

Heroic 20-Year Military Veteran & ER Doctor Shows How America Can Raise Young Leaders In A Moving, Award-Winning, Best-Selling Book

BE THE WEIGHT BEHIND THE SPEAR



DR. JOSH MCCONKEY

2024 Independent Press Award

Distinguished Favorite, Motivational Category

"An optimistic, if not particularly novel, conservative assessment of contemporary America...A renewed emphasis on "family values, integrity, leadership, and accountability," the author suggests, offers the promise of a new dynamism to help propel the American spear into the future."

-- *Kirkus Reviews (starred review)*

"Lottery winner tries his luck with voters in North Carolina congressional race: Iraq war veteran and physician Josh McConkey will put \$757K prize toward his campaign focused on fighting fentanyl insisting 'this is divine intervention.'"

— *Daily Mail*

Be The Weight Behind The Spear will inspire you to overcome obstacles and work on your personal and community growth, even in difficult times."

—*Readers' Favorite*

America is divided and at a crossroads. Are its best years behind it or ahead? How can we raise a new generation of leaders to make our nation strong, healthy, and successful?

One inspiring man, who has seen people at their most courageous in the military and their most vulnerable as an emergency physician, is raising a young family of three children and wants to see them and our country's youth have a bright future. He encapsulates his motivational prescription for the United States in an award-winning, best-selling book, ***Be The Weight Behind The Spear***.

It outlines the leadership ethos of author Dr. (Colonel) Josh "Blackjack" McConkey. With over 20 years of working in the trenches of America's emergency rooms and with two decades of decorated military service, Dr. McConkey combines lessons of leadership and poignant examples of how we can move American forward.

From the battlefields of Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom to the death and destruction right here at home caused by the opioid crisis, *Be the Weight Behind the Spear* encourages a national dialogue on the importance of motivating all Americans to be the weight behind the spears of America's heroes, and focuses on developing our youth into the future heroes and leaders America really needs.

Dr. McConkey is available to discuss the following:

- * What parents and the community need to do to raise successful kids.
- * Why teachers, family, coaches, and mentors must step up to shape America's future.
- * What it means to be a leader and how we each must rise to the occasion.
- * How post-Covid business leadership is measuring up.
- * Why he ran for Congress and how to bring a divided America together.
- * Life lessons learned on the battlefield in Iraq.
- * Insights on anxiety, addiction, and suicide from the ER.
- * How volunteers can make a huge difference in the lives of our youth.

"America, united, is unstoppable; America, divided, is an easy target," writes Dr. McConkey. "If the powers that be spent as much time focusing on the actual future of the country and the development of our youth and communities as they do on the past, we would be much better prepared for the challenges that await us as a nation."

"When we speak of the fundamental principles that set America apart from every other country in the world, it comes down to the people: each American—whether ordinary, hero, or superstar—can become the "weight behind the spear." Our family systems, teachers, coaches, and our volunteers provide the confidence, the security, and the weight behind each of us."

He divides his book into four parts: How to Be the Weight, How to NOT Be the Weight, Experiences That Shaped My Weight, and My Weight. In the first part, McConkey highlights the foundations of leadership drawn from experiences in combat, his childhood, and his time as a commander.

In the next part, he shows how attributes of selfishness and greed rot America's core principles and that foundation. In the third part, he offers anecdotal stories as an emergency physician around the world that illustrate what makes America unique as the shining beacon of freedom in the world. In the fourth part, McConkey describes how near-death experiences and his family have been the weight that shaped him as a leader and why it drives him to keep fighting for our American values. *Be The Weight Behind the Spear* is a call to action.

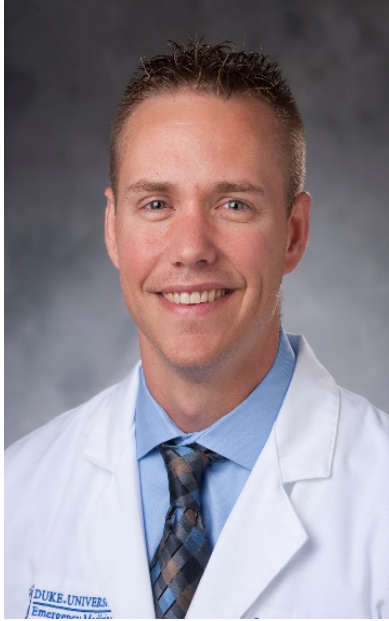
"America is as divided generationally and politically as it has ever been," asserts Col. McConkey. "But the strength of America has always been its people. Our teachers, families, coaches, mentors, and volunteers have the opportunity to shape America's future. America is always at its best when we are faced with a challenge, but only if we are prepared to meet that challenge."

Our national security and our future may just depend on it.

"Be The Weight Behind The Spear is a great read that uses a series of personal stories and observations as the background for lessons on service, leadership, and duty. The experiences of Dr. Josh McConkey in business, medicine, and the military serve to illustrate the impact each of us can have on our nation and the people around us. He does a great job of discussing challenges we face and how we can work together to address them. Entertaining, educational, and inspirational; I highly recommend this book for anyone concerned about the future of our nation." ***Five-Star Amazon Review***

Colonel Joshua M. McConkey, M.D.

Biography



Colonel Joshua M. McConkey, M.D. has served in the military for over two decades, been an ER doctor for over 20 years, run for Congress, taught at Duke University, and has written an award-winning and best-selling book, ***Be The Weight Behind The Spear***. His message is about hope for America to help infuse our nation's youngest generation with the leadership skills and attitude this country will need to succeed.

He presently is the Commander for the 459th Aeromedical Staging Squadron and oversees the training of 122 medical professionals. Colonel McConkey is credited with saving many lives and was awarded the Air Medal and Army Commendation for his deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Further, he has served for three years on the Air Force association Council, helping to make legislative and policy recommendations to Congress regarding quality of life, equipment modernizations, and military construction issues that impact the Air Force Reserve.

Colonel McConkey has logged more than 90 rotor wing combat hours of medical evacuation and air assault support as well as providing aeromedical evacuation support as a critical care transport team flight surgeon. He has earned several distinctions, including Chadron State College Distinguished Alumni Award, Alliance Public Schools Hall of Fame, Winner of the Daughters of the American Revolution History Award, Independent Press Award, and numerous military decorations, including Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and an Air Medal.

He has been interviewed or featured on dozens of news media outlets, including Newsmax, Breitbart, Kirkus Reviews, NPR.org, iHeartRadio, Patriot XM Radio, War Room with Steve Bannon, The Daily Mail, The Independent, Yahoo Finance, CBS-TV, ABC-News, and The News Observer.

Dr. McConkey holds multiple FEMA certifications and is board certified in Emergency Medicine and EMS/Disaster Medicine, both through the American Board of Emergency Medicine.

He was a professor and adjunct faculty member for a combined six years at Duke University. He received his Doctor of Medicine from University of Nebraska in 2003 and a Bachelor's of Science in Biological Science in 1999.

Born in Renton, WA, he was raised in Nebraska. He has also lived in Omaha, NE; Akron, OH; Georgetown, TX, New Zealand, and Australia. With his wife and three children, he resides in Apex, North Carolina. For more information, please see: www.JoshMcConkeyForAmerica.com.

Colonel Joshua M. McConkey, M.D.

Q & A

Be The Weight Behind The Spear



1. **What is your book, *Be The Weight Behind The Spear*, about?** In "Be the Weight Behind the Spear," Dr. (Colonel) McConkey advocates for nurturing future leaders amidst today's divisive landscape. Drawing on his ER and military background, McConkey underscores the critical role of leaders across sectors in shaping America's future. Emphasizing the importance of business executives, educators, families, and mentors, he argues they are essential not only for enhancing productivity and inclusivity but also for national security. McConkey's book sparks a national conversation, urging Americans to support and empower the next generation. He asserts that individual contributions in leadership, education, and community significantly impact collective success and security, rallying readers to fortify America's resilience and global leadership.
2. **What inspired you to write it?** The book is driven by the mental health crisis affecting younger Americans today. As an emergency physician, I witness alarming rates of anxiety, depression, and suicides. As a military commander, I'm troubled by the lack of coping skills among our youth, which raises serious concerns about the future leadership of our country. With three children of my own and over 100 men and women relying on my leadership in my

Air Force squadron, I take this responsibility seriously. The challenges we face are systemic across America, and this book represents my prescription to address these issues head-on!

3. **What does the title mean?** *“Be the Weight Behind the Spear”* embodies my personal leadership philosophy. It urges Americans to support the development of future leaders and heroes. Not everyone can be a special operator kicking down doors and jumping out of airplanes, but we can all provide the foundational support needed to nurture confidence and leadership skills in the next generation. *“Be the Weight Behind the Spear”* means engaging with your community to create a safer America where children can thrive. Your daily actions are crucial—something as basic as sharing a family meal together in the evening builds confidence, provides stress relief, and teaches essential coping skills for success!
4. **So, how does one effectively become the weight behind the spear?** Engaging meaningfully in your community—whether through coaching youth sports, volunteering in schools, or active involvement in your local church—builds crucial support systems for our younger generation's success. While the form of engagement varies, collectively pursuing common goals strengthens communities and propels America forward, enhancing safety and contributing to national security. Every day, your actions matter. Choosing to actively engage in your community—whether coaching, teaching, volunteering, or mentoring—is the first step. These actions not only enrich your community but also strengthen our country. By being involved, you become the "weight behind the spear," driving positive change and progress.
5. **America is so divided. How can we arm the next generation of leaders with the tools for success in uniting us?** America is as divided generationally and politically as it has ever been. To prepare the next generation of leaders to unite a divided America, we must prioritize education in empathy, critical thinking, and conflict resolution. Schools and communities can foster environments that promote understanding of diverse perspectives on leadership, accountability, and overcoming obstacles. Teaching history comprehensively, including its complexities and with respectful dialogue, helps cultivate empathy and critical thinking skills. Leadership programs should emphasize collaboration, teamwork, and inclusive decision-making processes. Mentorship programs connecting youth with diverse role models can provide practical guidance and inspiration. By equipping young leaders with these tools, we empower them to bridge divides, foster unity, and envision a future where community is celebrated, and collective progress is pursued.
6. **You wrote: “In witnessing the experience of my wife’s family migrating to the U.S., along with my own experiences living overseas, my belief has only solidified further that America is the last true bastion of freedom in the world.” How so?** I firmly believe that America stands as the ultimate beacon of freedom today. My conviction deepened through my mother-in-law’s poignant escape from communist Cuba, where darkness masked her perilous journey to sea and eventual rescue. Her story echoes with haunting reminders of government overreach and dictatorial control, vividly resurfacing during the COVID era. As a physician who practiced in both the United States and Australia, I witnessed firsthand the alarming sacrifice of common sense, liberty, and familial freedom. In Melbourne, families endured 111 days of apartment confinement, facing \$1,000 fines and threats of jail for not complying with intrusive government COVID tracking measures. These experiences reinforce my belief that

America's commitment to individual liberty remains a crucial safeguard amidst global uncertainties.

7. **You say you've learned on the battlefield of Iraq, in the trenches of today's health care system as an ER doctor, in business, as a professor, and in running for Congress. What type of leadership, integrity, and acceptability does our nation need?** America craves leaders unafraid to confront truth head-on and embrace ultimate accountability, a principle ingrained in my special operations background. There, "ultimate accountability" dictates that every team member shoulders responsibility without passing the buck. Each knows their role, unified by a common purpose and ready to sacrifice for the team's greater good. Integrity, essential in leadership, demands doing right when unseen and resisting pressure to compromise principles when scrutiny is intense. True leaders exemplify this, standing firm even amid dissent. And violence can never be a solution! America's future hinges on leaders embodying these qualities—courage to uphold truth, unwavering accountability, and steadfast integrity—essential for navigating challenges with resilience and ensuring a unified, ethical path forward.
8. **Which critical values do Americans lack that our nation rots from the inside out?** Americans currently suffer from a deficit in accountability, integrity, and resilience, corroding our nation from within. The absence of accountability means evasion of responsibility and the erosion of trust in leadership. Integrity, essential for moral grounding, wavers under pressure, compromising ethical standards. In real life, not everyone is a winner! The inability to cope with adversity fosters fragility rather than resilience, contributing to a worsening mental health crisis. As an emergency doctor, I see the anxiety, depression, and suicides. These foundational values are critical for strong leadership and societal cohesion. Restoring them demands a renewed commitment to ethical conduct, transparency, and robust mental health support systems. Only by addressing these deficiencies can America rebuild a solid foundation for a thriving future.
9. **Why do you believe every American has a crucial part to play in establishing and securing our national security?** Every American plays a crucial role in securing our national security because without ownership and accountability, critical issues are easily dismissed as someone else's responsibility. National security extends beyond government and military realms; it hinges on the collective vigilance and actions of every citizen. By actively engaging in shaping our future leaders and policies, we invest in long-term national security. Surrendering community security policymaking solely to bureaucrats absolves personal responsibility. Each individual bears responsibility for themselves, their families, and their communities. Taking ownership means getting involved—coaching, teaching, and mentoring future leaders—to fortify America against emerging threats. This direct engagement fosters community resilience, heightens awareness, and bolsters commitment to safeguarding our nation's future.
10. **You witnessed how government can take away one's freedoms. What did you experience overseas during covid?** I witnessed firsthand the Australian government's extreme COVID measures in South Australia. Plainclothes police officers closed off all entrances to a grocery store, demanding patrons surrender their mobile phones without warrants. They insisted on

proof of signing into the COVID contact tracing QR code; those who hadn't faced \$1,000 fines, while the store incurred a \$20,000 penalty for non-compliance. Furthermore, police compelled people to download GPS tracking apps with facial recognition, enforcing geofencing that led to arrests for leaving home. These coercive tactics exemplify governmental overreach, infringing on civil liberties under the guise of public health. Such measures underscore the importance of upholding individual rights and freedoms in managing crises, ensuring policies respect privacy and maintain public trust in governance.

11. **What are America's biggest challenges?** America faces its greatest challenge in striking a balance between integrating new technologies, such as social media, into educational curricula while preserving essential leadership skills like accountability, integrity, ownership, and interpersonal communication. Embracing technological advancements offers vast educational benefits, yet it must not overshadow the foundational skills crucial for ethical leadership and cohesive communities. Maintaining a focus on accountability ensures responsible use of technology, while integrity upholds ethical standards in digital interactions. Ownership cultivates a sense of responsibility, crucial for personal and collective growth, while nurturing interpersonal skills fosters empathy and effective communication. Finding this equilibrium ensures that America's future leaders are equipped not only with technical proficiency but also with the moral and social competencies needed to navigate an increasingly interconnected world with wisdom and resilience.
12. **Which attributes do you believe makes for a good leader?** It takes the right combination of attributes to make a great leader. A good leader embodies accountability, ensuring they take responsibility for actions and decisions. Integrity is paramount, maintaining honesty and ethical conduct consistently. They are relatable, fostering trust and collaboration through genuine connections with others. Humility allows them to listen, learn, and admit limitations, inspiring respect and openness within their team. Adaptability enables them to navigate challenges with resilience and creativity, adjusting strategies as needed. Together, these attributes make a good leader a great leader and build the core of effective leadership, guiding teams through obstacles while remaining adaptable and anchored in values and purpose.
13. **Why does our younger generation lack accountability and leadership? Do they have an entitlement mentality?** The younger generation's perceived lack of accountability and leadership can be attributed to several factors. The "everyone is a winner" mentality prevalent in upbringing shields them from experiencing failure and overcoming challenges independently. This over-protection stunts their resilience and problem-solving skills crucial for leadership. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this issue by isolating them from social, educational, and developmental experiences, reinforcing entitlement and dependency on external validation. Without facing real-world adversity and learning from setbacks, they struggle to develop intrinsic motivation and responsibility. Consequently, they may find it challenging to hold themselves accountable and take initiative in leadership roles. Encouraging experiences that promote resilience, problem-solving, and self-reliance from an early age can help mitigate these effects and cultivate stronger future leaders.
14. **As an emergency physician, you see patients with anxiety and depression, some of whom attempted suicide. How do we instill confidence in our youth, and give them a will and**

reason to live? Instilling confidence in youth begins with fostering ownership over their lives and choices. Encouraging a team mentality helps them feel connected and valued within their communities. By promoting involvement in causes or passions larger than themselves, such as volunteering or pursuing meaningful goals, they develop a sense of purpose and belonging. Education on mental health and resilience equips them to navigate challenges effectively. Providing mentorship and supportive relationships empowers them to seek help when needed. Ultimately, nurturing their sense of agency and belonging inspires a will to live by showing them their inherent value and potential impact on the world around them.

15. **How can we volunteer to engage our communities?** Volunteering to engage our communities begins with coaching, teaching, and mentoring, starting within our own families. Offer to coach youth sports teams, tutor students in local schools, or mentor young adults navigating career choices. Look for opportunities at community centers, religious institutions, or through local organizations that align with your interests. Participate in neighborhood clean-up events, food drives, or initiatives supporting vulnerable populations. Share your skills through workshops or classes on topics like financial literacy or digital literacy. Volunteering not only strengthens community bonds but also enriches personal growth and empathy. By starting with our families and extending outward, we can create a ripple effect of positive change and connection within our communities.
16. **As a military vet, what do you feel our country could be doing to help our young, returning soldiers to fit back into society?** As a military veteran, I believe our country could better support young returning soldiers by integrating them directly into our communities. Programs that facilitate involvement in church outreach, coaching youth sports, or other community activities can help them maintain connections and find a sense of purpose outside the military. Providing accessible mental health services tailored to their unique experiences is crucial. Additionally, promoting employer incentives for hiring veterans and offering vocational training can ease their transition into civilian careers. Cultivating a supportive environment where their skills and contributions are valued helps bridge the gap between military service and civilian life, fostering a smoother reintegration process.
17. **You ran for Congress this past year. What inspired that – and what was the experience like?** I was inspired to run for Congress because as an emergency physician, I witness the profound pain and isolation among our young men and women, fueling a mental health crisis marked by anxiety, depression, and suicides. Seeing their struggles with leadership skills, accountability, and coping abilities further compelled me to act. I was further inspired as a military reserve commander, when I saw the effects of this crisis on our military. I seek to influence policy to address these issues and prevent further devastation in American families. My experience has revealed a government system more divided and troubled than I realized, reinforcing the urgency of my candidacy to bring about meaningful change.
18. **Right around the time of running for office, you won over \$750,000 in the lottery. How lucky was that?** Winning the lottery felt like a blend of good fortune and divine intervention. Amidst the turmoil caused by a corrupt CEO embezzling money from our Texas business while violating anti-kickback laws, it seemed like a sign from God affirming my decisions and resilience. Rejecting a \$3.4 million bribe to drop my complaints to multiple Texas

agencies and the FBI, despite facing financial ruin, it reinforced my commitment to integrity over profit. The lottery win wasn't just about money; it was a reaffirmation that staying true to my principles was the right thing to do. It was a reminder that even in the face of adversity, maintaining honesty and moral values ultimately pays off in the end.

19. **One of your book's chapters is entitled: "Nightmares Are Dreams Too." What was your nightmare?** My dream of entrepreneurship turned into a nightmare of corruption and threats by an unscrupulous CEO. As the business prospered, I noticed some glaring accounting irregularities. I uncovered embezzlement, unethical business write-offs for a lawsuit involving sexual harassment, and federal violations within the company all orchestrated by the CEO who was the majority shareholder. Unable to condone this with my military security clearance, I refused a \$3.4 million bribe to keep quiet. In retaliation, the CEO waged a campaign to bankrupt us and threatened my family's safety. With courts frozen and FBI resources stretched by COVID, I fled to Australia for safety. It was a harrowing ordeal, shattering my business aspirations into a fight for survival.
20. **You are involved in international health policy and you advise Congress on healthcare policy. What do you advocate for?** During my tenure on the Air Force Association council, I advocated for military personnel by crafting policy recommendations and legislative proposals on quality of life, equipment modernization, and military construction for the Air Force Reserve. Additionally, I contributed to VA healthcare legislation facilitating organ donations within the VA system, ensuring better healthcare access for servicemembers and their families willing to provide those lifesaving organs. Serving on the council was a source of immense pride, allowing me to support those who safeguard our nation and ensure the security my family cherishes daily. I am also a strong advocate for policy and legislative actions that support law enforcement and first responders.
21. **Where does your courage come from, like the kind that helped you save lives and earn the Air Medal and Army Commendation Medal during your Operation Iraq Freedom deployment?** Courage manifests unexpectedly in moments of crisis, driven by instinct or a sense of responsibility. It arises when facing fear or adversity, spurred by a commitment to principles, values, or the well-being of others. Ultimately, courage is nurtured by belief in a cause greater than oneself, whether personal, societal, or moral, and is fortified by faith, integrity, and a willingness to confront challenges despite uncertainty or danger. For me, my courage comes from my upbringing, where examples of resilience and determination from family and mentors throughout my life shaped me as a leader. Additionally, my love of military history has provided me many examples of courage from America's past heroes.

Be The Weight Behind The Spear

Selected Excerpts

We Must Help The Next Generation

The same can be said of America's youth. Without the proper "weight" behind them, propelling them forward, they are set up for failure. With a multitude of challenges-the chaotic political climate and the pop culture distractions of social media being the tip of the iceberg— this current generation of American youth is left floundering on their own. We (the current adult leadership) give them catchy generational labels and chastise them without thought, but the reality remains: the responsibility to mentor and teach this newest generation is ours alone. When I say "ours," I mean all Americans. As a country, we need to own this responsibility. We must teach our youth the skills and confidence to make decisions for our future. The decisions they make today and the direction in which they are pointed will directly impact where America stands tomorrow.

Demonstrating Leadership

Most of all, leadership is about being present. Leadership doesn't have to be demonstrated on a battlefield (or an emergency room). You don't have to be a Tom Brady (a seven-time Super Bowl champion quarterback) in those team huddles. You don't have to be the world's best coach; you just need to take the time and effort to care and be present. The leadership you demonstrate every day within your own family and community has just as much impact. You're there, in good times and in bad, and that is what matters.

Many people hesitate to volunteer because they feel they aren't the best at leadership, when in truth, leadership is learned. The more you volunteer the better your leadership skills become.

When you take the time to volunteer, coach, or be a mentor, it demonstrates leadership in your community.

When you "aim to be a zero" you incorporate all these important leadership traits: mutual respect, leading from the front, integrity, and account-ability. You focus those energies on the people around you. The example you set becomes a powerful motivator for everyone around you, inspiring others to be their best and become the weight behind the spear in their families and communities. Collectively, this strengthens America's spear.

The Pain Of Losing Our Children

Walking into a room to deliver bad news to a family is the worst part of my job. They might still be hanging on to a sliver of hope that their loved one is still alive, and I must break their world in two and watch them all fall to the ground in pain. My patient might be their sibling, their parent, their spouse, or-even worse-their child, whom they will never hold again, whisper "good morning" on a carefree Saturday morning, or watch their child walk across the stage at high school graduation. No holiday season will never be the same again. If you haven't witnessed the pain of a loved one overdosing on prescription opiates, then you are very blessed.

Why Heroes Die For America

I will stand by America and its imperfections to the death if need be. I've watched American heroes make the ultimate sacrifices for this nation. I have carried their body bags. Those emotional scars run deep. Body bags are heavy. They are mentally, physically, and spiritually draining. As the blood drains out of the corners of those body bags and splatters on the cement of a helipad, it swirls like calligraphy in the rotor wash. Those men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice died for a reason, for a cause.

They died so that American ideals will continue to live on. The freedom to make our choices and the freedom to pursue our happiness must not be infringed upon.

America is special. America must endure. We need to move past the division of our differences, and instead, focus on our collective future.

We need the unified weight of America behind every boy and girl, every teacher, every mentor, and every hero. Within the imperfections, the idiosyncrasies, and the faults, lies beauty and the power to create. Within our melting pot lies the power to think outside the box and the power to solve problems. The American people are the best single resource we have as a nation!

Equip Our Youth

Finally take the time to teach our youth the importance of integrity, accountability, and ownership in our country. Take pride in your work and know that each individual purpose matters-the purpose beyond the singular dream of money, cars, and houses. When we equip our youth with the right leadership skills and we work together collectively, the great spear of this nation is unstoppable. A strong America will lead the world in innovation and project peace through strength. A weak America will fade away like the Roman Empire of old.

Give Of Your Service

Service to our country, whether sacrificing yourself for the greater good or sacrificing your time in your local community, is what really matters. I promise you, when death comes knocking on your door your life will flash before your eyes. You will not think of money, cars, or how big your house is: this stuff doesn't matter. It will be the memories of family, friends, and how you spent your time with them that flash before you. Your service to those around you and your community does matter. Your service and the examples that you set become the building blocks for our communities and they become the weight behind the spear for the generations of Americans to come!