

Winningstad Dinner

Thank you very much, Craig.

You know, in a few minutes I've got to take the red eye express back to Washington tonight. But I can't tell you how glad I am to join with all of you tonight to help the Boy Scouts of Oregon -- but also to salute and express my personal affection and admiration tonight for someone who should be called Oregon's high tech "renaissance man" - Norm Winningstad.

Norm...my dear friend...I've thought a lot about the years in which we've known each other. We go back a very long way. And I'm so happy about you being honored in this splendid way and in connection with such an outstanding organization.

Anyone here who knows Norm Winningstad has a reservoir of stories that could entertain us all evening long.

Norm's just that kind of guy...

Engineer...inventor...entrepreneur...rock video freak...businessman, par excellence. Aviator... philanthropist...political activist and advisor...corporate leader. Father...husband...and so very much more.

I've known Norm since I first ran for State Representative from Washington County some 15 years ago. He was one of my first supporters. And Norm, I remember first meeting you over lunch at Nendel's in Beaverton and...listening to you.....

.....In fact, anyone who has lunch with Norm finds that listening is an art that you must quickly learn.

But, on that day I met you, I remember listening to you describe how technology had not -- and would not -- imprison Man...but rather would liberate Man and lift him to heights that he could only now dream of.

That irrepressible optimism -- that exuberant faith in Man's ability to build a better world -- is the essence of this man.

For Norm, that spirit conquered many challengers. The product of a working class family during the Depression, his mother was his inspiration -- impressing on him the value of education. And he took it to heart, finishing high school at the age of 16 and going to college on the GI Bill, and today having endowed a professorship at one of our institutions of learning in our state.

The Irish writer, Frank O'Conner, tells in one of his books how, as a boy, he and his friends would make their way across the Irish countryside and...when they came to an orchard wall that appeared too high to climb, they would take off their caps and toss them over that wall: Then they had no choice but to follow them. The Norm Winningstad I know has tossed his hat over many walls. He's a risk taker because he knows, in America, that's how you make change.

And risks aren't all on the up-side. In fact, after leaving Tektronix, Norm's first business venture was a failure! But then he saw the potential in something called the "array processor" and believed in it so much that he and Delores went into hawk, sold his planes, mortgaged their house, and put all of their chips on the table for it.

That product, of course, became the cornerstone of Floating Points Systems which caused a sensation when its stock first went public in the late 70's...and which led to Norm's selection as Oregon's Small Businessman of the Year in 1981 and Oregon Business Leader of the Year in 1983.

Today, no one can dispute that Norm Winningstad has arrived. Yet this man is still taking risks with new enterprises and encouraging other young people to do the same. He has actually encouraged employees to do friendly spin-offs from Floating Points when they develop a good product idea that isn't fully in keeping with the mission of Floating Points itself.

You know, Norm, it seems like yesterday to me when this whole Floating Points thing began. My campaign headquarters, in my first race for Congress, was a small room in West Slope -- right next to another small room you were renting for Floating Points.

One of Norm's men, Alan Charlesworth, remembers those days as well as I do. Alan says he had been working at Floating Points for about three weeks when this guy came through the door wearing coveralls...started fiddling with the phones, trying to fix them.

Alan said to himself that it either had to be the janitor or Norm! And since they couldn't afford a janitor, he knew it must be the boss!

It was the boss

When Norm Winningstad is committed to an idea, he's really committed. He thought a sales tax was essential to Oregon's future, and so he contributed \$40,000 of his own funds to that cause.

Once Norm even rounded up a high level group of businessmen and flew them down to Salem in his helicopter to lobby the Governor for the sales tax.

They say it was history's first known helicopter assault on the Capitol lawn.

Since then, the State has banned helicopter landings. The State says it's not safe. But Norm really believes the Governor put the kabash on it to keep Norm from dropping in out of the sky to lobby him!

But you know what Norm's admirers and I respect most about him is that he has not let success make him forget that he's a human being.

Many have the ability to give what Norm gives. But few have such a belief in giving.

He and Delores gave up a significant number of their own shares in Floating Points so that their employees would have an adequate pool of shares for stock option grants in the company.

The two of them are among the major contributors, individually, to public television. Norm sponsors ads during TV cartoon shows promoting public libraries and books for kids.

They are major supporters of the arts and Norm has been known to quietly donate his planes to organ transplant patients who had to be rushed to the East Coast.

Norm Winningstad has supported political candidates of both parties and business enterprises of all kinds all over the state because if he believes in something, he contributes.

And you see, that's the point: For Norm Winningstad, life is not a "zero sum" game. For him, if you give something to someone, one party isn't a gainer and the other a loser. Both, in a special way, are enriched. Both are winners. As he puts it, its a "win-win" game.

How appropriate it is to be honoring a man tonight who represents so beautifully the values and virtues of scouting.

In fact, Norm, I'm just looking here at some terms describing some of the classic characteristics of a Scout and thinking about how they apply to you:

Trustworthy...absolutely.

Loyal...You bet.

Helpful...Ask thousands of Oregonians.

Friendly, courteous, kind.

-oOo-

Obedient...Actually, here, I think you could use a little work, Norm, but I think you understand what I've been trying to say.

...And tonight we're all here to say how very much you and Delores mean to all of us.