

Public Health Leaders

Setting the
goals

Setting the
pace

Setting the
example

A fundamental strategy by which Carolina's School of Public Health creates sustainable, positive changes in public health is by educating the next generation of public health leaders. When it was suggested that we devote an issue of *Carolina Public Health* magazine to "leadership," we were enthusiastic.

Then came the first challenge—how to define "leadership" for the issue. The spectrum of possibilities seemed endless.

We looked at programs at our School with "leadership" in their names—Public Health Leadership Program, Executive Doctoral Program in Health Leadership, Emerging Leaders in Public Health....

These are all wonderful programs that have produced or enhanced the careers of many of our public health leaders. But *every* department and *every* program at our School has "developing leadership" as a principal foundation of its very existence. We train

leaders. So we asked each department in the School to nominate graduates who have become outstanding leaders. The response was astronomical. We were inundated with fabulous examples of "public health leaders" at different levels, disciplines and career stages.

We didn't have room in one magazine to cover them all. So, taking a deep breath, an editorial board of School representatives selected the people profiled here. This sample of profiles is not intended, by any means, to be a complete or definitive list. Leadership profiles will be a regular feature in the magazine. Please send us suggestions!

The work of our graduates and faculty is inspiring, indeed. By communicating their stories of leadership, we want to share “best practices” and provide opportunities for others in the field to make connections.

What makes a leader?

John Quincy Adams once said, “If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.”

As we began our profiles for this issue, certain ideas kept resurfacing: make *sustainable* changes; create vision and inspire people; help people help themselves; build bridges; listen to people, then listen some more; compromise; negotiate.... Here’s more of what our alumni shared about leadership:

- Dr. Deborah Parham Hopson, assistant surgeon general and rear admiral in the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, holds a monthly “Chat and Chew” luncheon to listen to employees of the HIV/AIDS bureau she oversees. “If you’re a leader, you listen to employees and try to treat them like they want to be treated,” she says. (See page 12.)
- A colleague says that Dare County Health Director Anne Thomas “communicates honestly and directly what others are afraid to say, and she is heard because she seeks to understand and solve, not judge or blame.” (See page 40.)
- Water specialist Greg Allgood learned from his mentor and boss, Procter & Gamble CEO John Pepper, that, “To be a great leader, you have to be willing to serve.” (See page 24.)

Leadership starts with vision

One of the foremost leaders associated with our School is former biostatistics professor Dr. Dennis Gillings, chairman and chief executive officer of Quintiles Transnational Corp. and chair of the School’s Advisory Council.

Gillings, CBE (Commander of the British Empire), and his wife, Joan, pledged \$50 million to our School in 2007. This Septem-

ber, we become the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. Neither Dennis nor Joan are profiled in this issue, because we plan stories on them in the fall issue of the magazine. But we would miss a great

all to embrace—this is the most important thing I learned from Dennis Gillings. It’s not good enough to have vision—you must be able to communicate it and get agreement and buy-in from all for a shared goal. Or as

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opportunity if we didn’t highlight Dennis’ leadership example here.

Dr. Bill Sollecito, director of the School’s Public Health Leadership Program since 1997, says he learned important leadership qualities from Gillings. Sollecito was a biostatistics student of Gillings while earning his DrPH at the School. Later, from 1982 to 1996, he worked for Gillings at Quintiles, ultimately as president of Quintiles Americas, where he was responsible for clinical operations in Canada, South America and the United States.

“Leadership starts with a vision, a view of where your organization should go,” Sollecito says. “All great leaders have the ability to envision the future and set out a path for

W. Edwards Deming describes it, there must be ‘constancy of purpose’ in the organization to achieve vision.”

Sollecito says he learned another important characteristic of leadership from Gillings—both in his classroom and as part of his leadership team. “One of the ways you empower people is to train new leaders. This is especially true in a university where our faculty are leaders and mentors of other leaders at every interface—through the classroom to the lab and most importantly, through everyday interactions. That is how I learned leadership from Dennis Gillings. The key is interchange of ideas—not top down, but through exchange, debate and collaborative learning.” »

inspire
negotiate
listen
envision
collaborate
empower
encourage
dream
communicate

Training leaders

“If I have seen farther than others, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants,” said Sir Isaac Newton.

Many of the inspiring public health leaders profiled in this issue laud the professors who coached, coaxed and challenged them through their coursework and into their careers. Professors like the late Al Tyroler, who helped students like Robert Verhalen carve new fields of study. (See page 22.) And professors like John Hatch, who taught students like Fiorella Horna-Guerra, “Don’t just ask people what they need. Let’s change the question. Ask them what their *dreams* are.” (See page 41.)

Within the next four years, more than 250,000 additional public health workers will be needed in the United States to avert a public health crisis, according to an assessment released this spring by the Association of Schools of Public Health (see www.asph.org/shortage). This startling statistic makes our work training leaders even more important.

challenge
motivate
influence

“We know that there will always be a shortage of well-trained and highly effective leaders in public health nationally and throughout the world,” says Dr. Edward Baker, director of the North Carolina Institute for Public Health, the School’s service arm. “We know that many top leaders are nearing retirement, and limited attention has been paid to organized approaches to developing the leaders of the future through well-resourced succession planning and career development programs. Our School is uniquely positioned to replenish the diminishing ranks of public health leadership in North Carolina, the U.S. and the world in light of our strong record of tailoring our programs to meet the needs of the health field.” ▶▶

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▶▶ The leaders profiled in this issue tell us that success does not come from one person's efforts and abilities alone, but from their ability to inspire others to work with them, and with each other. Working together — as a team — is a theme that other UNC greats have emphasized.

When Michael Jordan was a UNC freshman — long before he became a superstar athlete — his coach, Dean Smith, told him, “Michael, if you can't pass, you can't play.”

Smith, one of the most successful coaches in college basketball history, helped his players develop their skills by giving them the same three goals every year, as chronicled in his book, *The Carolina Way*:

- **Play Hard:** Insist on consistent effort.
- **Play Smart:** Execute properly. Understand and execute the fundamentals.
- **Play Together:** Play unselfishly. Don't focus on individual statistics.

aspire
facilitate
cooperate

Perhaps the strongest definition of leadership that emerged from our research was that leaders who lead by example are inspiring.

“I think the one true form of leadership is leadership by example,” says Dr. James Porto, clinical assistant professor of health policy and administration and director of the School's Executive Master's Program. “You don't become a leader by holding a certain position — leadership has to be earned. And it starts with ‘self-leadership,’ which is self-discipline and self-management. That's manifested by success, but also by how a person handles failure. Socrates summed it up — ‘Know thyself!’”

So read on about our alumni, faculty and students in this issue of *Carolina Public Health*. We hope you'll be as inspired by these stories of leadership as we are. ■

– BY RAMONA DUBOSE