

Critical Issues Breakfast

Speaking at the Critical Issues breakfast, Saturday morning, Thomas Jefferson (portrayed convincingly by Patrick Lee) told board members “respect and gratitude are due those who devote time and effort to render youth fit governors of the age to come.” He pointed out that there are issues critical in our day just as in his, and shared seven foundational principles of leadership to help us all in addressing those issues.

1. Leadership is not about you. Rather it is based on a motivation to serve. We lead for the sake of others.
2. Do what’s right. The whole art of leadership is being honest and pursuing with steadiness what is right.
3. Don’t seek authority or power for yourself. Spread it as broadly as you can, involve others in the decision making and finding solutions.
4. Be wise in the exercise of authority. Self limiting power will enhance power.
5. Do good work with a humble spirit and a low profile.
6. Expect to be opposed in what you do. One of the responsibilities of leadership is responding to opponents; there are two sides to every issue.
7. When you’ve done all you can do, retire. Know when to stop and hand over power.

Jefferson illustrated these principles with examples from his life and writings from his own pen and he added one caution, “Do not look for answers to federal powers.” He ended by saying there is always a choice between hope and despair, and we must side with hope if we are to dream.