

For Class Distribution

We just completed USAFA's 17th Annual National Character and Leadership Symposium.

The theme was: "Guardians of Trust: Leaders in the Modern Era." The Academy brought in 41 speakers to include

- The Honorable Michael Donley, the Secretary of the Air Force (see picture of our class with Secretary Donley);



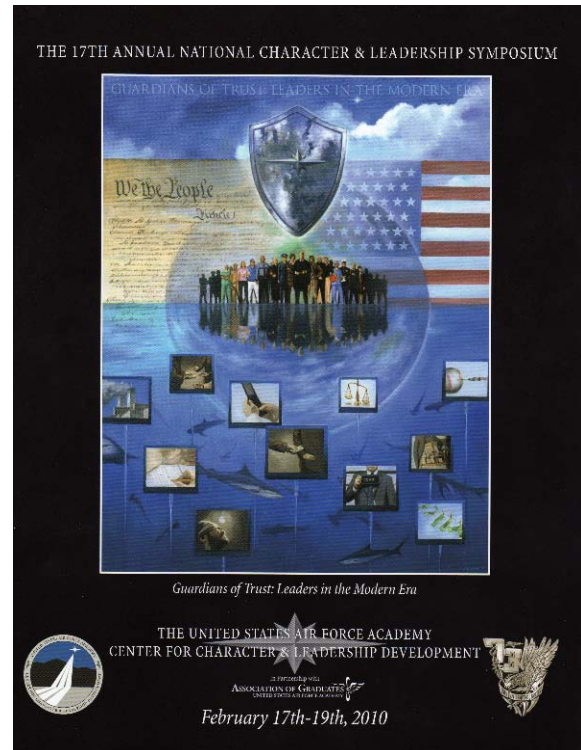
From Left to Right: Dale Birch, Ted Munsch (Alaska), Mike Smith, Chris Flynn (Texas), "T" Thompson, the Honorable Michael Donley, Ron Scott, Trapper Carpenter, John Stefonik, Paul Freund (Washington DC), and Bob Munson. Attending but not pictured: Steve Dalrymple (Illinois), Joe Kahoe, and Mike Mosier.

- General (retired) Michael Hayden, former Deputy director of National Intelligence, the Director of the CIA, and the Director of NSA;
- General (retired) Lee Butler, former Commander of Strategic Air Command and first Commander of Strategic Command;
- Coach Brian Billick, first head coach for the Baltimore Ravens, winning Super Bowl XXXV;
- Mr. Mikey Weinstein, Founder and President of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation; and
- Many other notable speakers from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences (see bios at: <http://www.usafa.edu/Commandant/cwc/cwcx/ncls/speakers.cfm?catname=ncls>)

Thirteen members of our class and eight spouses were able to participate in the events.

Here are some impressions from our classmates who participated:

- Good choice of speakers, all that I saw were good to excellent. Feedback from others made me feel I had missed on a lot of other very good speakers. Best walkaway point: D'Souza's persuasive arguments to support "Liberty is a prerequisite for virtue." (Bob Munson)
- Gen Hayden was a rock star; when I left Arnold Hall he was still surrounded by cadets and putting his autograph onto programs. (Bob Munson)
- Feedback from cadets was uniformly positive. Feedback from the participants was likewise positive and the guests from colleges/universities again also liked living the cadet experience. (Bob Munson)
- I thought Hayden was outstanding. I found Weinstein to be interesting but I think I need to understand the underlying issues a lot better to assess the validity of his comments. His comments did raise some concerns about how the Academy and even the Air Force are approaching religion. (Mike Smith)
- I will be promoting participation in the NCLS at my institution in AK and hope to attend future events. Visiting with parents, cadets, students and their faculty representatives from other institutions, law enforcement officials and retired USAFA grads provided all of us an opportunity to exchange ideas and share the energy and messages shared at NCLS. This was good exposure for the Academy, an excellent opportunity for cadet/student exchange and a much needed conference to remind us all that the future we hope to enjoy will be made possible by ourselves and others, supported by leadership and strengthened by the traits of character that each of us possesses. (Ted Munsch)
- This was my first "hands on" exposure to the program other than the briefings we received at the 30th and 35th reunions. I am happy to report that I believe we are making a tremendous difference in the lives of the cadets and their civilian counterparts who were in attendance at the symposium. I only wish that our class (and other past classes) had had the opportunity to attend something like this in addition to the honor and ethics training we received during our cadet days. Class of 1973 sponsorship of this symposium is a wonderful, lasting contribution to the process of molding the leadership of tomorrow. I believe that the Class of 1973 was more than justified in selecting sponsorship of this program as our class gift back to the Academy. It will have a longer lasting and more consequential impact than any memorial or statue might have. (Chris Flynn)



- This year's theme, "Guardians of Trust: Leaders in the Modern Era," was not only timely, but very appropriate to today's loss of trust in our elected government's ability to put national interests ahead of personal interests. The symposium also highlighted the difficult environment that trusted leadership has to work within today – fewer "face-to-face" meetings where you can read a person's body language; globalization; internet based commerce and networking; over reliance on technology for what has, in the past, traditionally been considered "human" interactions, etc. (Chris Flynn)
- It is always a delightful experience to get to interact with the cadets for a few days. I particularly enjoyed my participation in the Symposium Breakout Session with CS-24 on Friday afternoon. I went into the session thinking that I would help facilitate discussion, but discovered that the cadets needed no assistance with a frank discussion and assessment of the talks that they had attended. My role became one of an interested observer and occasional participant when a historical perspective was helpful in making a point. Basically, I was the "old guy" in the room urging the cadets to absorb as much character and leadership training as they could while at the Academy, because my experience showed me that it would certainly serve them well later in life. (Chris Flynn)
- I always enjoy the opportunity to have lunch with the Cadet Wing in Mitchell Hall -- that is a nice part of the NCLS experience. I also thoroughly enjoyed the interaction that I had with cadets, college professors, and other graduate supporters during the NCLS dinner on Thursday evening. I also enjoyed comparing notes and having some interesting discussions on the topic of character and leadership with other 1973 classmates who were volunteering their time at this event. (Chris Flynn)
- Overall, it was a great experience and well worth traveling the 850 miles to participate. I would like to assure our class that our sponsorship of this event is making a positive impact and would like to encourage them to participate in the future. I certainly would like to attend again in the future if my schedule permits. (Chris Flynn)
- All the speakers I heard were excellent. Certainly, Gen Hayden and Gen Butler were terrific and brought interesting stories and insights that were particularly relevant to the cadets and ROTC students. Mr D'Souza was both engaging and entertaining. Nate Self and CW5 McIlhiney conveyed a very real sense of the role of leadership in actual combat situations that seemed to resonate with the cadets. (Paul Freund)
- The mix of military and civilian speakers was good and of great value to the symposium. It provides a broad view of the universal applicability of leadership and character and an essential connection of these ideas to more than just the cadet experience and to life beyond the academy or military. Secretary Donley's presentation I think was critical to imparting the importance of these notions not just to the most senior leadership of the Air Force but to the future of the institution of the Air Force. (Paul Freund)
- Jane and I thoroughly enjoyed the event and appreciate the opportunity to participate. We hope to attend next year as well. It is truly a valuable experience for everyone. As I thought about the event during the trip back to Virginia, it struck me that in our cadet experience we could have used something to connect the dots between what we learned in our cadet experience and our futures, especially the leadership and character concepts and values. The symposium seems to provide at least a bit of that and a bridge to the value of those notions in the non-military world. (Paul Freund)

- Barbara and I enjoyed the banquet and General Hayden immensely. I thought his comments about learning “who you are” as it pertains to your leadership style were very applicable. (Dale Birch)
- Everywhere I went, when they found out I was with the class of 73, without fail cadets, staff, and even speakers thanked me on behalf of my class. They are very aware of the fact that our class is a major sponsor of this event. (Dale Birch)