The Henry Toll Fellowship helped me identify my own leadership strengths, work more effectively with my colleagues and strengthen my relationship with the media.

Henry Wolcott Toll, a Colorado senator from 1922 until 1930, was a **Harvard educated lawyer** who founded The Council of State Governments in 1933.

The Toll Fellowship Program was begun in 1986 to equip talented state policymakers with the skills and strategies to **meet future challenges**.

This year’s program will include sessions dedicated to improving leadership skills, dealing with the media and **team-building**.

The Toll Fellows Program is in its **21st year**.

Among the graduates of the Toll Fellow program are current members of Congress, lieutenant governors, secretaries of state, attorneys general, state treasurers and judges.

Each year’s program includes a session addressing pressing policy issues and trends shaping governance on the state level. Previous topics discussed have included immigration and the aging population.

Past Toll Fellow session leaders have included **nationally renowned** media expert **Arch Lustberg**, pollster **John Zogby**, former Kentucky **Gov. Martha Layne Collins** and former Arkansas **Gov. Mike Huckabee**.

The Toll Fellows Program is an “**intellectual boot camp**” where participants gain valuable insights and perspectives not readily available in the course of everyday public service.

The Toll Fellowship is one of the **nation’s most prestigious leadership development programs**, and the only one open to officials from all three branches of state government.

Each year 40 of the **most impressive state leaders**—10 from each of CSG’s regions—are selected to participate in the five-night, six-day program.

The Toll Fellowship Program is located in Lexington, Ky.—the heart of Bluegrass horse country.
Sen. Philip Bartlett  Maine

Building consensus and sharing responsibility have become vital tools of the trade for Maine state Sen. Philip Bartlett. During his first term in office, Bartlett faced a difficult budget issue which required a small group of his colleagues to develop a plan to cut nearly $125 million in spending to remove a controversial borrowing proposal from the budget.

“I quickly learned there is no limit to what you can accomplish if you are willing to let others take the credit,” he said. “By letting other colleagues in both parties dominate the public discourse, we were able to build consensus around our proposal.”

Lessons like these have helped Bartlett in his position as chair of the Utilities and Energy Committee.

“By working toward compromise but also building support to move legislation forward even if consensus proved un-achievable, I have been able to keep parties at the table,” he said, “and strengthen the committee process by ensuring that it cannot be driven to a halt by a few divisive members.”

Bartlett was motivated to return to Maine after law school, but found the state offered few job opportunities and low salaries.

“This motivated me to pay more attention to politics and to search for ways to enable more of the people who so love the state to live, work and raise their families here,” he said.

FAST FACTS

Cum laude graduate of Harvard Law School  •  Former volunteer at Mission Possible Teen Center  •  Married with three dogs: Joe Pete, Miss Otis and Milton

Mark Brainard  Delaware

Public-private partnerships are of particular interest to Mark Brainard, chief of staff to Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner.

As the federal government continues to shift costs to state and local governments, Brainard said, leaders must determine how to do more with less.

“Leaders at the state level will be forced to identify new and creative ways to provide services, develop partnerships with other public entities or the private sector and find efficiencies in current programs to meet the growing need to provide core services,” he said. “Innovation, creativity and the competitive drive that have served the private sector so effectively will be necessary to keep state governments effectively responsive to their citizens.”

Brainard has worked in both the executive and legislative branches of government. He said his decision to enter this field was influenced by the personal and professional satisfaction he derives from serving the public through government service.

“Working on behalf of the public good, particularly those segments of the population that typically are not empowered to work on their own behalf because of economic or social status not only benefits the disenfranchised,” he said, “but equally important, builds stronger communities.”

FAST FACTS

Graduate of the first class of CSG’s Eastern Legislative Academy  •  Began his working life as a sales associate for Sears and Roebuck  •  Obtained his Juris Doctorate from Widener University School of Law in 1994

Rep. Michael Brunelle  New Hampshire

Freshman Rep. Michael Brunelle was selected by his House colleagues from Manchester to serve as chair of the Manchester delegation. He is executive director of his local political party and deputy political director for the state party.

And he’s only 22 years old.

Brunelle attributes his success at such a young age to teachers and elected leaders in Manchester.

“Their guidance and dedication to a troubled, misguided young man who had great potential is what drives me today to give back to the community that has provided me with the opportunity to once again thrive and successfully achieve anything I undertake,” Brunelle said.

Outside state policy trends, Brunelle is especially interested in United States world trade policy.

“The world’s economies are beating America to the punch,” he said, “and the result has been that our country has become heavily invested in and dependent on global markets while simultaneously falling behind in terms of innovation and the production of goods and services.”

This self-proclaimed high school underachiever graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a 3.8 GPA and was elected twice as student body president at UNH-Manchester.

FAST FACTS

Eucharistic minister at the Parish of the Transfiguration since January 2005  •  Led a current events topic discussion at Hillcrest Terrace Retirement Home  •  Made the New Hampshire Union Leader/Ocean National Bank Top “Forty leaders under 40” list for New Hampshire leaders
**Secretary of State Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez New York**

Lorraine Cortes-Vazquez is the first Latina to hold the position of secretary of state in New York—but, as a colleague said, “her accomplishments extend far beyond the boundaries of any particular community.”

Cortes-Vazquez said she tries to uphold Mahatma Ghandi’s philosophy that one should “be the change you want to see in the world,” and this led her to public service.

“Early in my professional career, as a community advocate, I recognized that to change systems and policies, you had to have access to the systems that needed to change,” she said. “Fortunately, I was recruited early in my career to serve in Mayor Koch’s new administration. It has been my goal since to ensure that governmental systems are accessible to all New Yorkers.”

Before she was nominated as secretary of state, Cortes-Vazquez was vice-president of government and public affairs at Cablevision Systems Corporation, one of the largest cable and entertainment companies in the United States. From 1998-2004 she served as president of the Hispanic Federation, and in 2001, she was appointed to the New York Board of Regents, a position she held until this year.

**FAST FACTS**
- Married to Louis M. Vazquez, mother of Michael and grandmother of Michael and Mark
- Held positions working with children, young people and senior citizens in East Harlem
- Past executive director at ASPIRA, the oldest and largest nonprofit group dedicated to education and leadership development in young Latinos

**Jennifer Davis Delaware**

Jennifer “J.J.” Davis can manage money.

Davis, who works as director of the Delaware Office of Management and Budget, is responsible for the overall coordination and development of the governor’s annual $3.2 billion operating budget and more than $500 million capital budget.

As a former deputy secretary of education in Delaware—and a mother—Davis said she has developed a “keen interest in improving public education.”

“The old way of teaching is no longer relevant,” Davis said. “The classroom of the future will need to be more global and technologically advanced so we can continue to build on the foundation of our future: our children.”

Davis said her father, a career civil servant who worked as a legal counsel for the federal government, instilled in her the desire to work in the public sector.

“He consistently reminded me as I grew up the importance of giving back to the community and making a difference in people’s lives,” she said. “He truly believed one of the best ways to demonstrate your commitment to others was to work for the government. He also strongly valued hard work, dedication and a commitment to quality work through objective and critical analysis.”

**FAST FACTS**
- Participated in a dual degree program at Penn State which allowed her to receive a masters’ of science in policy analysis and a bachelor of arts in political science
- Led and managed the eventual creation of the Office of Management and Budget
- Colleagues say she possesses contagious energy and is infectious with enthusiasm

**Rep. John Keenan Massachusetts**

Massachusetts state Rep. John Keenan has spent 13 years of his life in public service—two years as assistant district attorney, eight as city solicitor and the past three as a state representative on the Judiciary, Tourism and Energy committees.

“As a state representative, I have become a recognized state leader on tourism issues and have been on the front lines dealing with criminal justice policy in our state,” he said, “including legislation on drunk driving, sex offenders and capital punishment.”

Of particular interest to Keenan is criminal re-entry, the judicial system and sex offender management, especially related to the Internet.

“The Internet is a particular challenge,” he said. “Although it is a wonderful tool for innovative economic growth, it has also, unfortunately, become a tool for sexual predators.”

Keenan said one of the most interesting parts of his job is learning something new every day.

“Whether a technical debate on stem cell research and science or moral deliberations on the death penalty, every issue is a chance for me to learn and grow as a legislator, a public servant and a person,” he said. “Through that education I have become a better representative for my constituents.”

**FAST FACTS**
- Harvard graduate and member of the Harvard football team
- Consistent participant in the Pan Mass Challenge, an annual 192-mile bike ride to raise money for the Dana Farber Cancer Institute
- Cum laude graduate of Suffolk University Law School
Sen. Ruth Hassell-Thompson New York

New York Sen. Ruth Hassell-Thompson is, above all, trustworthy. “By leading through example on controversial issues or unpopular stances, I have shown my conference and my constituency that I am true to my word,” she said. “A lack of tolerance for providing information that is wanted rather than what is real has proved to my colleagues and community that I can be trusted.”

Hassell-Thompson’s policy interests include campaign finance reform. New York state’s limit on campaign contributions is the highest in the nation—more than 10 times the federal limit.

“More than 99 percent of the public does not contribute to campaigns,” she said. “We must work diligently to take away the pernicious effect that wealthy patrons have on state officials.”

Economic stratification and political marginalization motivate Hassell-Thompson to participate in public service. One major factor that influenced her decision to enter politics is the opportunity to be a “voice for those within my community whose voices cannot be heard over the screams of wealthy corporations, privilege, greed, and racial and class bias,” she said.

According to Hassell-Thompson, government has big shoes to fill, especially with today’s changing paradigms. “Government can adopt policies that create affordable units rather than institutionalizing homelessness, and make strides on the issues of hunger, obesity, diabetes and domestic violence,” she said.

FAST FACTS
Represents part of the Bronx and Westchester counties  •  Recipient of the Sojourner Truth Racial Justice Award  •  Married mother of two and adoring grandmother

Rep. Helen Head Vermont

Third-term Vermont Rep. Helen Head is very aware of generational issues facing her state. She lost her uncle and mother-in-law to Alzheimer’s disease in the past three years and also is the mother of two teenagers.

“Our rapidly growing older population is already creating challenges and opportunities in our educational and transportation systems, workplaces and in leisure activities,” she said. “The population also needs special attention in housing development and expansion of end of life care.”

Head is the chair of the General, Housing and Military Affairs Committee. Under her leadership, the committee has passed legislation to secure job retention and has increased benefits for Vermont National Guard members, added consumer protections for mobile home owners and supported Vermont’s entrepreneurial ventures.

“My workload has increased exponentially with the need to plan committee time and stay on top of the committee’s issues—before, during and after they leave our room,” said Head.

But, according to Head, the challenges are part of being a good public servant.

“My paternal grandfather, John W. Head, was a Kentucky state legislator in the 1960s,” she said. “The importance of good citizenship and the importance of community service were messages I received through childhood.”

FAST FACTS
Co-founder of the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  •  Currently a nonprofit planning and development consultant  •  Motivated by the need to give back to her community through public service

Sen. Terrence Nelson Virgin Islands

Sen. Terrence Nelson’s district will face unique challenges, compared to some members of this year’s Tolls class.


The free trade status agreements are with the incorporated United States of America, Nelson said, and that would not include the Virgin Islands.

“Due to our unincorporated status, we will be prohibited from trading directly with our Caribbean neighbors and pay higher costs for commodities because of additional transportation costs,” Nelson said. “Federal policies are restricting use of our natural resources such as fishing waters and use of lost beaches.”

Nelson’s history in public service dates back to his teaching career, when he was elected nine times as Teacher of the Year and was a two-time nominee for Who’s Who Among American Teachers.

“As a teacher for nine years, I helped shape the minds and behaviors of many students,” he said. “As an activist, I have organized numerous protests and demonstrations to demand responsible and accountable governance and public service.”

Nelson said a public official’s responsibilities are weighty. “Government’s primary responsibility is to provide the infrastructure and services to enable public, private, corporate and individual citizens to exist comfortably in a society.”

FAST FACTS
Proud father of four children  •  First Rastafarian chosen as a representative by the people of St. Croix  •  Motto: “Positive is how I live”

Chelsea Turner Connecticut

Giving a voice to members of disenfranchised groups—like people with disabilities, those who are homeless and those who struggle with HIV/AIDS—are among the ways Chelsea Turner, the policy and legislative affairs liaison for Connecticut Gov. Jodi Rell, contributes to her state’s government.

By working as a lobbyist for a firm that represents nonprofit organizations, Turner said she has been able to “penetrate barriers between political parties and various branches of government and at the same time, facilitate compromise and build consensus.”

Building consensus and sharing ideas among states is critically important to Turner, who has developed long-standing relationships with Connecticut legislators on both sides of the aisle.

“While each state has its own individual set of laws, many of the overarching policy concerns we are facing are the same,” she said. “With the network of colleagues I hope to develop through the Toll Fellowship program, I will have the opportunity to discuss and debate issues as well as government policy and administrative procedures.”

Currently, Turner covers the Judiciary, General Law, Veterans’ Affairs, and Public Health and Aging committees for Rell and is responsible for helping develop and advance the governor’s legislative agenda.

FAST FACTS
Participated in the Presidential Classroom program in D.C. as a high school junior  •  Has worked as a lobbyist and campaign manager, and as a legislative fellow for the Connecticut Office of Legislative Research
Rep. Brenda Clack \textit{Michigan}

Third-term Michigan Rep. Brenda Clack has one major goal in the legislature: Impact the lives of Michigan's residents. Her service on four major committees—Health Policy, Education, Families and Children's Services (for which she is chairman), and New Economy and Quality of Life—helps her to achieve that goal.

“I feel compelled each day to impact lives by approving good legislation and introducing legislation to not only impact my district, but the state,” Clack said.

But she knows there will be challenges. One goal is to improve the lives of children in foster care and those in transition, as well as providing better health care for all Michigan residents.

“Band-aiding health care is unconscionable today,” she said. “I have introduced proactive legislation to address the issues of higher health costs.”

A former teacher, Clack has always been interested in government. She’s also active in many civic and service organizations.

“Volunteering was also a component for preparing myself for the political arena,” said Clack.

She organized the Anti-Violence Task Force comprised of community, business and religious leaders. The group has gained citywide attention as it strives to increase neighborhood awareness.

\textbf{FAST FACTS}

- Is a life member of the NAACP
- Co-chaired the Michigan Legislative Black Caucus’ commemoration of the Brown vs. Board of Education’s 50th anniversary celebration
- Received the Crime Victim Advocate of the Year by Flint’s prosecutor, David Leyton, and the Service Educator Award from Connect Michigan Alliance

\textbf{Sen. Tarryl Clark \textit{Minnesota}}

Less than a year after she was elected to the Minnesota Senate, Tarryl Clark’s colleagues in the majority caucus selected her as assistant majority leader.

Her goal, along with Majority Leader Lawrence J. Pogemiller, is “to return the Senate to a more productive and bipartisan institution.”

Clark said she and Pogemiller have made great strides toward that goal through a number of actions, including working well with the minority caucus and setting a public tone of productivity and policy over politics.

That’s important as Minnesota faces many challenges.

“Leadership from elected officials will be needed to keep our communities working together and moving forward, rather than tearing themselves apart,” said Clark.

The desire to help strengthen communities was one factor in her decision to enter public office after years as an advocate for families, seniors and veterans.

“Obviously, this larger goal is influenced by numerous smaller goals,” said Clark. “One of the most important is to stem the growing tide of polarization in our communities, our institutions and our elected officials.”

She hopes to work as an elected official toward solutions, “instead of attempting to harvest conflict.”

\textbf{FAST FACTS}

- Was a member of the 2006 Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development
- Was executive director of the Minnesota Community Action Partnership
- Was chief author of legislation to expand early childhood education

\textbf{Sen. Timothy Grendell \textit{Ohio}}

First-term Ohio Sen. Timothy J. Grendell had a close role model to motivate him to run for public office: his wife, Diane.

Grendell was elected an Ohio state representative in 2000, succeeding his wife, who had served for eight years.

“During that time, I saw her help individual constituents with state-related issues and make major policy changes for the good of all Ohioans,” Grendell said. “Her public service inspired me to enter public service, and it has been extremely rewarding.”

Grendell was elected to the Ohio Senate in 2004. He successfully led the effort to eliminate a proposed $5 use fee at state parks and has led the fight against E-check, an emissions testing program.

A practicing attorney, Grendell has also spearheaded passage of legislation dealing with complex issues such as tort reform, eminent domain, medical malpractice and state tax reform. He’s also helped lead efforts to rein in state spending and the burgeoning state bureaucracy, and considers education a priority.

“School districts face a squeeze, plus the prospect for financial catastrophe—if the state doesn’t act to address the projected massive shortfall in the next decade,” Grendell said.

\textbf{FAST FACTS}

- Serves on the Judiciary-Criminal Justice, State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs (SLGVA), and Energy and Natural Resources committees
- Worked as a baseball and softball umpire while in college
- Is a former Judge Advocate General and served as a military prosecutor for one year at Fort Hood, Texas
Sen. Mattie Hunter Illinois

A major reason Sen. Mattie Hunter entered public service was her desire to improve the quality of life for individuals and families.

“I recognize the vast disparities that still exist between upper- and lower-class individuals and primarily minority and majority communities,” said Hunter. “I am passionate about reducing those inequalities through the legislative process.”

Hunter, who represents Illinois’ third district, is interested in issues that illustrate that desire. She sponsored bills in the 94th General Assembly to improve access to health care, and plans to work with colleagues during the 95th session to support new health care and educational initiatives.

She also has an interest in economic development.

“I want to continue the entrepreneurial spirit of Black Chicago,” she said.

African-American business ownership is at an all-time high in the U.S. today, according to Hunter.

“I am interested in continuing to bring grocery stores, specialty shops, residential buildings and hotels to my community,” she said. “Bringing jobs and minority-owned small businesses into a community will deliver an economic boost to the local community and will help to close the wealth gap between African-Americans and Caucasians in Chicago.”

FAST FACTS
Has been involved in international activities, such as a China Tour-Trade Mission in 2003  •  Developed and managed a shelter for battered women and children, and trained drug and alcohol counselors  •  Is a former administrator for the city of Chicago

District Court Judge David L. Knutson Minnesota

Minnesota District Court Judge David L. Knutson only had to look to his father for inspiration to enter public service.

“It was clearly his example of serving people and making a positive impact in the lives of others that compelled me to enter the same professions and to serve as a district court judge,” Knutson said of his father, who was also a lawyer and state senator. “His focus was on serving individuals and not himself.”

Knutson represented Minnesota’s District 37 from 1993 to 2004. He was appointed to the district court bench by Gov. Tim Pawlenty in 2005.

“As judges, we will face challenges in the coming years of having to do more with less by processing an ever-increasing caseload without significant new resources or new employees,” said Knutson.

That relates to a public policy issue that draws Knutson’s concerns—maintaining public confidence in government and elected officials.

“The courts are specifically challenged to maintain the perception and reality of fairness and impartiality in the face of increasing involvement of special interest and big money in contested elections,” Knutson said. “There has always been cynicism and apathy toward government, but as we see increasing divisiveness in society and less agreement on public goals and priorities, cynicism and apathy continue to grow.”

FAST FACTS
Was a Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development fellow in 1999  •  Received the YMCA Distinguished Volunteer Award in 1999  •  Selected as Legislator of the Biennium by the Minnesota Retailers Association in 2002

Rep. John Lesch Minnesota

John Lesch wears two hats in Minnesota.

As a state representative, he is actively involved in developing policies for the state. He’s also an assistant city attorney in St. Paul, with his primary focus being the prosecution of domestic assault cases.

“In this role, I am able to see the impact of state policy where ‘the rubber hits the road’ of its acute implementation,” he said.

That gives him a unique perspective, and he has used it to explain the real life impacts of policies to colleagues on legislative committees.

“With a foot in both worlds, I seek to breathe new life into mined policies,” he said. It has helped him in the areas of criminal justice, re-entry programs and safe neighborhoods.

Lesch knows Minnesota will be facing challenges in the coming years as tax changes have saddled the state with structural deficit. He knows it’ll take consensus from both parties to resolve those problems.

“The common vision and values which once allowed us to agree, relatively easily, on a consensus as to Minnesota’s ills and the resources we would direct toward them, have gone the way of so much intractably partisan hogwash,” Lesch said.

FAST FACTS
Was instrumental in forming a committee for victims’ rights, and was appointed the first chair  •  Elected to a third term with 78 percent of the popular vote  •  Is president and general manager of Triumvirate Development

Rep. Donovan Olson Iowa

Iowa Rep. Donovan Olson has always had a passion to serve his community.

He began first by attending public meetings on downtown revitalization in his community of Boone County, Iowa.

“It was my belief that a citizen must be involved to be heard,” Olson said.

He became involved in the process to create a comprehensive plan and zoning ordinance for Boone County. When officials failed to vote on the recommendations, Olson decided to run for Boone County Board of Supervisors. After two years of public hearings, Olson was instrumental in getting the plan approved.

He was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives in 2003.

Among his goals are to push for more spending on education and to address Iowa’s need for an energy plan.

“Expansion of renewable energy in an environmentally friendly way is the greatest challenge Iowa will face in the coming years,” Olson said.

Olson helped draft the Iowa Energy Independence Act, a bill to expand the production of renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, and research and development.

As for education, Olson was part of the effort to pass a package of education reforms and funding in the last legislative session.

FAST FACTS
Serves as a distance education coordinator at Iowa State University  •  Helped draft the Iowa Values Fund, a 10-year comprehensive economic development strategy  •  Conducted a case study of Main Street Iowa’s Rural Main Street program for his master’s thesis, “Evaluation of Main Street Iowa’s Rural Main Street Program”
Sen. Vicki Schmidt  Kansas

As a registered pharmacist, first-term Sen. Vicki Schmidt brings a wealth of practical experience to the Kansas legislature.

As the costs of health care continue to rise, the topic has dominated many issues in state government, according to Schmidt.

“Kansas faces many challenges with regard to health care, not the least of which is the increased money needed for our Medicaid budget,” Schmidt said.

Health care technology is another area the legislature is probing, and Schmidt said the state must move toward more technology with regard to health care information and e-prescribing. Her background has been helpful in dealing with the health care issues.

Schmidt served as vice-chair of a committee that developed the plan to consolidate the functions of many agencies that deal with health care into the Kansas Health Policy Authority.

“While the timeline was aggressive when the legislation passed, the Authority has exceeded my expectations and has put Kansas on the leading edge of many issues with regard to Medicaid, healthy lifestyles and addressing our uninsured population,” she said.

She is the vice chair of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee and has also served on the Ways and Means Committee and the interim Judiciary Committee.

FAST FACTS

Received the American Pharmacists Association Hubert H. Humphrey Award in 2007  •  Served previously as director of the Kansas Medicaid Drug Utilization Review Program, Drug Rebate Program  •  Was appointed to the Kansas State Board of Pharmacy, where she served as president for two years

Assemblyman Ron R. Schuler  Manitoba

Manitoba Legislative Assembly member Ron R. Schuler grew up knowing that serving as an elected official was an honorable way to live life.

But it wasn’t until he and wife Tanya had their first child that Schuler ran for public office, first as a school trustee.

“By working on the inside of the school system, I could ensure her (his daughter’s) education would be the best it could be,” Schuler said.

He was first elected a member of the Manitoba legislature in 1999, and is responsible for formulating his party’s response to legislation dealing with Labor & Immigration, Energy, Science & Technology, the Kyoto Accord, Civil Service Commission and Lotteries & Gaming.

A businessman, Schuler is a graduate of BILLD (Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development), CSG-Midwest’s leadership program. Schuler believes the Toll Fellows program will help him be a better leader and positively influence his provincial government’s future legislation.

“With only 1.4 million people and a continual out-migration of young people, we may have to face the fact that difficult choices are going to have to be made in order to service our debt load,” said Schuler. “Manitoba is going to have to call upon individuals that will lead in this area.”

FAST FACTS

Is president of Gingerbread World Inc., an importer of European confectionary goods to Canada and the U.S.  •  Has been active in community organizations, including Big Brothers, Manitoba Inter-Cultural Council and German Canadian Heritage Foundation  •  Is the father of three children, Brigitta, Stefan and Corina

Rep. Pat Strachota  Wisconsin

Pat Strachota is a leader.

She is only in her second term as a state representative, but her colleagues in Wisconsin have already selected her to serve in the leadership position of caucus vice-chair. She’s attended the Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development (BILLD) and the Darden Emerging Political Leaders Program in her brief tenure as a legislator.

“Fundamentally, effective leadership, political or otherwise, is clearly defining your goals and implementing a plan to achieve them,” said Strachota. “Effective leaders do this by making the members of the group want to help to achieve those goals as well, allowing everyone to achieve some ownership of the project and results.”

Through her work on committees and in drafting legislation, Strachota has acted as a mediator to bring two opposing sides together to compromise so a legislative initiative could move forward.

She hopes to use that skill in working on Wisconsin’s budget deficit.

“My goal is to strike a balance between the high levels of services our citizens have come to expect, without strangling our economy due to overburdensome levels of taxation,” she said.

She is also interested in working on health care issues, particularly with regard to controlling costs.

FAST FACTS

Is a 30-year resident of Wisconsin’s 58th Assembly District, though she was born in Gates Mills, Ohio  •  Served as chairperson of the Washington County Samaritan Health Center Committee, overseeing a long-term care nursing home  •  Is an employee of the Washington County Human Resources Department

The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

—Martin Luther King Jr.
Sen. Diane Black  Tennessee

While she never considered running for office until a friend who was retiring from the legislature encouraged her to do so, Tennessee Sen. Diane Black has dedicated her life to helping others as a registered nurse. Once she decided to seek elected office, Black used her new position to forward issues addressing public health and safety. In her freshman year in the legislature, then-Rep. Black pushed an effort to make the legislative plaza smokefree. While her initial effort ended in a compromise that left designated smoking areas, the attention drawn to the issue undoubtedly played a role in the movement that recently ended with all state buildings being designated smokefree. In addition to public smoking, Black has sponsored legislation to remove junk food from school vending machines, to require children to wear helmets when bicycling and to require insurance companies to offer coverage for colonoscopy screening.

Black’s interests have not been limited to health care issues. She has also taken a role in other important challenges facing the state, including education and transportation. Tennessee ranks near the bottom in high school graduation rates and K-12 test scores. Black recognizes that sometimes conventional fixes won’t suffice.

“I want to be a part of looking outside the box at alternatives that other states have used to bring about success in education,” said Black.

FAST FACTS
Named American Cancer Society Legislator of the Year in 2003  •  Served as associate professor at Volunteer State Community College  •  Mother of three: Steve, Jill and Katie

Jerry Boden  Maryland

Loyalty is important to Jerry Boden. It was something he learned during his years as a U.S. Army officer. It was that sense of loyalty that drew Boden away from the corporate world to serve as chief of staff to Maryland Lt. Gov. Anthony Brown.

“I grew up with the lieutenant governor and have been his closest friend for over 30 years,” said Boden. “When he asked me to come on board as his chief of staff, I had a tough decision to make. I accepted the job primarily out of loyalty to my friend, but with a bit of trepidation.”

As chief of staff, Boden has been tasked with heading up two of the administration’s top priorities—a new state health care policy and growing the state work force.

The administration has set an ambitious goal of creating 60,000 new jobs by 2011. Boden has taken the lead in this initiative working with state business leaders and agencies in his position as chair of the BRAC subcabinet. Boden’s corporate experience has provided the skills and communication abilities to bring the necessary players to the table for this project.

Boden’s experience makes him an even more perfect fit for the challenge of overhauling the state’s health care system. With several years of management experience in the health care field, Boden is well positioned to make the needed changes to achieve administration goals.

FAST FACTS
1985 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point  •  Received an MBA from Georgetown University  •  Received the General Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award while serving in the U.S. Army

Rep. Paul DeMarco  Alabama

While health care is an issue at the forefront for many leaders, Rep. Paul DeMarco’s interest in driving change in Alabama’s health care system goes beyond the broad need for better service and insurance coverage.

DeMarco, inspired by his own mother’s battle with breast cancer, has taken an interest in how Alabama cares for those with cancer.

“My mother’s death from cancer provoked me to move from simply being a bystander to being a volunteer and then into the public arena,” said DeMarco. “Cancer strikes all segments of society and it influenced me to take a leadership role to help my state help residents suffering from cancer.”

Alabama is ranked near the top in the nation for cancer deaths per capita. DeMarco wants to change that. He is working with a coalition of groups and medical providers to create new partnerships—public and private—that can help prevent more cancer deaths while providing better care to those already diagnosed with the disease.

Cancer care may be the issue closest to DeMarco’s heart, but it is not the only example of his efforts to build consensus and cooperation to address pressing concerns. As a member of the Judiciary and Boards and Commissions committees, DeMarco is taking an active role in confronting increasing Medicaid costs and an increasing and aging prison population.

FAST FACTS
Graduated from Auburn University with a degree in journalism  •  Chosen as one of the Top 40 under 40 by the Birmingham Business Journal  •  Achieved the level of Eagle Scout
Rep. Kenny Jones Missouri

Rep. Kenny Jones is only in his second term in the Missouri House of Representatives, but his entire career has been devoted to public service.

Jones served 11 years as a Missouri state trooper, and 20 years as Moniteau County sheriff before being elected to the Missouri House in 2005.

“I was deeply influenced by my parents who taught me to always help others,” Jones said.

He has taken that advice to heart. As a state trooper, Jones suggested cost-saving measures to improve public safety. As sheriff, he implemented programs to improve employee morale and provide better and more efficient services to constituents.

Jones’ experience in law enforcement has helped him in public policy areas outside the public safety realm.

“I have come to realize that education and crime rates are related,” he said. “The failing schools in our urban areas have filled our state prisons with individuals who have dropped out and feel they must resort to crime as a way of living because they cannot read, write or have the ability to obtain a decent paying job.”

Jones said health care will be a major issue for Missouri, especially as the state revamps its Medicaid system.

FAST FACTS
Vice president of the Missouri Sheriff's Retirement Board • Father of four children • Enjoys fishing, canoeing, skiing and camping

Secretary of State Mark Hammond South Carolina

A desire to serve, to give back is often an ideal instilled from youth. Such is the case with South Carolina Secretary of State Mark Hammond.

The secretary credits the examples set by his parents for his decision to enter public service. His father was a dedicated state trooper, and his mother served as a county personnel director.

“I have nothing but the utmost respect for my parents’ selfless service,” said Hammond, “and I am proud to follow in their footsteps.”

As secretary of state, Hammond has faced many of the most difficult issues challenging elected officials across the country. The world is increasingly run electronically and Hammond, recognizing this, has helped South Carolina revise its corporate codes while making electronic transactions easier.

Hammond would also like to see increased access to technology benefit the state’s children as part of a broader effort to improve South Carolina’s education system.

“Unfortunately, surveys rank South Carolina 49th and 50th in the nation in high school graduation rates,” said Hammond. “This is unacceptable … We must look at inventive ways to teach our children in order to prepare them for the global economy.”

Hammond uses his efforts at improving the quality of life in South Carolina to follow in his parents’ footsteps by serving those who elected him.

FAST FACTS
Father of three children: Matthew, Ross and Grace • Completed special basic training at the South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy • Served as chairman of the International Relations Committee for the National Association of Secretaries of State

Janie Huddleston Arkansas

For 30 years, Janie Huddleston has dedicated her career to improving the lives of children.

From the chalkboard in a first grade classroom, Huddleston has traveled a long way to the halls of government where she now serves as deputy director of the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services. In her current capacity, she continues serving children as she administers several of DHHS’s youth-oriented divisions, including the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

Huddleston’s duties at DHHS are now administrative as opposed to the hands-on nature of the beginning of her career, but her work continues to have a large impact on the lives of Arkansas children.

“When serving in leadership roles within the Department of Health and Human Services, I led the development of key initiatives,” said Huddleston. “This year we will fully fund quality pre-K for at-risk children, an initiative I helped begin in 1998.”

Funding quality and much needed child development and education programs is a challenge Huddleston faces head on.

“While we have developed a policy unit that works on issues such as children’s mental health,” said Huddleston, “we flounder when we try to develop non-Medicaid sources of funding to support children in the system. We must better coordinate our funding streams to support the needs of children and families.”

FAST FACTS
Served as principal at three different elementary schools • Started her own cloth diaper service—Diaper Depot Inc. • Received the Child Welfare League’s National Award for Advocacy in 2002
Sen. Alex Mooney  Maryland

Family relationships play a large role in shaping Maryland Sen. Alex Mooney’s legislative acts and interests. The son of a Cuban immigrant, Mooney is proud to bring a unique point of view to the legislature where he is the only senator of Hispanic descent. Growing up learning of life under a Communist government left Mooney with a profound appreciation for the civil liberties and freedoms often taken for granted.

In addition to a unique childhood experience, Mooney benefits from a close relationship with his wife, a doctor, as he attempts to tackle deficiencies in Maryland’s and the country’s health care systems. “My wife is a neurosurgeon, and my conversations with her and her colleagues have increased my interest in health care policy,” said Mooney. “Given the great technology in the United States and the very qualified and capable pool of doctors and nurses, we should have a better health care system.” Mooney has shown interest not only in the nationally difficult issue of health care, he has also tackled decreased tax revenues with advocacy of increased fiscal responsibility. It is such action on behalf of so many issues important to his citizenry that has helped Mooney serve effectively into his third term.

FAST FACTS
Was the youngest member of the Maryland Senate when elected in 1998  •  Enjoys playing rugby  •  Has two children, Lucas and Camille

Jody Wagner  Virginia

Competing in the shrinking global economy is a concern for all states and the nation as a whole. To this end, Secretary of Finance Jody Wagner calls on a background in corporate and banking law to help Virginia stay on solid ground economically.

In addition to helping Virginia retain its AAA bond rating, Wagner has dedicated years of service to strengthening the commonwealth’s financial footing both in her current role and while serving as treasurer from 2002–2006.

In order to keep Virginia competitive, the secretary recognizes the need to build on a base of diverse industry and business interests that will offer opportunities to a broad work force. “Virginia has successfully attracted knowledge-based industries, but not all of our work force can succeed in those industries,” said Wagner. “We have not attracted a car manufacturing plant in the past 20 years.”

Wagner hopes to explore a number of options including re-examining what role government can and should play in economic development.

Wagner has dedicated her career to serving the residents of Virginia and has no regrets because she is confident her efforts have had an impact.

“Based on my experience, I am convinced that state service is an effective way to make a significant difference,” said Wagner.

FAST FACTS
University of Virginia Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership board member  •  Mother of four: Rachael, Jason, Elizabeth and Maxwell  •  Graduate of Northwestern University, Washington University School of Law and Vanderbilt University School of Law

Tonya Williams  North Carolina

The daughter of a career public servant, Tonya Williams always knew she would follow her mother’s example. Her mother was a social worker, but Williams wanted something different. To that end the current general counsel to the president pro tempore of the North Carolina Senate studied political science and earned a legal degree.

“When I was in college, I decided, that like my mother, I, too, wanted to work in public service,” said Williams. “However, I wanted to work at a level of government where I could help shape and direct policy.”

While serving the government and 7 million residents of North Carolina, Williams has addressed many of the most challenging issues including education reform. But the issues she has dedicated the most time to thus far are campaign finance and ethics reform. Her efforts to help members of the House and Senate draft meaningful legislation has led to increased transparency and what Williams hopes will be greater public confidence in the political process.

Williams would like to follow this recent legislative victory by playing a similar role in drafting legislation that will help protect the environment by combating global warming and ensuring nature’s sustainability. Environmental issues are of personal interest to Williams, who recognizes that solutions in this policy area are hard to come by in today’s political environment, but she is up for the challenge.

FAST FACTS
Fellow, North Carolina Institute of Political Leadership  •  Clerked for Judge Joseph John Sr. and Judge Loretta C. Briggs, North Carolina Court of Appeals  •  Has traveled extensively including Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Europe

Marquett Youngblood  Oklahoma

Many who claim a lifelong desire to serve the public follow traditional educational courses such as law or medical school. Marquett Youngblood knew he wanted to help others as a result of his childhood experiences growing up in a lower income family fighting to make ends meet.

“The opportunity to serve others in need by improving their capacity to function independent of public assistance was the primary reason I entered public service,” said Youngblood. “Although my family never received public assistance, we got very close to the edge in spite of my father’s multiple jobs and many hours of hard work.”

But it wasn’t a career in social work or education that drew Oklahoma’s Department of Human Services chief operating officer. It was the field of information technology.

“Accessing the opportunity for technology education, I was determined to move from being close to needing assistance to a place where I could aid others,” said Youngblood.

After completing an associate, bachelor’s and finally a master’s degree, Youngblood has used his education to work up the ranks in the Department of Human Services, transforming the efficiency and accessibility of the department.

Among his accomplishments, Youngblood has led efforts to improve the agency’s Web site and other technologies. Today the agency Web site has progressed to allow those who owe or are owed child support to log on to access their balance and pay online, among other services.

FAST FACTS
Certified Public Manager  •  Chairperson IT Solutions Management Association  •  Graduated from Rose State, Southern Nazarene University and the University of Oklahoma
Rep. Savali Talavou Ale, American Samoa

House Speaker Savali Talavou Ale has served in the American Samoa legislature for 26 years. Options for young people in American Samoa are limited, said Ale.

“The only other alternative, except catching a plane and moving to the United States, is to work for the canneries,” he said.

So in 1980, he ran for the House of Representatives and has been there since. Ale views the Toll Fellowship program as an opportunity to exchange ideas with other government leaders about the challenges of the global economy.

“American Samoa is no longer isolated from the rest of the world,” he said. “To survive it must keep up with the world in the ever growing area of business dynamics and critical thinking.”

The challenge for American Samoa is complicated by its political status. Residents are not citizens of the United States but are designated as nationals. This classification protects the communal land ownership system, said Ale, even though it frustrates economic development. The fear, he said, is that if American Samoa loses the land tenure system that currently exists, it will lead to the demise of its cultural system.

“Leaders of American Samoa,” said Ale, “must have the capacity to process new ideas and concepts quickly to stay competitive.”

FAST FACTS
Previously taught business administration at the Leone High School • Is the longest-serving member of the American Samoan House of Representatives

Rep. Rosie Berger, Wyoming


“Volunteering inspired me to believe we can all enhance our communities by taking an active role in the process of government,” said the Wyoming legislator.

Berger is a consensus builder.

“She stands out among her fellow legislators for her ability to tirelessly bring together people from differing points of view to reach conclusions that work,” said Gov. Dave Freudenthal.

One example, said Freudenthal, was Berger’s ability to bring opposing sides together to agree on a quality child care proposal.

“Her determination and skill in hammering out agreements,” he said, “made a significant difference in the fate of the measure that was signed into law on March 1, 2007.”

As a member of the House Appropriations Committee, Berger believes major challenges will come from state budget fluctuations because Wyoming’s economy is based on natural resources.

“We anticipate major revenue downturns from time to time,” she said. “As a policymaker, I need to do wise budgeting and analysis of current and future needs and be able to effectively communicate decisions to my constituents.”

FAST FACTS
Has been involved in location management projects for the film industry in Wyoming. Among the films she has worked on are Flicka, Rollerball, The Horse Whisperer and Starship Troopers • Serves as chair of the Legislative Technology Committee

Janice Doggett, Montana

Janice Frankino Doggett grew up in an Irish Italian Catholic family that valued education and public service.

A plaque in the family living room displayed a quote from Pope Paul VI: “If you want peace, work for justice.” That concept has been the core belief that has guided Doggett in her private and public life.

As chief legal counsel for Montana Secretary of State Brad Johnson, a 2006 Toll Fellow, Doggett was instrumental in designing the state’s Eelector Identity Verification Process, which expanded the requirements under the Help America Vote Act. The program was considered so successful, it was awarded a CSG Innovations Award in 2005.

Doggett believes it takes more than laws to streamline the election process; it also takes education and training.

“One of the challenges I have faced and will face to a greater degree in the future will be to keep the mechanics of our election process free of partisan politics,” she said. “We can begin to meet this challenge by educating the political parties.”

Doggett was the first female president of the Montana High School Association Board of Control; served on the Montana Supreme Court Gender Fairness Task Force; and is past president of the Women’s Law Section of the State Bar.

FAST FACTS
Was crowned Miss Montana in 1976 • Rented a facility and taught gymnastics to hundreds of children to put herself through college and law school
Alaska state Rep. Carl Gatto learned early the value of serving people’s needs and making them happy.

“Learning in elementary school that I could make money delivering groceries to tenement houses in New York City. It was a calling,” said Gatto. “Relying extensively on tips I soon recognized that working one-on-one satisfying customers’ needs was a place where I felt comfortable and prosperous.”

He continued serving people as an adult first as a school teacher for five years, then 26 years as an Anchorage firefighter and paramedic. After he retired, he was elected to the school board before entering the state House.

As chair of the House Education Committee, Gatto has been instrumental in increasing K-12 school funding for four consecutive years.

Serving his third term in the House, Gatto has also championed public safety issues, such as the state’s first DUI/ignition interlock legislation in response to a growing drunken driving problem in Alaska.

He is chair of the House Resources Committee and, with other state leaders, is promoting the building of a 1,600-mile natural gas pipeline to Alberta and the lower 48 states.

“I love my work and know that my career choices were the best I could have made,” said Gatto.

FAST FACTS
Served as volunteer mentor for children in outreach programs • Interests include flying, marathons and triathlons

Mary Herrera has only been New Mexico’s secretary of state since January, but she has already made her mark on the office.

During her first three months on the job, Herrera initiated the passage of two bills that will streamline the election process for New Mexico voters and make it more efficient. One bill deletes Social Security numbers as identifiers, providing voters with unique ID numbers. The second provides for an automatic recount procedure, something New Mexico didn’t previously have in place.

Herrera’s interest in public service started early.

“As a public servant for over 33 years, I worked myself up the ranks at a county level from clerk typist in 1974 to assistant comptroller in 1989,” she said.

She was elected Bernalillo County Clerk in 2000 and re-elected in 2004. Bernalillo is New Mexico’s largest county.

Herrera also has public policy concerns outside her role as secretary of state, including children’s issues and elderly care.

“As a board member of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials, I requested during last year’s conference for the organization to include for its members a session on how to effectively manage parent aging, illness and care while keeping up with busy work schedules,” she said.

FAST FACTS
Active in the community working with the Make A Wish Foundation, Toys for Tots and United Way • Has raised funds for the New Mexico Music Association and the New Mexico Hispano Entertainers Association


Sen. Sheldon Killpack wasted little time in getting involved with challenging issues when he was appointed to the Utah Senate in 2003.

He was Senate chair of the legislative committee appointed to settle litigation on a new 14-mile highway in Northern Utah that cuts through a portion of wetlands along the Great Salt Lake.

Environmental groups had filed lawsuits that stopped construction and cost the state more than $200 million.

“We not only needed to find common ground with the plaintiffs,” said Killpack, “but also persuade our colleagues in the legislature to pass a bill during a special session. We were successful, and the road will open next year.”

One person impressed by Killpack’s leadership during those negotiations was Utah Gov. Jon M. Huntsman.

“Throughout the negotiations Sheldon stood out as a leader and demonstrated rationality and effectiveness on a very emotional issue,” Huntsman said.

Killpack said Utah’s rapid growth presents challenges for education.

“The fact that the federal government owns well over 60 percent of the land in the state, which results in less property tax revenue, combined with much larger than average family sizes and you quickly see that the financial forecast is not rosy,” he said.

FAST FACTS
Assistant Majority Whip of the Utah Senate • The youngest of nine children • Vice president of Academica West, charter school management consultants

For state Sen. John McGee of Idaho, public service is a way of life.

“It hasn’t been an acquired skill I’ve had to learn,” he said.

McGee’s father is a Vietnam veteran who continues service to his county as a member of the 183rd Attack Battalion.

“My father’s example to give of oneself unselfishly has been a character foundation and way of life in my family,” McGee said.

Although he is the youngest member of the Idaho Senate, McGee has a record of accomplishment. He was co-author and helped negotiate a 10-year strategy to improve fire-prone ecosystem health in the West. This was a collaborative effort with the Western Governors Association, the Forest Service and the Department of Interior.

He was principal author and coordinator of a report that identified potential pilot projects in Idaho that would test land management practices used by federal agencies.

McGee is chairman of the Senate Transportation Committee, a member of the Health and Welfare Committee and the Agricultural Affairs Committee.

McGee sees Idaho’s growing population as a challenge for state leaders.

“Issues such as funding for high-growth areas such as education, health and welfare, and transportation will have to be examined if the state of Idaho is to keep up with the rapid growth,” he said.

FAST FACTS
Is a board member of the 2009 International Special Olympics • Serves his alma mater, Albertson College, as a member of the Board of Trustees • Is the recipient of national distinguished service awards from the National Association of Agriculture Educators and the National Association of State Foresters

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Robert O. Lampert  Wyoming

As director of the Wyoming Department of Corrections, Robert O. Lampert believes in a holistic approach to corrections, fostering person-centric, cross agency solutions to the individuals and families of the prison population.

“I had a cousin who went to prison where there was no attempt at helping him address the behavior that landed him there,” Lampert said. “His criminality increased as a result of his incarceration. Public policy at that time seemed to suggest that locking people away as punishment for their crimes and expecting time and maturity to change them was an acceptable approach. I decided to see if I could make a difference by changing the system from within.”

Lampert believes agencies should share client information. He views that as an opportunity to provide legislators with the criminal justice data they need to make sound policy decisions in sentencing policies that help reduce incarceration rates.

“The people who suffer the most as a result of agency-specific, program-centered silo approaches are our children and families,” he said.

Lampert, a lawyer, previously served in corrections management posts in Texas and Oregon.

FAST FACTS
Previously an animal trainer and showman, training bottle-nosed dolphins, sea lions, dogs and horses • Began public service career as a corrections officer with the Texas Department of Corrections

Sen. Michael Machado  California

State Sen. Michael Machado’s background prepared him for his role as chair of the California Senate Committee on Revenue and Taxation.

He graduated with a degree in economics from Stanford University, earned his master’s degree in agricultural economics from the University of California at Davis, and, in 1988, attended the Harvard Agribusiness School in London, England.

Before entering the state legislature in 1994, when he was elected to the California Assembly, Machado worked for the Agency for International Development in Eastern Europe and Russia, assisting farmers with the transition from a closed to an open market economy.

Machado was the author of Proposition 13, the Safe Drinking Water, Clean Water, Watershed Protection and Flood Protection Bond Act. He also assisted in the passage of Proposition 50, the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act of 2002.

“It’s important to advance California’s water policy to support the state’s economy and growing population,” Machado said. “I will continue to work with urban and rural, environmental, agricultural and manufacturing interests to ensure good quality water is available to meet their needs.”

FAST FACTS
Owns and operates a family farm that has been in the family three generations • Was influenced to run for public office by his grandmother, an immigrant who believed it was important to help make other people’s lives better

Rod Tanonaka  Hawaii

Rod S. Tanonaka believes his contributions to Hawaii’s state government have been behind-the-scenes in nature. However, that doesn’t mean he believes government business should be conducted behind closed doors.

“In recent years, there have been increased calls for transparency in decision-making,” he said. “As the chief clerk of the Senate’s Committee on Ways and Means, I not only embraced such a change, but advocated for as much public disclosure as possible.”

Transparency, he said, has forced decision-makers as well as staff to do thorough, thoughtful and detailed research on issues.

Tanonaka is now chief of staff for Hawaii Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, who was a member of the 2000 Toll class.

“In my current role,” said Tanonaka, “the challenge for public policymaking comes in advocating that while public resources must be shared by all, with those most in need getting priority, it also comes with the expectation that everyone must sacrifice for the greater good.”

It takes courage, he said, to support what promotes fairness to all, yet provide’s growth to industry and economy. “Doing what is right in the long term over what is politically expedient will be my biggest challenge.”

FAST FACTS
Has served in the private sector as a registered lobbyist for the Hawaiian Electric Company and the Hawaii Government Employees Association • Began his public service career as a budget analyst for the House Committee on Finance
Toll Fellowship

and the Essence of Leadership

By Russell Copeman, 2006 Toll Class Representative

I’m not a big fan of management gurus, so I was especially struck by a quote from Peter F. Drucker that I heard at last year’s Henry Toll Fellowship Program: “Management is about doing things right. Leadership is doing the right things.”

The statement brought home to me that leadership is not just about the role you assume but also about the ethics of doing what’s right. Leadership is about the means as well as the ends.

There are always a number of significant moments in our lives. Finding a life partner, the birth of a child, assuming for the first time a position of public trust. For me, being a Henry Toll Fellow ranks, rather unexpectedly, among those remarkable experiences. It provided me with the opportunity to acquire new skills and to learn various strategies to become a better leader. It taught me about dependence and cooperation. It also challenges participants to examine and confront our own shortcomings and, most importantly, allows us to learn from one another. Strong bonds are forged with people of very different backgrounds and experiences and everyone comes out the better for it.

I urge the fortunate class of 2007 to throw yourselves into the Toll experience as completely as you can. Submerge yourselves in the camaraderie and you can’t help but learn things and become “new and improved.” I know you will emerge better leaders. Try to remember that, though leaders can be molded, true leaders always strive to do the right things.