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Welcome to the second edition of the W.T. Beebe newsletter! Written by the students of the W.T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations, part of the Robinson Business School at Georgia State University, this newsletter is sent out to friends and well-wishers of the Institute. Along with providing information on the various Beebe events, it provides interesting reading for HR professionals and students alike.

FOCUS ON FRIENDS OF BEEBE

Remembering Bill Key - A Tribute

By: Bruce Kaufman, Sr. Associate, Beebe Institute

It is with great honor and pride that I reflect back on one of the dearest, big-hearted and most dedicated men I have known – the late William P. “Bill” Key. Bill was an executive-in-residence here at GSU. He helped raise a considerable amount of the funds for the establishment of the Beebe Institute. In his honor: the William P. Key Scholarship was established.



To date, eight graduate students majoring in HRM and IR at GSU have been the recipients of this scholarship. Now that the years have passed and students and faculty have come and gone, only a few of us are left who actually remember the individual whose name and contributions made it all possible. So, I am pleased to have the opportunity to acquaint others with this fine man.

Bill received his MBA at Georgia State in the late 1960s. Like thousands of other GSU alumni, he attended night school, balancing coursework with the demands of a full-time job while helping his wife Norma raise a family. Many years later, when I got to know Bill, he would look back on his MBA days with a mix of appreciation that GSU made it possible for him to continue his education and with gratitude that his statistics professor had mercy upon him.

Bill was employed in the Industrial Relations Department at the Lockheed Corporation’s aircraft plant in Marietta. He worked his way up and by the time I

got to know him, he was a senior executive, carrying the title Vice President of Industrial Relations.

Bill was in charge of the entire human resource function at the Marietta facility. He handled all aspects of contract administration with the local union (The International Association of Machinists). Every three years when it was time to bargain a new contract, Bill would put aside his "Mr. Nice Guy" persona, disappear for a few weeks to California where negotiations took place, and go head-to-head in collective bargaining. Several of those times during negotiations, strikes occurred, testing to the fullest, his skills as a manager, negotiator, and employee advocate.

Bill retired from Lockheed in 1988 but wanted to stay active and put to good use his knowledge and skills in the employment arena. Just at this time, Delta Air Lines gave a sizable financial gift to the College of Business to establish The W.T. Beebe Institute of Personnel and Employment Relations. Director Mike Jedel saw a great opportunity to bring Bill on board and help get the new institute up and running. Bill Key became the Institute's first Executive-in-Residence.

My personal relationship with Bill started in 1989 when I succeeded Mike Jedel as Institute Director. I came from the Economics Department and, while I had done a good bit of research and academic writing on industrial relations, my contacts in the Atlanta business community, and knowledge of the practical end of human resources and industrial relations, was very modest.

Bill Key's title continued to be Executive-in-Residence, but in reality, he was my right-hand man, consultant, and close friend. One of the first things we did together was form a Board of Advisors for the Beebe Institute. Since I knew few business people in Atlanta, Bill suggested who would be the best people, set-up face-to-face meetings, and initiated agreements to serve. With his help, we obtained the top human resource executives from Delta, Coca-Cola, Georgia-Pacific, Siemens, Holiday Inn Worldwide, and several other prominent Atlanta companies to be on the Board. Trust me, this was a BIG step up for the Beebe Institute, and Bill made it possible.

Bill helped us tackle fundraising. Our target was a \$1 million endowment. Delta had pledged an initial sum, but made the remainder contingent on raising matching money from other companies. Bill helped put together a list of contact companies, worked-out our solicitation letters and presentations, and then followed-up with phone calls and visits. Again, this was way beyond what I could have done on my own, but working together, we were successful. In 1993, the Institute's endowment passed the \$1 million mark.

Bill also put his own money on the table for the good of Georgia State University and its students. Each year, he donated many hundreds of dollars to purchase new books in the human resource area for Pullen Library.

In 1993, I stepped-down as Beebe Director; Bill continued on as Executive-in-Residence. Shortly thereafter, however, Bill received the hardest news of his life, cancer. Bill fought it valiantly and bravely, and for a while the news was optimistic. But then the cancer returned, and Bill simply could not beat it. On June 1, 1998, Bill Key passed away, survived by his wife Norma and four children. Mike Jedel and I attended Bill's funeral.

Bill Key made many contributions to the Beebe Institute and his alma mater, Georgia State University. Each student who has received a Key scholarship, or has read a book at the library donated by Bill Key, owes a debt to a great and caring person. He was one of the best friends and greatest supporters I have ever had, and I remember Bill Key with great fondness and appreciation. Today, his wife Norma Key is a big contributor to the scholarship in her husband's honor.

Thanks Delta Airlines Foundation

The W.T. Beebe Institute received a very nice gift to the Foundation from the Delta Airlines Foundation. As you may be aware, Delta has been a long-time contributor to the Institute and provided an enabling grant for the start up of the Institute.

FOCUS ON FACULTY



Lynn Shore, a Senior Beebe Associate, is currently on leave at the University of California – Irvine. In terms of teaching, Lynn taught two sections of a case in organizational behavior to MBAs this fall (136 students!). Lynn is now teaching strategic HR as an elective course. In the spring, she will teach 3 intense one-week leadership courses in UCI's residential program in Lake Arrowhead: Executive MBAs, fully employed MBAs, and full time MBAs.

Lynn is also Associate Editor of the *Journal of Applied Psychology*. In addition, she is working with a number of world-wide researchers on a Beebe sponsored research book publication entitled "The Employment Relationship: Examining Psychological and Contextual Perspectives." The book will be published by Oxford University Press, Oxford, England.

Lynn is co-editing a special issue of the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* on the topic of Employment Relationships. It will be completed this spring. Lynn and family (husband Ted, sons, Jason and Ben) have been touring California and visiting relatives to the extent possible. They are renting a townhouse in University Hills, a faculty housing area that's about 2 minutes from Lynn's office.

Bill Bommer & Ed Miles have had a manuscript accepted at the *Journal of Organizational Behavior* entitled, "Does one good turn deserve another? Coworker influences on employee citizenship."

FOCUS ON BEEBE ALUMNI

Randy Patterson, MBA, HRM 2001, recently accepted a position with Home Depot in Atlanta as Manager of Retail Staffing. Randy will be responsible for building the process, tools, and technology to ensure that Home Depot employs a diverse, high performance workforce.

Todd Winkleman, MBA/MS HRM 2002, accepted a position with Daimler-Chrysler in Belvidere, IL. Todd will be working mainly on labor relations.

FOCUS ON STUDENTS



The Atlanta Engineering Personnel Association (AEPA) presented Beebe student Preyasi Vakil with a \$1,000 scholarship in December, 2002. The AEPA is made up of recruiters in high-tech industries in the Atlanta area. Preyasi is the second GSU HRM recipient of this scholarship. The AEPA scholarship is one of the several scholarships awarded in the Beebe Institute. The AEPA award is made on the basis of academic achievement, community service, and HRM work experience. Congratulations Preyasi!

Preyasi is a current MBA student at RCB. She has a master's degree in HR Management from the Leeds University Business School, UK, and has worked at Pricewaterhouse, Coopers and Maersk Shipping. Preyasi double majored in accounting and economics for her bachelor's at the University of Bombay, India. She has received several scholarships, among which was the National Merit scholarship from the Government of India. She has taken on various leadership roles during her studies, and actively participates in IASEM (International Association of Students in Economics and Management) and MENSA International.

FOCUS ON GSU SHRM CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

The GSU student Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) chapter got off to a solid start for the academic year with three meetings during fall semester. The first gathering, held in late September, was an organizational meeting in which officers were elected for the coming year. Kevin Cruse, SHRM Atlanta liaison to the student chapter, attended and spoke to the group about the benefit of being a SHRM member. The new officers for fall semester are:

President ----- Todd Winkleman
VP, Programs ----- Jarrett Walton
VP, Membership ----- Saralyn Greene
VP, Operations ----- Janice Jones
Secretary ----- Julie Burns
Treasurer ----- Philicie Fountain



The second SHRM meeting was held in November, attended by about 35 students. The guest speaker was Laurine Page, SHRM-Atlanta Student Advisor, who gave an informative and enthusiastic talk about her experiences in HR at EarthLink, Inc. She also spoke of how SHRM has helped her in her career progression.

The final meeting of the semester was a joint meeting with SHRM Atlanta at the Atlanta Sheraton on December 2nd. Despite the end-of-semester crunch and final exams, about 15 GSU students attended the dinner and heard several speakers. This meeting was especially helpful as it gave students an opportunity to get to know local HR practitioners. The student chapter of SHRM is open to all students who are interested in HRM, regardless of major or course of study. Applications and information are available on the GSU student chapter [web page](#).

FOCUS ON RECENT HR RESEARCH

Common misconceptions about HR practices

Recent research has shown that certain common HR practices limit performance. The following are HR beliefs that were inconsistent with research findings:

● Myth 1

“Conscientiousness is a better predictor of employee performance than intelligence.” While conscientiousness and intelligence are both key predictors of performance, intelligence is comparatively more important. For jobs with low complexity (unskilled work) the two are equally important. However, as job complexity increases, so does the importance of intelligence.

Ways to apply the finding:

- Choose new employees based on intelligence and conscientiousness using well validated instruments to measure both constructs.
- Use a range of tests to assess intelligence including paper and pencil tests, job knowledge tests, work samples, and simulation interview questions.

● Myth 2

“Encouraging employees to participate in decision making helps improve organizational performance more than setting performance goals.”

On average, employee participation in decision making improves participation by only 1%, whereas goal-setting improves participation by 16%. For participation to be successful, employees need to understand why exactly they are participating.

Ways to apply the finding:

- Set inspiring, challenging goals that stretch people’s capabilities
- When goals are clearly communicated and accepted, enlist high participation, and be open to ideas
- Reinforce participation and goal achievement via the reward system in terms of gain sharing and group incentive programs.

● Myth 3

“If employees are asked how important pay is to them, they are likely to overestimate its true importance.” Research shows that people actually understate the importance of pay to personal decisions. We tend to say things that make us appear socially desirable, i.e., good job, keep up the good work, etc. etc. Studies on people’s behaviors (not attitudes) in response to pay reveal strong motivational effects.

Ways to apply the finding:

- Remember that employee responses are typically biased in attitude surveys by social desirability and low self-insight - As often as possible, study employee behaviors as well as attitudes since the two do not always coincide. Being aware of, and breaking these myths can significantly improve individual and organizational performance.

Source: Rynes, Brown, & Colbert, *The Academy of Management Executive*, Vol. 16, No. 3, August, 2002.

We want to hear from you!

Current and previous editions of the Beebe Newsletter are available online at www.robinson.gsu.edu/beebe/newsletter. If you have any comments or suggestions about the Beebe Newsletter, or for more information about our programs, please email the Faculty Advisor at mgtlnm@langate.gsu.edu, visit the Beebe Institute website at www.cba.gsu.edu/beebe, or write to:

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