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<http://www.kkpsi.org>

This month with Dr. Kirk Randazzo, Past National President

## Leadership without title or office?

So often, I hear Brothers express concern that there is no room for their leadership. When we pursue the conversation further, the title “leader” is confused with “officer.” We want officers who have leadership skills, but all Brothers are called to lead.

How can we take advantage of this?

Dr. Kirk Randazzo discusses how it works in this issue. So often, we get stuck at the point of trying to envision how this type of

leadership arises. Once we have a picture, we can go far. Dr. Randazzo helps create this picture for us.

This is a time when many Brothers consider officer positions in chapter, district, or band. Great is your opportunity, with or without title.

If you have questions, contact me at [mmatney@umich.edu](mailto:mmatney@umich.edu). Your leadership today can launch this Fraternity to great achievement!

Malinda

## Where do we start to create the picture of leadership for every Brother?

by Kirk A. Randazzo, Ph.D., Past National President

If you were asked for examples of prominent leaders, in any field, which individuals would initially come to mind? For most people, the only examples involve individuals who hold particular offices or titles. It is easy for us to conceptualize leadership by examining individuals who hold prominent positions, or offices or who have fancy titles. But, is leadership truly about attaining a particular position? Is leadership success measured by the election of an individual to a specific office? The obvious answer to these somewhat rhetorical questions is, “NO!” However, without the office or the title to help us envision leadership, what is left? How can one demonstrate effective leadership without possessing an office or a title? This article will explain three things that everyone can do to become effective leaders. To help us develop a useful mental image of these three things, allow me to focus your mind on an individual who was incredibly effective as a leader, but did not possess an office or title – Forrest Gump.

Think back to the last time you watched the movie *Forrest Gump*. When I ask most people to do this, I usually receive chuckles because they think of Tom Hanks’ character as the loveable little guy who was not too smart, but

incredibly lucky. When I claim that Forrest Gump was an incredible leader, those chuckles usually turn into fits of uncontrollable laughter (as some of you may be doing right now). However, I honestly believe that we all can learn important leadership lessons from Forrest Gump and this article is designed to explain three. These lessons can be referred to as the “Three A’s of Leadership”: Ability, Attendance, and Attitude. I affectionately refer to these lessons as the *Forrest Gump* Style of Leadership and the rest of the article will explain these lessons using scenes from the movie.

Everyone possesses special abilities and talents that we use in daily interactions. For the members of Kappa Kappa Psi these abilities include musicianship but they do not stop there. The first A of leadership is to use your abilities to motivate others. Forrest Gump’s best ability was running. This talent provided a scholarship to the University of Alabama, where the not-too-smart-but-incredibly-lucky guy received a college education. In Vietnam, his ability to run saved the lives of several members from his unit and ultimately earned Forrest the Congressional Medal of Honor. If you do not believe these are examples of leadership, let me provide one more. Remember the scene where Forrest runs across the country three times? By the end of that trip he has several people running behind and when he finally stopped, they all waited patiently for words of wisdom. We may all think of this scene as being humorous, but if we go beneath the humor, there is an incredible leadership lesson.



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### *Now that we have basics, let's get to more details of leadership*

Good leaders are able to use their abilities and talents wisely. Forrest Gump did not have an elected office, but he was still able to motivate others to follow his steps by only operating within his ability. Therefore the lesson is simple: lead through your abilities. Too often we try to imitate others when we lead and this sends confusing messages to people. Instead, we should look within ourselves, focus on our own abilities, and use those talents to motivate other individuals.

The second A of leadership is attendance and this is where individuals without (or those with) elected offices can be the most effective leaders. Again, Forrest Gump provides an excellent example of how attendance is essential to leadership. Think about the scene where Forrest is learning how to catch shrimp in Louisiana. Initially, he was incredibly unsuccessful at shrimping (catching boots and license plates instead of fish). Most people would probably have given up, but Forrest continued to shrimp day after endless day. In fact, when the other fishermen had given up and docked their boats, Forrest was still out working. As chance would have it, a hurricane struck and all of the docked boats were destroyed, leaving Forrest alone to harvest all the shrimp. In Kappa Kappa Psi we often provide service to bands that others do not want to do, such as moving equipment. It would be very easy to just give up and dock the boats, so to speak. However, we lead by showing up day after day to perform those tasks and provide that service. Therefore, the lesson here is that attendance is beneficial. Although we may wish we were somewhere else, it is important that we show up if we wish to be effective leaders.

The final A of leadership is attitude and this aspect has such a tremendous impact on leadership that it cannot be emphasized enough. Have you ever watched an individual who constantly complains? When you see someone with a negative attitude, do you think how nice it would be to belong to a group with that person? Usually negativity breeds contempt.

When we see people constantly complaining, we want to get as far away as possible. However, when people are excited and enthusiastic about what they do, it generates excitement within us and often causes us to change the way we view the world. Forrest Gump possessed an incredibly positive attitude. Remember the scene in the army barracks when everyone was assembling their rifles? Forrest finished first and the drill sergeant claimed that he had set a company record. Forrest's response was not a negative, unenthusiastic "yes sir." Instead, he shouted "YES DRILL SERGEANT!" and went back to work. Another example of Forrest's positive attitude occurs when he speaks to Lt. Dan after Vietnam. Initially, Lt. Dan was skeptical about Forrest becoming a shrimp boat captain. However, Forrest's optimism changed the way Lt. Dan viewed the world and ultimately, when Forrest was married, Lt. Dan showed up with "magic legs" and a more positive outlook. In Kappa Kappa Psi, our actions are viewed by the other members of the bands. If we are constantly negative then those people will not want to join the Fraternity, and could ultimately think negatively about the bands. However, if we are always excited and enthusiastic about everything we do (especially the mundane tasks) then we will inspire others and change the way people view the bands. Thus, the lesson here is attitude can be everything! Whatever attitude you project, people will notice. Good leaders recognize this fact and therefore work to inspire others through a positive attitude (even when they are having a bad day).

These lessons do not require you to have an office or committee chair or any other leadership position. The *Forrest Gump* Style of Leadership can be employed by anyone at anytime. Using these techniques will inspire and motivate other people to achieve more and be the best they can be. I hope you incorporate these lessons into your personal leadership style.