

HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?

By Steve Keller, CPP

ABSTRACT

Few of us think much about how we might want to be remembered by our peers after we retire or die but sooner or later this thought comes to all of us, usually as we reach the later years of our career or when we are faced with the untimely death of a colleague. We may wonder if our peers will remember us, let alone honor us, but what is often more important is what our co-workers will think of the contributions we have made to our institution. Some accomplishments are short-lived, forgotten a few years after we leave the scene. Other contributions live on for many years because they change how people do things or make new rules for all of us to follow. Bob Burke is remembered not so much for his friendly personality but for a conference he championed. Years after his death we are still benefiting from his “gift” to us. When the author asks the question “How do you want to be remembered?” he is really asking, “What have you done to make a lasting contribution to your profession?” What are the elements of good leadership and good management that lead to success?

DISCUSSION

How do YOU want to be remembered? When you die, how would you like me to remember you; to think about you as a colleague? Some people really don't think much about how they want to be remembered by their friends and colleagues. It is usually the younger men and women, who are early in their careers, and are healthy who have not yet faced either the thought or possibility of retiring with or without their boots on. But as one gets older and begins to approach the end of his or her career one begins to think about the legacy, the contribution to the world he or she has made, and how it will be perceived by peers.

I was remembering Bob Burke recently. Those of us who have been coming to this National Conference on Cultural Property Protection for more than a decade remember Bob Burke as the late Director of Protection Services for the Smithsonian and a man instrumental in our being here at this conference today. Think about that for a minute. Bob has been dead for more years than most of you have been coming to this important conference, yet we are here because of something he did, because of a contribution he made to his profession. Bob and I were friends. He called me from time to time for advice, and we tilted a few glasses together, but I never really knew Bob until after his untimely death. He never bragged to me about his life before museums, but I sensed that Bob was in a bigger league than I was and that there was more to him than I was aware of. I think I first realized he was truly one of the world's “contributors”, that is to say that, he was a person who gave the world something more than an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, when I opened the *New York Times* and saw his obituary.

When I die, I assume that my family will submit my obituary to the local newspaper. The newspaper will probably print it. It prints obituaries for criminals and vagrants, so I guess they will accept mine. But there is a great difference between the *Daytona Beach News-Journal* and the *New York Times*. That's what I mean about Bob being in a different league. I knew that Bob was friends with General Colin Powell, but I didn't know that he was godfather to his children. I learned after the fact that when the U.S. engaged in military action in Panama and Smithsonian was unable to make contact with Panamanian employees assigned to the facility, Bob picked up a phone and military troops were immediately dispatched to assure the employees' safety. In Bob's obituary, I read how he was a leader of an organization within the Army that mentored young Black military officers, including men like General Powell, when he was first assigned to the Pentagon.

It is rare that a man can leave his mark in one profession let alone in two professions, but Bob did it and he continues to be remembered today as the institutions he built--this conference among them--continue to serve his profession long after his death. Bob Burke's leadership and contribution to his profession is remembered around the world, not just in the U.S., and his memory is preserved by the memorial award that bears his name.

Late in 1999, as the Millennium drew to a close, I was watching A&E's "Biography--The 100 Most Influential People of the Millennium." Can you imagine being chosen one of the 100 most influential people in the last thousand years! In case you missed the program, George Washington, Galileo, Copernicus, Albert Einstein, Shakespeare, and a few others made the top ten, but the most influential person was Gutenberg, whose movable type printing press made it possible for the contributions of all of the others to be known to the world. Think about that. Without a means of getting information out to those who can use it, information is simply ink on a piece of paper in the helpless hands of its author.

By this standard, Ton Cremers who has used the internet as a tool for distributing information on museum security to all corners of the planet qualifies as the most influential person of the millennium in museum security . There are people who have written books, presented papers with important ideas, developed industry standards, presented seminars and conferences, and developed programs that are widely used in our profession. But all of these achievements are small compared to the contribution made by Ton Cremers who has managed to put that information into the hands of the world.

There are three types of contributors in our profession. One contributor is a hard working professional who reports to work daily and does his or her job well. As a result of that person's contribution, nothing happens. And that's good. No thefts occur. No vandalism occurs. The museum remains safe from fire. When you retire, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that works of art that have been preserved for a thousand years have remained safe for a few years more because of your hard

work. You can, if you choose to do so, think that no one tried to steal works of art on your watch because the fruits of your labor thwarted even the best of thieves. You can fantasize that what you did for your institution posed a greater challenge to the forces of evil than the forces of evil were prepared to take on. Maybe so, maybe not. It may not seem like much but this type of contributor deserves our respect. What better legacy than to be part of a continuing procession of guardians who have successfully protected the world's cultural and artistic heritage from those who might wish to steal or deface it.

Another type of contributor displays unusual leadership ability and excels in reaching out to his or her peers. This contributor writes and speaks and shares and when he or she retires, leaves behind a body of work that, at least for a few years, serves the profession by educating and inspiring a new generation of professionals who can take over. This is no small achievement but it is still not a lasting contribution.

The third type of contributor is the person whose ideas are fresh and dynamic. They're people who make a contribution that, should it end due to retirement or death, is sorely missed. They make contributions that can be taken over by someone else upon their exit from the scene, or their contributions simply live on with a life of their own. These contributors are leaders who inspire others to become leaders. They are doers who inspire others to become doers. And they are people who take on the difficult projects because they know that if it is to happen, they must make it happen.

Let's look at the elements of good leadership. As a manager, our job is not so much to do the work as it is to help our people do it. We must first and foremost create a good work environment for our people. We must give them direction. Management, after all, is the process of setting and achieving goals using the available resources. We direct the activity of others in achieving those goals.

A good manager must be a good leader. A good manager must be a good planner. Not only identify goals, but also identify ways of achieving them. Ton Cremers saw the need for exchanging information among peers. Using his planning skills he decided to build a means of connecting museums in 100 countries. He did the planning and had the vision.

A good manager is an organizer--an organization builder. He or she will determine how personnel and resources will be used.

A good manager is skilled at staffing, and recognizes that the hiring and the training of people is the very essence of getting the work done properly. Hire good people first and groom them to do the job right the first time.

A good manager is a good director. What does it mean to give "direction" to your people? A leader will develop effective leadership methods that assure that the ship stays on course. He or she will develop policies and procedures and most importantly management systems that assure that a policy that is put into place today is carried

out exactly the same way a month from now just as Coke has established processes and procedures that assure that a Coca Cola purchased from a machine at a convenience store in Northern Virginia tastes just like a Coca Cola purchased in a bottle in Honolulu. This doesn't happen by chance. Management systems assure that things get done consistently every time.

And a good leader sets up standards of quality and efficiency against which progress by all members of the organization can be measured.

As I look through this audience I see many of my clients. Some of you are leaders and others of you fall far short. No, let me qualify that remark. Very few of you fall short. The vast majority of you simply miss the message in the Nike commercial: "Just Do It!" What I see in the audience is lost potential. During a survey of a museum, I ask the following questions of the security director:

1. Do you have a mission statement that sets goals and objectives for your department? Ninety-nine percent of my clients do not even have a mission statement thus indicating that the most basic element of planning is missing from the organization.
2. How are your resources deployed? The vast majority of all clients of mine fail to develop a resource management plan which communicates to their superiors in one concise master plan document what resources they have and what resources they need. Posts go unstaffed year after year. The schedule lacks adequate relief personnel and the electronics often need basic service. But a check of the files reveals few if any memos documenting these problems and laying out in a decisive and compelling manner what is needed and why it is needed.
3. Do you hire your own people or are they sent to you by the human resource department and do you have a training program? Most of you make excuses for how hard it is to get good staff but cannot show me a memo to your boss justifying higher wages for guards or showing comparative salaries in your area. Some of you can't tell me the wages of your direct employees. And while all of you claim to have a training program, more times than not it consists solely of handing a new guard over to a senior person so the new guard can observe how things are done. There is no formal program. It is not documented. There is no roll call program. Is this a problem of your leadership and management? It is if your files do not contain any documentation requesting the resources that you need to do the job right. Think of how many of your problems could be solved if you had a thirty minute roll call program before each shift where training can occur and your vision can be communicated to your people on a daily basis!
4. In surveying your facility I ask to see management systems. The vast majority of you have never heard the terminology used let alone have formal management systems in place. Do you know how few museums have a complete policy manual that spells out policy by policy how things are to happen in the organization? I'm not

talking about post orders or work rules. You all have this manual--or do you? I'm referring to individual policies and procedures that break each basic task a guard does down into a written instruction that formally defines how that task is to occur. I was hired once by a museum director who complained that a policy that he had asked to be implemented was no longer being carried out after only a month. He wanted to know why his basic orders were not being carried out. The policy involved the completion on a daily basis of a checklist by a security supervisor. I found that the security office was recently repainted and the cup hook that held the clipboard that held the checklists was removed and not replaced. Because the clipboard disappeared, the supervisor simply stopped filling out the form. No management system was in place to assure continuity within the organization and the manager failed in his basic duties to supervise his people.

5. When I survey, I look for evidence that the top management of the security department has established standards against which all activity is measured. Few museums have a performance review for their guards that truly measures performance. The vast majority don't even have a formal method of assuring that night rounds are performed consistently. The majority of my clients have some form of report writing system but no way of retrieving the reports and compiling statistics so that statistical comparisons can be made year to year. How can you justify more money if you can't show that you have set goals and standards and that those goals and standards are not being met? Your boss won't give you more money if no problem is apparent and even if it is, you must be able to make a compelling argument in the ever present competition for limited resources. Too many of my clients simply fight brush fires rather than prevent them from occurring in the first place. If you have no standards for hiring, how do you get good people? If you have no standards for performance, how do you get improvement? If you have no formal criteria for failure and for discipline, how do you maintain a quality work force?

What else makes for a good leader? A good leader motivates his or her people and makes them feel enthusiastic about their job. One of the leading problems I see is the lack of motivation among guards. How does this reflect on your leadership?

A leader puts his people first. This is not always easy and it doesn't mean that you should let the inmates run the nuthouse but most of you can do better in developing communication between your office and your employees. Likewise a leader communicates with his superiors and with his customers. I ask many of you who your customers are and I'm told that they are the museum visitors. But your customers include the museum staff as well. You as a skilled leader must reach out to your boss and your customers to get them to sign on to your program and to adopt the same goals that you define for your department, that is, if you have defined goals.

A good leader looks for trends. Ton Cremers had the foresight to see that the internet was a tool that could not be wasted. He saw a trend and capitalized on it. And a leader challenges assumptions. Cremers didn't just publish a newsletter or develop a conference. He found a better way. And in your organization you can almost always

find a better way of doing things. I have had just one client in five years that has conducted a formal study to determine whether they should convert from a proprietary to contract guard force or vice versa. I have had only two clients that have conducted a return on investment study comparing the cost of CCTV systems to guards. Even when forced to lay off guards to the detriment of the collection, few museum security managers ever conduct studies that seek another way of achieving the organization's goals.

I just finished a major project at a major museum where I identified critical processes that had to be performed by the security staff and defined the resources that would be needed to successfully complete those critical processes. Access control is a critical process that was not being performed. I identified a list of critical processes, showed what was being done, showed what really had to be done to be successful at achieving access control, and translated that into dollars. My report resulted in the hiring of added guards and the installation of electronics. The security director had the audacity to tell me that "they always listen to the consultant but never listen to me" but I know the truth that he had never performed the very basic management responsibility of identifying critical processes and showing that current resources were not being met. He said he didn't have time. I submit that he simply did not make time.

A leader will effectively deal with people. He or she will organize work for himself and others and see that it gets done. He or she will delegate but not pass his work off onto his employees. He will understand and make sure everyone else understands work processes--how the work is to be done. That is his or her job to define. He will be or get organized and will make sure through his mentoring of others that they become organized. There are always more things in a day that need to be done than there is time for. This is not just your problem. This is a problem every manager faces. Just do it! It may mean closing the door to get quiet time to work, or taking some work home at night. Or you may try developing systems that help you do the job more efficiently. When I ask clients why they don't do this, they often tell me that they just are too busy to develop systems or procedures. Nonsense! Doing so may cost you efficiency initially but you will more than make up for the lost time in the future.

If I could give one piece of advice to a would-be leader it would be to develop policies and procedures that clearly and efficiently, in an organized manner, spell out how things are to work. This gets the entire organization thinking like you. It gives them clear direction. It defines your program and gives you something to measure against.

A leader trains then empowers his first line supervisors. Don't be mistaken. You are not the most important person in the organization. If your first line supervisors are not up to the task then you will fail. They are the most important people and they can control your success. Your job is to get your supervisory level people to sign on to your program and to give them the skills they need to keep things running smoothly. Above all, hold them responsible for their performance. Be fair to them and treat them well. But begin to out process them using your defined disciplinary program if they fail to

live up to your expectations. Few will fail if you do your job right. I guarantee it.

Manage your resources. Justify your requests for additional resources. Learn the art of the memo. It can be a fine tool or a sword. Use it well.

Some managers in some museums must engage in strategic planning but this is rare except in the largest institutions. Strategic planning usually occurs at a level above that of the museum security manager. But nevertheless, you must keep ahead of things so that you can advise those who do strategic planning. Know the security technology available to you. I am always amazed by the lack of knowledge many of my clients have regarding their alarm systems and other tools they work with daily.

You as a leader must inspire others with a vision. You must convince people at all levels of the organization that while your program is not perfect today, it will be perfect in the future with their help. You must define that vision so they can see it also. You must motivate them through your own enthusiasm and you must share the satisfaction and the glory that comes with achieving the vision. To do this you must keep in touch. You can't manage them and you can't motivate them sitting in your office.

Above all you must understand that management is not just a title. It is a profession. Few of us have all of the resources we need and the answers are rarely ever easy or apparent. We must make good decisions and not be afraid to think differently in seeking solutions. This is not easy. Managers must be risk takers and if you are too afraid to do your job, then step aside and let someone else do it. You call yourself a leader, so lead!

So how will you be remembered? Will your colleagues remember you for the beers you drank with them and the jokes you shared, or will they remember you for the lasting contributions you made to your profession and the leadership you displayed?

Like the Marines, we are looking for a few good men and women. But let me tell you that as your mentor, I hold up to you a very large measuring stick. You had better measure up if you want to be remembered as one of the best. What are you waiting for? No one is going to invite you to be a leader. Leadership is something that is recognized, but only after you put forth initiative and make yourself known. We don't need more leaders who occupy the throne and offer too few good new ideas. We need leaders who will walk the walk, not just talk the talk.

Gutenberg could only have been the "Man of the Millennium" if he had something to print. Without data, his books were just blank pieces of paper. It was only when Shakespeare came along that he had great literature to publish or when people like Galileo or Martin Luther, or John Locke came forth with revolutionary ideas that he could help start a revolution or a reformation or a Renaissance. Without you and your contributions to our profession, visionaries like Ton Cremers are like a Gutenberg, but with nothing to print.

Years from now when Ton Cremers rides off into the sunset, people will remember him as a visionary who not only had an idea, but also gave his time and even his money to make it happen. When Ton set out to start an internet mailing list and world wide web site, he never thought that it would grow to be the single most important contribution to our profession ever. When I asked my colleagues a year or so ago to financially support this project, few of them recognized it to be a vital contribution that moved our profession out of the 20th century and into the new millennium. Great contributions are often not recognized as such in their early stages and are rarely ever undertaken for the purpose of achieving greatness. Great contributions just happen. They happen because someone recognizes a need--in our case a need to help our profession achieve a new level of productivity, efficiency or effectiveness--and then makes it happen.

What will you be remembered for? If you left your museum tomorrow, how would you be remembered there? Will they remember you as the person who wrote a policy manual or a training program or a disaster plan? I doubt it because I haven't seen many worth remembering and if I had, they would have been plagiarized by the rest of the profession years ago. Many have not so much as contributed to our profession those things that are reasonably expected. You say that you don't have the time to write a policy manual or training program or disaster plan, but the truth is, you don't know where to start.

"Little old me"? you say. Who am I to write the book on museum security or prepare a manual that others want to copy, or to give a speech at the Smithsonian Conference? Well, who is Ton Cremers? Three years ago no one knew who he was outside of the Netherlands. Today he is recognized by colleagues as probably one of the most influential leaders in our profession. He has never held a major office on a major professional committee. Yet he has made something happen that no one else could. It happened because he made it happen, and if he nurtures it properly, it has the potential of living on beyond his lifetime as a lasting contribution to our profession, like this conference has lived on beyond the lifetime of its founders.

I don't know how I will be remembered. I'm hopeful that it will be as more than someone who shared a few laughs or gave a few speeches. I have done so little for our profession compared to others. But as I move into the later years of my career, I will endeavor to make a greater contribution to all of us. If only I had begun this effort years before! How about you? Don't wait until the last quarter of your career to begin to think about the lasting contribution that you can make to the profession.

CONCLUSION

You are young and you are ready. Step up and take the role of leadership in our profession. But be prepared to work hard to build your reputation because it won't be handed to you simply for chairing a committee or giving an interesting speech because these are not lasting contributions. Think the impossible. Make something

happen that will influence how the rest of us do our jobs and build an infrastructure of management systems and technology within your museum that assures that what you have accomplished will continue on beyond you. Leave a mark on your museum that will be remembered. Be the standard others will be measured against. Develop the museum security management model for the twenty-first century. Write the text book that guides the rest of us, or teach us something that we don't already know, or just inspire us in ways that we have not yet considered. Start by being the manager and leader that your boss knows you can be. It won't happen unless you make it happen.

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BIOGRAPHY

Steve Keller, CPP is an Ormond Beach, Florida, consultant specializing in projects involving museums and cultural properties. He is a graduate of The American University, Washington, D.C. He was a Legislative Assistant to a Member of Congress; an officer, sergeant and detective on the Washington, D.C. Police Department; a special agent and deputy U.S. Marshall, then Assistant Director of Security with the Federal Reserve Board in Washington. He served as Executive Director of Protection for the Art Institute of Chicago. He is the recipient of the ASIS "Certificate of Merit", its "Distinguished Achievement Award", and the "Executive Achievement Award" from *Security Magazine*. He has been published thirty-five times in professional publications, is a contributing author to eight security books and two encyclopedias including the Microsoft *Encarta Encyclopedia* and has produced thirty-one videos. He is a former Chair of the ASIS Cultural Property Committee on which he serves.