

Special Honor - MDF Annual Meeting 2011

Before we close today's events – I would like to take this opportunity to honor and thank another special leader who is in our midst. A little over an hour ago, we started this award ceremony by honoring a bold female leader who has distinguished herself in a myriad of ways and who has led in a very public way – well known throughout the state. It is fitting that we end with honoring a woman who – while equally bold, leads in a much quieter, under the radar style.

Years ago, my wonderful co-worker and friend at the State Planning Office, David Keeley, used to speak of “leading from behind” – and I used to think that was a very odd phrase. But I now think this is a perfect description of this person.

One of my very favorite quotes is of Margaret Thatcher who once said, “Being in power is like being a lady – if you have to tell people you are, you aren't.” I rather think that these two ladies have a bit in common. While both are small in stature – make no mistake, they are mighty in deed, a true force to be reckoned with! In fact, this small lady we are honoring today has managed more leaders in this room than even the most renowned CEO.

My oldest son studied Kosho Ryu Karate for several years and earned his black belt. He explained to me the titles given to the various degrees of black belt. There is: Sensei – which means teacher; Master; Shihan – which means Master of Masters; and the highest title of all is Hanshi - I was stunned to learn that Hanshi means Root Waterer.

The mightiest of all, proudly wears the title that implies: Humility, Humbleness, No one is too small or too insignificant for his care, He makes others grow. This is exactly the type of leadership we are honoring right now. And so today – we will end our program by honoring a Root Waterer of sorts – one who leads from behind – one who cares for all.

And in addition to getting one of these coveted awards – which will likely require a bigger office – I also want to present this sentiment that seems to describe her leadership style:

“Have I ever told you you're my hero...

You're everything I wish I could be...

I can fly higher than an eagle...

...Because you are the wind beneath my wings”

Presented with the deepest respect and affection from the Theta (with Kelly 2000-2001), Iota, Kappa, Lambda, Mu, Nu, Xi, Omicron, Pi, Rho, Sigma, and Tau classes of Leadership Maine, a Governor Kenneth M. Curtis Leadership Award goes to Cheryl B. Miller.