



**E-Connections
March 3, 2009**

Dear Friends,

While many of you may have already heard through phone conversations or *Faith Connections*, we thought it important to share the news of David Westcott's passing with the full IPM Family. David passed away during the early morning of Friday, February 27, 2009. David's commitment to IPM as a Board member and Volunteer has been long and unwavering, and we will certainly miss him greatly.

Below is a reflection that I shared at his Memorial Service this morning, on behalf of all of the non-profits with which David shared his time and talent. Please join us in celebrating his extraordinary life of servant-leadership and faithful dedication.

May he rest in peace.

Joseph F. Cistone
Executive Director



David Westcott at IPM's December 2008 Annual Luncheon, receiving the Rev. Richard E. Sering Award, with Joe Cistone, IPM Executive Director; Susan Westcott, his daughter; and Flo Saeger, Chair of the IPM Board of Directors.

***Eulogy at the Memorial Service for David Noel Westcott
by Joseph F. Cistone, IPM
March 3, 2009, 11:00
The Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Old Brooklyn, OH, USA***

Good Morning!

It is an honor and privilege—on a day that so many of us just assumed would never come—to stand before you today representing the countless non profits David gave his life to here in Cleveland: the ACLU, the Brookside Hunger Center, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless, WSEM, and International Partners in Mission. With the exception of LMM, I know mostly of the others from what David told me over the

years and I hope I can give his relationship with each of you some justice in my brief remarks today.

As one IPM Volunteer wrote to me when she learned of David's passing: "David was such a kind, gentle yet determined man seeking justice and hope for others. It certainly was an honor and a privilege to have known him and to have been in his presence." It was undeniably so for all of us!!!

It is through IPM that I came to know David when we both joined the Board almost 12 years ago. As the "new" Board member from Cleveland, David immediately made me feel at home—despite his ever-present New York Yankees baseball cap! We quickly discovered a shared passion for IPM's mission of working across borders of faith and culture, a commitment to family & friendship, and a love of gardening and the kitchen that we built upon in the years since.

After some three years on the Board together, perhaps no one was more instrumental in my decision to take up this position at IPM. David came back from an Executive Committee meeting in St. Louis in late 2000 and asked me to go out to lunch at Flannery's—a trendy Irish pub in downtown Cleveland. We must have looked like quite a pair: me in my fancy business suit and David in his typical "business casual" and that damned cap! Not a beer between us, I thought to myself that folks must think he's my grandfather, and over the years he became just that.

In fairly short order he had convinced me I was indeed ready for a career change and gauged my possible interest in joining him in servant leadership. In a few days, he and a few IPM stalwarts set me up as Search Committee Chair. Gloria, David's "first and only wife," as he liked to call her, reminded me often, that when David thinks he has a good idea there is no denying him. So, by June of 2001 I had resigned from the Search Committee and was subsequently named IPM's 4th Executive Director at a special Board meeting David had organized at Susan's Messiah Lutheran Church.

David then let me know that he had been in discussion with his friends at the ACLU and they had agreed to help outfit IPM's new Cleveland office with their old furniture. So, David, a group of volunteers, and I rented a U-Haul and moved their furniture up and down countless stairs (since David was the only one older than the respective elevators) from Cleveland's Warehouse District to Cleveland Heights. David, of course, brought along his own tool kit and dolly just in case. All of this at 74! (I can't imagine doing that again at 44!)

A few weeks later he introduced me to his many friends at LMM and subtly suggested that their conference room would make a wonderful venue for IPM's local Advisory Council meetings. Needless to say, our International Board was soon meeting there as well!

In the intervening years, David spoke with me often about his particular commitment to the direct service of Brookside & NEOCH and how important it was for him that his volunteer activities at 5 nonprofits in his adopted Cleveland hometown reflected his deep, personal commitment to faith and to country, to the materially poor and socially marginalized, both at home and abroad. He—as the painting he gave me of a saying from Francis of Assisi proclaimed—preached the gospel always with his actions in the world.

In the 8 years since, David has been a mentor and confidant, a friend and an ally. Justifiably proud of his commitment to Servant Leadership, David did everything at IPM from serving as Board Treasurer and historian, to picking up supplies at Office Max and taking out the trash:

- He'd meet me at my home on the weekend and we'd talk about the implications of the latest book he had "borrowed" from my bookshelf while admiring the ripening raspberries and tomatoes in our garden;
- He'd come into my office every Thursday I was in town, asking how my latest journey abroad had been and we'd steal a few moments together to catch-up on Gloria's health, his pride in his children and grandsons, and our shared struggle with much of organized religion and outdated models of mission;
- We'd head across the street for a sandwich or downstairs for coffee and—as I'm sure Brian, Ward, and others also experienced—he'd ask me about IPM's finances and the work of our Partners but never before asking me how I was doing, about the health of my parents, and whether I was spending enough time with my children and spouse;
- He convinced Gloria to join us on an IPM Board Retreat among the Shoshone People of Wyoming and then whispered to me that he'd be happier if she would let him join us sleeping outside under the stars;
- And finally (and most happily) after twenty long years of waiting he was able to travel with me on our long-anticipated pilgrimage together to El Salvador. David with baseball cap in hand and tears in eyes, alone in prayer at the site of Archbishop Oscar Romero's martyrdom—what a moving site to behold!

David faithfully surprised and inspired me (and the IPM Board) with typed letters—I'm sure you all can identify with that. One of the last came earlier this year when David reflected on his Surprise 82nd Birthday Party at our home in conjunction with IPM's annual holiday party—it was one of the only ways we could get David and Gloria there! And, may I add, a sure way to get your own loaf of David's wonderful holiday breads!

David wrote: "As we begin another year, it seems ages ago when we moved from St. Louis. A huge river of successes has run down the river and due in many ways to your gifts of leadership. I saw it in the early days when we met and am not disappointed in MY decision to encourage you to 'go for it.'" Whatever successes I have achieved were always thought through in quiet consultation with David, and whatever growth IPM has had these past eight years was directly related to David's faith in each of us!

He went on: "IPM can easily take over a person's life. But with a new son and wife you will need to balance the role between CEO and father and husband." There's that gentle but determined grandfather all over again!

David concluded: "I'm just happy to be able to watch and contribute in some small way to your vision of the future of IPM." These past eight years in time, talent, and treasure, David not only watched but contributed as much as any member of the IPM Family. He was—as we were pleased to honor him at the Center for Community Solutions Luncheon in 2006 and most recently at our 2008 Annual Luncheon where he received the Reverend Richard Sering Award—IPM'S (& all of yours) MOST TREASURED VOLUNTEER.

At the end of January, David led yet another series of reflections at an IPM meeting. Afterwards I told him how his reflections somehow were always able to slow me down and to bring our meetings' focus squarely to IPM's inter-faith mission. David had a unique ability to bring all of us back to what really matters! On February 12th, before I headed to India, and the last time I saw David, we spoke of our concern for IPM at this challenging time in our world's history and I reminded David just how much I appreciated his steady presence and faithful generosity in the face of change. We hugged, as we usually did when parting, and I felt once again that sense of confidence and pride one feels when they know that they are trusted and truly loved.

All of us were blessed to have David among us. There was something truly holy about that gentle baker from Alabama. May his kindness live on in how we relate to one another, may his passion for Micah's prophetic call to justice live on in our respective missions, and may his humility and love always remind us of what it means to be a father and partner, a mentor and friend.

Thank you & God Bless You!

Letters of Condolence to David's widow, Gloria, may be sent to:

Gloria Westcott
13813 Wainstead Avenue.
Cleveland, OH 44111, USA

The family suggests donations in David's honor be made to IPM; donations may be made by visiting:

http://partners.guidestar.org/controller/searchResults.gs?action_donateReport=1&partner=networkforgood&ein=43-1487311

Or by calling the office at +1.216.932.4082.