Character is the Key to Successful Leadership

Retired General H. Norman Schwarzkopf Speaks at C of O

Retired General H. Norman Schwarzkopf addressed a crowd of more than 4,000 at College of the Ozarks Tuesday, October 13. His address on character and leadership was the first on the 1998-99 agenda of The Keeter Center for Character Education. This year the College received an endowment from the James P. Keeter family to assist in the continuation of character as a front-burner issue at C of O. The Keeter Center for Character Education is named in honor of Mr. Keeter’s parents, Ruby and the late Vester Keeter.

To announce the formal beginning of The Keeter Center, General Schwarzkopf, assisted by College President Jerry C. Davis, recognized several organizations that are key leaders in character education. The Heritage Foundation, Young America’s Foundation, Character Education Partnership, The John Templeton Foundation and Focus on the Family Institute were all paid tribute for their roles in this important field.

After recognizing endeavors in character education, General Schwarzkopf captivated the audience as he made several key points regarding character and how vital it is to successful leadership. He said everyone at some time is a leader and that the single most important ingredient in a good leader is character.

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General Schwarzkopf provided a list of important factors for leaders to keep in mind. “Leaders recognize a need to do something,” he said. “No organization will ever get better unless its leader realizes something may be wrong with it.” He continued by saying leaders set goals but they are only meaningful if all members of the organization understand the goals and realize their role in meeting them. He stressed the importance of leaders setting high standards and expectations for their followers. “If you set them high, they’ll meet them—if you set them low, they’ll meet them.” He encouraged the rewarding of success. “Failure is contagious; success is infectious,” he said.

“All you need for successful leadership in the 21st century are two rules,” stated General Schwarzkopf. “When placed in command, take charge; and do what’s right.”

During his introduction of General Schwarzkopf, President Davis referred to an incident early in the General’s youth. Young Norman had set a campfire by the family garage. When his mother confronted him about the incident, the boy denied he knew anything. Soon thereafter, Norman’s father talked to him and expressed his continued on page 2
worry that he might hurt himself or burn the house down. During the conversation, the elder Schwarzkopf took out his cigarette lighter and said, "If you want to play with fire and burn yourself, you might as well put your hand in the flame right now. Do you want to do that?" "No," replied Norman. His father then told him to never play with matches again and proceeded to talk to his son about honor. He told the young Norman: "No matter what happens, no matter how bad a situation is, no matter what you think the consequences will be if you tell the truth, an honorable man does not lie. A Schwarzkopf does not lie."

Obviously, Schwarzkopf's character education process began early, but in his speech he said, "The circumstances of birth have nothing at all to do with a person's ability to lead. Good leaders are ordinary people who find themselves in extraordinary circumstances." Then he added, "There is no such thing as a born leader."

His comments urged listeners to consider the leadership role they each have. Mothers and fathers are leaders; teachers are leaders; siblings are leaders and role models for their brothers and sisters. To be successful, we must have good character. We may be competent, but if we lack in character we are susceptible to failing in our leadership responsibilities.
C of O Alumnus Four-Star General Dake Recognized

General Terrence R. Dake, Assistant Commandant of the United States Marine Corps and a 1964 College of the Ozarks graduate, was recognized for his commitment to character and leadership. Originally from Rocky Comfort, Missouri, General Dake graduated from Officer Candidate School in 1966. His numerous accomplishments encompass several flying tours, including a combat tour in Vietnam; serving as the Commanding Officer of Marine Helicopter Squadron One; the President’s helicopter pilot from 1983-85; Commanding General of the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing; serving as the Assistant Chief of Staff of Operations; and G-3 for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing in Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

President Davis and General Schwarzkopf presented General Dake with a plaque commemorating his years of dedication to character and leadership. General Dake commented, as he was being honored, that his development in character took shape during his experiences as a student at College of the Ozarks in the early sixties. President Davis remarked that General Dake serves as an exceptional role model to all C of O students. He shares a common bond with the students in that he comes from a small town, as do most C of O students, and he exemplifies success is attainable if one is willing to work hard. Working hard is a principle put into practice every day at Hard Work U.

Spring 1999 Character Forum Speaker Announced

A group of 120 C of O juniors and seniors will be selected to participate in the forum via an application or nomination. They will attend a reception, a lecture, then participate in an open question-answer session with Dr. Bennett. Students selected will fulfill convocation requirements for the spring term by participating in the forum. Consequently, they will be expected to attend three required meetings prior to the forum and complete preparatory reading assignments which include The Death of Outrage and Our Sacred Honor.

Students from ten other colleges, which are similar in mission and philosophy to College of the Ozarks, will be invited to attend the lecture and listen to the question-answer session. The faculty advisory committee for the forum consists of six C of O professors.

Calendar of Events

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<td>April 23</td>
<td>Character Forum: Dr. William Bennett</td>
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<td>(former Secretary of Education)</td>
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<td>June 1-August 7</td>
<td>Camp Lookout</td>
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<td>June 27</td>
<td>Honor America</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 9-August 22</td>
<td>Character Camp (Orientation program for new students)</td>
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<td>August 22</td>
<td>Honor Induction and Etiquette Banquet</td>
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Students Learn Ethics Lessons, Commit to Honor Code

Although character education has been an integral part of College of the Ozarks since its founding in 1906, the academic year of 1998-99 marks the first year of heightening the awareness and importance of character for the student body.

Students were introduced to character, honor, values and ethics during Character Camp. The Character Case Studies Series and the Honor Induction and Etiquette Banquet were two occasions where these traits were instilled.

In the Character Case Studies Series, faculty members presented scenarios designed to challenge the students with regard to employing ethics, values and morals in decision-making situations. The case studies entailed issues ranging from cheating on examinations to the college’s zero tolerance alcohol policy. After faculty members presented the scenarios, students discussed and decided on the best course of action to take in each situation. As a result of the case studies, students should be better equipped to make responsible moral and ethical decisions both during college and throughout their lives.

At the Honor Induction and Etiquette Banquet, all 378 entering students committed to the College of the Ozarks Honor Code. By signing the Honor Code card, students committed to the following:

“I agree to be an honest, trustworthy, caring and responsible citizen. I will uphold these values in others and myself.”

Students signed the Honor Code card after listening to an address by Joe White, President of Kanakuk-Kanakomo Kamps. White stressed not only the need to be an honorable person in their college and professional careers, but with their families as well. He reminded them that most of them will someday be parents and how important it is to be examples of honor to their children.

College of the Ozarks is excited about training young men and women who will be the leaders of the 21st century. C of O has always believed that character in young people is best developed from an education which includes the head, the heart and the hands. The College, in conjunction with The Keeter Center, is committing itself to preparing our nation’s future leaders in business, industry, education, homes and churches, not only to do their part toward healing what is wrong with our country, but more importantly to be a shining example of what is “right” with America.

A special thanks is due James P. Keeter, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, College of the Ozarks. Mr. Keeter is a distinguished business entrepreneur and is Chairman of the Board and CEO of Royal Oak Enterprises of Atlanta, Georgia. He and his family have provided an endowed gift to start The Keeter Center for Character Education. The Center is named in honor of Mr. Keeter’s parents, Ruby and the late Vester Keeter of Bradleyville, Missouri. It is the intent of the Keeter family to take a leadership role with College of the Ozarks in promoting character education on a national level.

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