

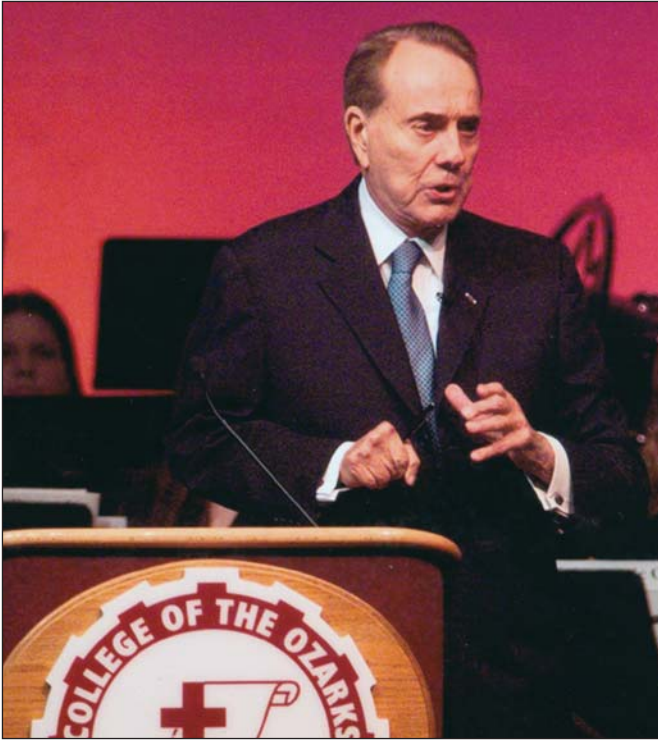
# College of **The** the Ozarks KEETER REPORT

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## Successful Character Forum, More Discussion Craved



Robert J. Dole

The Willard and Pat Walker Spring 2003 Character Forum presented former United States Senator Robert J. Dole as its featured speaker on Thursday, April 11. Mr. Dole is a decorated WWII veteran and served in the United States Army's 10th Mountain Division in Italy. This is the fifth annual forum hosted by The Keeter Center for Character Education at College of the Ozarks.

Mr. Dole's wit and stories captured the audience from start to finish. Several C of O students shared that they enjoyed how he made his points with humor. When addressing the subject of character, Dole said President Dwight Eisenhower was the epitome of character and referred to a short note scribbled by General Eisenhower just as he gave the order to send the troops onto the beaches of Normandy on D-Day. General Eisenhower prepared the note for inclusion in a press release just in case the landing failed. In the last line of the note Eisenhower stated, "If there is any responsibility for the failure, it is mine alone."

Senator Dole proclaimed, "That is character, when you don't look for a way out, but accept that you are the one who made the decision and you are the one accountable."

"There will always be bumps in the road, but you have to get up and move forward," Dole shared as he alluded to the accountability aspect of one's character and the people in our lives.

Acquaintances often become our true friends, displaying character through honor and duty. Senator Dole reiterated this thought as he told a story of the doctor who cared for him following his war injury. "They did not think I was going to make it after I was wounded. I was operated on ten different times by an Armenian doctor in Chicago who had immigrated to the United States. This doctor refused to take one penny for the operations and said that it was an honor for him to do something for an American serviceman."

Senator Dole pleased the crowd with his many references to fellow World War II veterans and recognition of their sacrifices. When he invited veterans of all wars to stand, they were given a round of applause. He also recognized all the young men and women in uniform from the various academies and colleges and spoke of their duty to our country and their patriotism.

***"That is character, when you... accept that you are the one who made the decision and you are the one accountable."***

Mr. Dole's presentation and question-and-answer session followed a series of character education events. In preparation for this event, the Forum Facilitators team comprised of College of the Ozarks employees prepared a booklet of character essays for the forum participants to use as a basis for discussion. Pulitzer Prize Winner George F. Will's writings were used and arranged into three themed sections for the Forum: Education and Athletics; Patriotism and Politics; and Contemporary Society and Culture.

Joining the C of O students were attendees from guest schools, including participants from



Dale Henry (center) is amused at something Senator Dole shared.

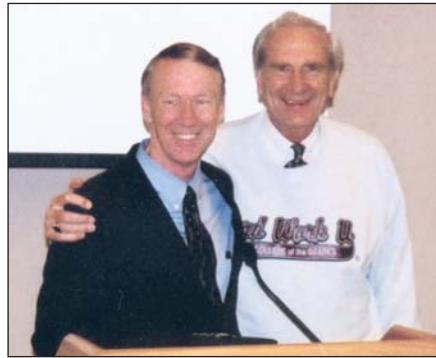
Bluffton College in Bluffton, Ohio, Evangel University and Southwest Missouri State University, both of Springfield, Missouri. The College also had the unique privilege of hosting representatives from each of the following military academies: the United States Air Force Academy from Colorado Springs, Colorado; the United States Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut; the United States Military Academy from West Point, New York; and the United States Naval Academy from Annapolis, Maryland.

The Pre-Forum events began the evening of Wednesday, April 10, and continued through Thursday, April 11. During this time C of O and guest participants had the opportunity to hear insights from three additional keynote speakers. Sharing his experiences on the topic of *Education and Athletics* was educator, author, trainer, entrepreneur, and motivational speaker, Dr. M. Dale Henry. Speaking on



C of O students Amanda Robbins (left) and Casey Guernsey (far right) pose at the reception with guest participants from Bluffton College.

the topic of *Patriotism and Politics* was General Terrence R. Dake, College of the Ozarks alumnus and former Assistant Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. To cover the third topic, *Contemporary Society and Culture*, was distinguished speaker Mr. Donald G. Soderquist, Executive in Residence of the Soderquist Center for Leadership and Ethics at John Brown University, and retired Senior Vice Chairman of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.



President Davis and Don Soderquist, will *Hard Work U.* attire soon be sold at Wal-Mart?

"The format worked very well and I feel it was a worthwhile experience," said Dr. Larry L. Cockrum, Dean of Administration and Executive Director for The Keeter Center for Character Education at the College. "I always like to hear the students' comments; they are the driving force behind our efforts."

The College conducted a Post-Forum evaluation, below are some of the questions and responses.

#### What do you feel you gained from the Character Forum?

*"I think this was arguably the most influential experience of my college career. The whole process was totally inspiring in every way. I learned so much about important political and worldwide issues, as well as about myself and my own beliefs."*

*"I gained more knowledge about character and more respect*



Terrence Dake addresses "Patriotism and Politics."

*for other people's opinions. The speakers all gave many helpful items about character and what character really is. I learned that through other people we can gain more knowledge and see what character is."*

#### What changes would you make in the format of the Character Forum?

*"More time with each topic for more discussion, I really enjoyed getting to debate with the other people."*

*"The only thing I would change is to have longer discussion times. I enjoyed all of the speakers; they were all top-notch. I also enjoyed being able to spend some 'play time' with the students from the academies."*

*"It was great, however, I would like for the forum to be longer; gained a lot from the experience."*



Students enjoy conversation with representatives from the Naval Academy and West Point during the banquet.



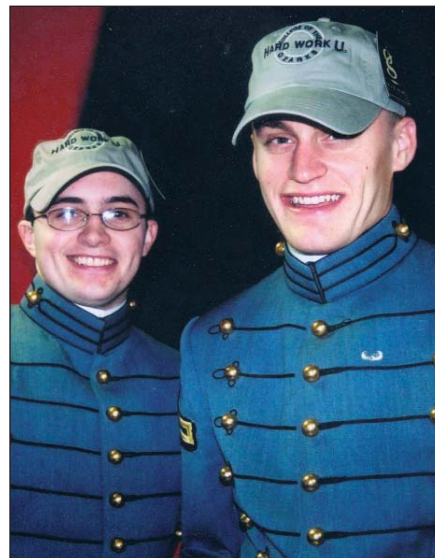
# A West Point Cadet's Perspective...

## Thoughts on the Character Forum at College of the Ozarks

I was given the opportunity to travel to the College of the Ozarks Character Forum, which allowed me to see how other schools deal with the same issues we have on our campus. At the Forum, eight schools attended from different areas. Forum attendees included the military academies and four other public or private schools. This Forum gave students at College of the Ozarks (C of O) a chance to see different perspectives, as some of the students have never left Missouri.

The conference staff did an incredible job of mixing the par-

Character Camp prior to their freshman year. C of O students have a lot of rules to follow. I was surprised because I thought only the military academies focused on developing well-rounded individuals with core values. C of O and the Academy had one major difference; that is, the students there follow the rules and do not try to challenge them. Their reason for accepting the rules is, "I chose to come here and therefore, I will obey the regulations," which I found amazing, because we also choose to attend a military academy.



West Point cadets show off their new Hard Work U. caps (even though they acknowledge it is not an "official" uniform change).

***"Sometimes a good leader has to take the risk of doing the right thing even if it is not supported."***

I think the reason for this is we create cynicism in the cadet culture even though we try to abolish it. There is always someone looking to modify

ticipants as they assigned seating and groups for the various activities. This allowed us to meet, interact and learn about all the participants. The conference focused on character, which is a prime focus for all the service academies. I was surprised to learn that it was also a part of the C of O curriculum. In fact, students there spend two weeks at

the rules or complain about them rather than accept them. This has to be performed at the top levels. Sometimes a good leader has to take the risk of doing the right thing even if it is not supported. Bob Dole, the conference speaker, addressed this topic. He suggested President Bush had to do this when he chose to go to war with Iraq. I think the same thing

has to happen at our academy. For example, if we disenroll cadets who commit Honor Violations or Multiple Conduct Offenses as explained in the Regulations, then cadets will soon learn that there is no tolerance for certain things and thus, abide by the rules. This is the case on the C of O campus for drinking tolerance. Their students cannot drink on or off campus; if they do and are caught they are dismissed from school. C of O has this policy, and amazingly, drinking is not an issue. It is an accepted rule because they know and have seen the consequences if found in violation.

## Former CIA Director to Visit Campus



Robert M. Gates

The Leonard B. and Edith Gittinger Community Convocation Series presents, Dr. Robert M. Gates, former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as guest speaker for the major convocation on October 7, 2003. Dr. Gates spent nearly 27 years as an intelligence professor in the Agency and is a three-time recipient of the CIA's highest award, the Distinguished Intelligence Medal. He is currently the President of Texas A&M University.

President of Texas A&M University.

### Upcoming Events

- Camp Lookout ..... June 2-August 14
- Honor America Celebration ..... June 29
- Character Camp ..... August 15 - 24
- Honor Induction/Etiquette Banquet ..... August 23
- Community Convocation ..... October 7
- Dr. Robert M. Gates, Former Director, CIA,  
Texas A & M University President*
- Veterans Day Celebration ..... November 11

# Legacies Will Forever Live On in the Lives of Students



This past year holds many dear memories and successes for The Keeter Center for Character Education. The legacies of two very special friends of College of the Ozarks will live on through the lives of many students their families have touched, both directly and indirectly.

Philanthropist Willard J. Walker, 81, of Springdale, Arkansas, died February 23, 2003. Over 60 years ago, Mr. Walker married his bride and lifelong companion, Mrs. Pat Walker. The Walkers have graciously given of their time and finances to countless facilities in schools, hospitals, and colleges. The College of the Ozarks has also been blessed by their generosity.

In 1999, the Walkers took an active role in character education and endowed The Willard and Pat Walker Character Academy of The Keeter Center for Education at College of the Ozarks. The Academy makes possible programs such as The Character Forums, explained in the cover story, and Character Camp. This Camp, held prior to the beginning of each semester, is a special orientation introducing all new students to character development and its importance for a student's success at College of the Ozarks and beyond.

Other longtime friends and gracious benefactors to the College and The Keeter Center for Character Education are Leonard B. and the late Edith Gittinger. Mrs. Edith (Edie) May Gittinger, 93, of Hollister, Missouri, passed away February 1, 2003. Edith and Leonard Gittinger were married August 21, 1938, in Chariton, Iowa, and spent over 64 won-

derful years together. In 1972, they moved to the Hollister area and became very active with the College.

Since then, the Gittingers have endowed a facet of The Keeter Center called The Leonard B. and Edith Gittinger Community Convocation Series. This program has brought prestigious speakers such as Lady Margaret Thatcher, General Colin Powell, Mrs. Elizabeth Dole and, most recently, former Prime Minister of Israel Benjamin Netanyahu, to College of the Ozarks.

Presently, there are two building projects under construction at the College, which will bear the Gittinger name. One of these will house the College's music department and is named after Mrs. Edie herself: The Edith Gittinger Music Center.

All can admire the lives of the aforementioned. Mrs. Gittinger will be remembered for years to come as her contribution continues to expose the students to wonderful examples of character through the Community Convocation Series and the education they will enjoy in the new state of the art music building. Not only does every full-time student reap from the seeds sown by Mr. Walker from the first day they step foot on campus for Character Camp, but many guest students will also benefit from attending the Character Forums.

These two faces will be greatly missed at College of the Ozarks, but their legacies live on. Hard Work U. is forever grateful for having known these two very special people.



James P. Keeter (second from left) and family

We extend a **special thanks** to James P. Keeter, a member of the Board of Trustees, College of the Ozarks. Mr. Keeter is a distinguished business entrepreneur and Chairman of the Board and CEO of Royal Oak Enterprises of Atlanta, Georgia. He and his family have provided an endowment gift to start The Keeter Center for Character Education. The Center is named in honor of Mr. Keeter's parents, the late Vester and Ruby 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.



[www.keetercenter.edu](http://www.keetercenter.edu) · 417-334-6411, ext. 2496  
Larry L. Cockrum, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 17 · Point Lookout, MO 65726

