real life example should be considered as we continue to build the Extension community. How often do any of us ever stop to consider what our co-workers have done to help us succeed? And just as importantly, how often do we stop and thank them?

As I thought about what it will take for us to be successful and the title of this meeting, Galaxy Summit, I thought it would be helpful to think about the five star qualities that will be required by "All of Us" as we approach Extension's secondary century.

The First Star Quality required is for the organization to have a guiding vision and a commitment from "All of Us" to make a difference. Even though both keynote speakers referred to the need for vision, I would like to make some additional comments. Peter Block defines vision as "Our deepest expression of what we want. It is a dream created in our waking hours of how we would like our lives to be." You may have also heard vision referred to as something that is built on a desire to make a difference and to change things for the better. I guess it really doesn't matter how vision is defined as long as we have a vision or ideas that will help us know where we want to go, helping us make critical decisions when we're not quite certain of our next move.

Even when we know the next move, I hope we won't be like the football player in this story. The football coach, dejected because his team was losing again, looked down the bench for substitutes and yelled, "All right, Smith, go in there and get ferocious!" Smith jumped up with a start and yelled back, "Sure, Coach. What's his number?"

Oakley and Krug in their book, *Enlightened Leadership*, said, "Failure to understand the subtle distinction between focusing on what is wrong with where we are instead of what will it take to get where we want to be costs organizations dearly." There are no magic approaches to determining where we want to go, just as there are no simplistic solutions to the complicated problems of today's society. It takes "All of Us" working together to develop a common vision of where we would like to be. I hear many Extension professionals saying we need our director or dean to create this vision for us. Sure, we need deans/directors who are able to visualize what is possible, have the ability to convey that vision and to motivate and excite "All of Us" along the way. However, if we're going to succeed in the 21st century, I believe we will need Extension leaders who

can help us build a shared vision that embodies the collective values and aspirations of "All of Us". Then, we need to be sure the vision is communicated. It appears to me that at times Extension's problems have been created because the vision has not been transferred to the clientele and the stakeholders.

Even though we have a vision and know where we want to go, we have to be ready for some temporary setbacks, realizing that these setbacks are really just steps to ultimate success. We need to remember that great leaders can lose battles and still win the war. Even if we lose a battle, we must bounce back and renew our efforts toward the vision and the dream.

In addition to being willing to lose some battles along the way, we will need to exhibit some patience in allowing the time necessary for successful implementation of the vision.

The Second Star Quality necessary for "All of Us" is to take Extension's mission to heart and maintain a positive, progressive identity. This maintains loyalty to Extension and keeps stakeholders committed to the organization. The chairman of Saturn has said, "Loyalty today is no longer a function of role or duty, but rather passion. We must do things so astonishingly well that customers become not merely loyalists, but rather outright apostles." Every Extension professional should be an ambassador carrying impressions of the purpose, mission and value of Extension to everyone they know. Many times we may find ourselves acting as ambassadors for the old Extension--trying to shield ourselves from change by cloaking ourselves in history and tradition. Extension's culture is one of our greatest organizational assets, but there are times when it can also be one of our most troublesome liabilities.

I just finished reading a very thought provoking book entitled The Living Company which describes a study about corporate longevity. As a result of the study, the researcher found four essential traits these companies had in common--they were sensitive to the environment; they were cohesive, with a strong sense of identity and community; they were tolerant of activities on the margin; and they were conservative and frugal. As you think about these four traits, which ones do you think have contributed to Extension's longevity and what changes will we need to make to survive?

A key factor, in my opinion, in maintaining a positive and progressive identity will be for Extension to receive priority and credibility as a major function at every land grant institution. Strong working relationships with all departments are essential and efforts must be made to have campus faculty value outreach as an integral part of their day-to-day mission. Outreach cannot be seen as just an add-on to a faculty member's responsibilities and something to be talked about a lot but practiced minimally.

Even though many faculty may value outreach, some do not focus on programming in an interdisciplinary fashion. Others may view outreach as something they do to people rather than with people. James H. Meyer, Chancellor Emeritus of University of California at Davis, pointed out that most public concerns are multi-disciplinary, while the faculty in

most departments operate along discipline lines. If we are to be successful in the future, faculty will need to work across disciplines and the sharing of resources across state lines must be increased. The problems of today and tomorrow require a different, more collaborative, less traditional response.

In addition to enhancing our internal partnerships, it is also critical that we establish even stronger external partnerships. Managing these external and even the internal partnerships will not be easy and we must remember what the authors of *The 8 Practices of Exceptional Companies* say about partnerships. Partnerships are a "balancing act between competitive and cooperative agendas". "Successful partnering requires learning new skills of dialog and a collective commitment to the partnership." "If we succeed there is glory enough for everyone."

Creating strong partnerships will also require us to find ways to increase the level of trust. The authors of the book *Successful Partnerships* say, "The most common cause of a partnership's failure is lack of trust. Keep the lines of communication open and honest, and trust will keep the partnership together even when the times get tough."

Creating a positive identity in the ways I've described will challenge us to make sure our loyal supporters remain loyal as we seek these new constituencies and relationships. An article in *Sloan Management Review* stresses this point. The authors note, "Credibility is the result of the credit others give us, regardless of the credit we take."

In my opinion, our window of opportunity is now. If we don't move forward aggressively to achieve the second star quality--a positive, progressive identity--it's likely that we will face a very difficult time in the coming years.

The Third Star Quality requires that "All of Us" must have quality programs and solid results which will justify further public support. Maybe we should accept Walt Disney's philosophy that "It's always fun to do the impossible."

The coming years will be interesting times for "All of Us" conducting programs. We will need to break new ground and be prepared to deliver quality programs for an age of accelerating change in a world of increasingly diverse and growing populations, an expanding economy, fast-moving technological and information changes and a changing global environment. We know how to deliver quality programs. I just wonder if we will be able to adjust our programs as quickly as the changing times necessitate.

Finding a way to continue improving the relevance of our programs to address the rapidly changing needs of our clientele may require us to hire more staff with applied research skills, as well as adult education skills. Future Extension educators may well make a great or greater contribution to resolution of problems by their ability to generate pertinent knowledge and information in addition to their ability to extend it.

At the same time that we provide quality programs, we must also show program impact. Life today is highly competitive and more than ever, the name of the game is results. I'm

sure there are many times staff wish administrators would quit talking about evaluation and having solid program results. But in this era of increased accountability, we must push our definition of accountability even more toward the ultimate goal of practice change. And we must commit to some practice changes of our own--we must think "evaluation" during every step of the program development process.

Maybe you remember the story about John and Dave who were hiking in the woods when they spotted a mountain lion staring at them. John froze in his tracks, but Dave sat down on a log, tore off his hiking boots, pulled on a pair of running shoes from his backpack and hurriedly began to put them on. John yelled, "For crying out loud, you can't outrun a mountain lion!" To which Dave responded, "I don't have to, I just have to outrun you." Well, I'm not sure that just outrunning our competitors will completely do the trick in the future. We must have solid program results to show our value to stakeholders.

In addition, we must provide leadership which will enable local people to communicate impact/value to the public officials making resource allocation decisions. However, we must not depend on a few selected individuals to gain this support--rather we need to depend on the legislators' constituent support base. As politicians face the challenge of getting re-elected, they are interested in and supportive of programs and activities valued and supported by those constituents. Above all, we must remember that building support is a continuous process--in good times and in bad--and that broad-based support is the key to weathering changes in the political environment.

Those of you who are a little older in the audience will remember from your childhood the terminology, your "Sunday best". Well, as the author of *Crossing the Minefield* says, "It's important for every organization to parade its Sunday best out to impress customers and to remember that yesterday's showpiece can easily become today's mediocre program." Don't you think the time is right for "All of Us" to engage in a dynamic process to transform the Extension system by exhibiting the third star quality of providing superior programs which yield solid program results?

The Fourth Star Quality calls upon "All of Us" to have perseverance and a willingness to embrace change as a quality of life. The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, nor a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will--sometimes success is just a matter of hanging on.

Maybe some of you have heard the story of the mother who was teaching her 6-year-old son to use the phone. With much careful instruction, he dialed his grandmother's number. After about 10 rings, it was evident that no one was going to answer. So, mother said, "Go ahead and hang up, I guess nobody's home." Eager to make his first telephone call a success, the little boy said, "Not yet. I think I hear somebody coming."

Now that's the kind of perseverance we all need to have. As Rick Pitino says, "It's persistence that makes you great. It's persistence that allows you to reach your dreams. It's persistence that enables you to perform at your fullest potential."

We must face up to the changes currently affecting our society. We must see these as positive challenges and not obstacles. We must find creative ways to address these changes.

Let me cite just a few examples of the speed of change we have experienced since 1960 from a newly released book, *The 500-Year Delta*.

In 1960, 925,000 Americans were age eighty-five or older. Today, the number has more than quadrupled to 3.8 million. By the year 2010, nearly 6 million Americans will be at least eighty-five years old. Luckily, I won't be one of them by that year!

The average CEO in 1960 traveled 12,000 miles a year. Today, the average CEO travels 112,000 miles a year.

Twenty-seven years ago, the average person needed to learn one new skill a year to prosper in the workplace. Today, the average person needs to learn one new skill a day.

The average American father spoke with his children forty-five minutes a day in 1960. Today, the average father speaks with his child six minutes a day.

And just for good measure, let's add this element. In 1990, the World Wide Web didn't exist. In 1996, 11.5 million Americans used the Web and more than 28 million had access to it.

So as you can see we are not only being caught up in the speed of change, but we also can easily be overwhelmed by the massive accumulation of change. These examples surely illustrate for us the many times we will be faced with needing to adjust to new and emerging paradigms and find ourselves often caught between dual directions--high technology and high touch.

We cannot let ourselves be trapped by behaviors that helped Extension get to where it is but may not help us get to where we want to go. It's much like packing for a trip. Most of us recognize what to carry; however, our problem lies in knowing what to leave behind.

Yes, there have been substantial changes within Extension and we do not do the same things we used to do 50 years ago. However, change within the Extension organization is inevitable if we are going to serve the most pressing educational needs of a changing society. Ken Hanson, Xerox corporate training manager said, "In the past, we considered change a disruption of our work. In the future, we must think of change as the focus of our work." "All of Us" will need to maintain an open-mindedness toward new roles that may emerge and have a willingness to let go of some of our past roles. The ultimate challenge for us will likely be to find a way to develop the proper balance between staying flexible and being willing to respond to changing needs while

simultaneously being able to carry out the quality programs described in our third star quality.

In the book I mentioned earlier, *The 8 Practices of Exceptional Companies*, the authors said, "Trying to respond to today's and tomorrow's problems with yesterday's solutions is the most injurious of paradoxes. It insures that we will misconstrue and misplay our opportunities." The authors go on to say that planning cannot be incremental. "By the time we figure out how to hold our own or gain ground in today's game, someone will have changed the rules. We can bring in the best coach and players in the world, but when the game changes to soccer, we're in trouble." What I think that says to "All of Us" is that Extension will never get ahead if we practice walking backward into the future.

I'm sure all of you remember the childhood story about the race between the tortoise and the hare. The moral was the slow but steady win the race. But today Extension cannot just be slow and steady because too many competitors (hares) are moving fast and they are no longer likely to fall asleep. Extension's past cannot be changed, but we can change what Extension will be tomorrow by the actions we take today.

As Extension staff, we must be sure that we do not act like bees and fail to adapt to the changes we will face. If you place several bees in an open-ended bottle and lay the bottle on its side with the base toward a light source, the bees will repeatedly fly to the bottom of the bottle and toward the light. It never occurs to them to reverse gears and try another direction. Being trapped in a bottle is an entirely new situation for them, one that their genetic programming is not prepared for. As a result, they are unable to adapt to a changing environment.

To achieve star quality four is best summarized by paraphrasing what Rick Pitino has said, "We must continue to be creative, always try to do better, and understand that nothing ever stays the same, including ourselves. If we're not getting better, someone else is probably passing us by."

The Fifth Star Quality requires that "All of Us" exhibit an enthusiasm for our profession, be supportive of each other, target our opportunities, and above all have some fun. There are many reasons to be optimistic about the future. The challenges of the year 2000 and beyond will create a need for inspired Extension professionals with contagious enthusiasm. If we are excited and enthusiastic about what we are doing, we will more readily gain the interest and participation of others. If we approach our jobs without enthusiasm and a who-gives-a-darn attitude, Extension will be unable to get the support it needs.

In a book entitled *The Skills of Encouragement*, the authors remind us that, "As we look at the history of humankind, it was always the enthusiastic, hopeful people who made the difference." I encourage each of you to make a positive difference wherever you go and spread the contagion of enthusiasm. Just remember if you growl all day, you'll be dog tired at night.

At times you may have noticed that one of the adversaries we seem to have is our co-workers. To some extent this is to be expected since there is always a tendency for the wagons to circle when there is a serious threat. However, if we are going to survive in the future, we have to be sure that all Extension staff form one big circle. The worst situation would be for us to create a lot of small circles shooting at each other. The only adversary we should ever have is the competition. And, in an era of increasingly scarce resources, it just makes sense to grow by sharing.

If we are to achieve the fifth star quality, we must target our opportunities. The cartoon example that is given in the book *The 500-Year Delta* does help clarify what I mean when I say we should target our opportunities. The cartoon they describe is taken from the *New Yorker* magazine. The cartoon shows one side of a New York City block. A sign in the building on the corner closest to the viewer reads "Best Pizza in New York". The sign in the next building says "Best Pizza in the United States". Beyond it, in the next building, another sign reads "Best Pizza on Earth". And then, finally, at the very end of the block furthest from the viewer, comes the sign that really counts "Best Pizza on the Block". To me, this cartoon truly describes the dilemma Extension often faces with trying to be all things to all people and often taking advantage of every opportunity whether it fits the vision or not. Wouldn't we be better off if we only took advantage of the opportunities that truly fit our vision and mission?

The opportunities of Extension are as unlimited as the number of stars in the galaxy. Scientists have estimated that the Milky Way contains 100 billion stars. How many of you in this room ever tried to count all of those stars? Well, it's been estimated that if you counted out loud to 100 billion, you'd spend the next 800 years speaking nonstop, according to calculations made by Rudy Rucker, author of *Infinity and the Mind*. Just as we should not undertake to count to 100 billion, we should not pursue all the opportunities we are given but rather target those that will provide us the opportunity to make the biggest difference.

Our personal future or the future of the Cooperative Extension System may be beyond our vision; however, we should never believe it is beyond our control. You are positioned for the future and you are well prepared to meet the challenges ahead. A person once said, "Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." Don't expect perfection. Be happy with every success, no matter how small. The limits we set for ourselves and Extension exist in our minds. Sometimes, if we let our hearts do the talking and believe in our ability to overcome past perceptions, we can create another reality.

More than 100 years ago, Robert Louis Stevenson gave us twelve tips for a positive attitude, and I think they still apply today.

- 1) Make up your mind to be happy. Learn to find pleasure in simple things.
- 2) Make the best of your circumstances. Everyone has problems.

- 3) Don't take yourself too seriously. Don't think that somehow you should be protected from misfortunes that befall others.
- 4) You can't please everybody. Don't let criticism worry you.
- 5) Don't let your neighbor set your standards. Be yourself.
- 6) Do the things you enjoy, but stay out of debt.
- 7) Don't borrow trouble. Imaginary burdens are harder to bear than the actual ones.
- 8) Hate poisons the soul, so don't carry grudges. Avoid people who make you unhappy.
- 9) Have many interests. If you can't travel, read about new places.
- 10) Don't hold post-mortems. Don't spend your life brooding over sorrows and mistakes.
- 11) Do what you can for those less fortunate than yourself.
- 12) Keep busy at something. A busy person never has time to be unhappy.

I'd like to conclude my comments about the fifth star quality by encouraging you to have some fun along the way. It would really be interesting if we could take some time this afternoon to have each of you talk about the ways you have fun at work. I even wish I had time to talk about some of the recent books I've read about having fun at work. Next time you are in a bookstore, you might ask to see a copy of 1001 Ways to Energize Employees (many of their ideas would work for volunteers) or 301 Ways to Have Fun at Work. Really great books with a wealth of ideas. One gives a Top Ten List of the most popular fun food for work (as compiled from the author's surveys). You will certainly notice a lack of healthy choices. Starting with number 10, the choices were: beer, "\$100,000" candy bars, pretzels (to go with the beer), M&M's, cake, popcorn, ice cream, doughnuts, pizza, cookies.

As Confucius said, "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life."

I appreciate having the opportunity to provide my view of how these five star qualities and "All of Us" working together will be important in the coming years. This afternoon I've had the opportunity to focus on only five star qualities: a guiding vision, a positive and progressive identity, quality programs and solid program results, a willingness to embrace change as a quality of life, and a commitment to displaying enthusiasm for our profession. I'm sure each of you have others you would like to see added to the list.

In closing, I'd like to read from one of my favorite children's books, The Rainbow Fish, that really summarizes what I've tried to say this afternoon in my remarks which I titled, "It Takes All of Us".

"The Rainbow Fish was the most beautiful fish in the sea. But he never played with the other fish. "I'm too beautiful", he thought.

Once, a little blue fish asked for one of his shining scales, but the Rainbow Fish just laughed. "Never!" he said.

After that, the other fish swam away from him. The Rainbow Fish was all alone.

He went to the starfish for help. "Why doesn't anybody like me?" he asked.

"Go ask the octopus," said the starfish. "She is very wise."

The octopus said, "Give away your shining scales. You won't be as beautiful, but you will have friends."

"I can't do that!" cried the Rainbow Fish.

Suddenly the little blue fish was back. "Please," he said. "Could I have just one scale?"

Well, the Rainbow Fish thought. Maybe just one tiny little scale. The little blue fish was so pleased, it made the Rainbow Fish feel happy.

Soon all the fish came, and the Rainbow Fish gave away his scales, one by one. Finally, he had only one shining scale left.

But now, as he swam off to play with his friends, he was the happiest fish in the sea."

Obviously, I don't have any shiny scales to share but I do have a little something that I'd like to give each of you. So as I close, you are very likely to see some shooting stars coming down the aisles.

It was a pleasure to speak to all of you and I truly appreciate this recognition. My best wishes to each of you for a successful career in Extension.

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