

Ian Rolland

Quest Fort Wayne

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I would like to thank the committee for giving me this topic. It is been a pleasure to review the life of one of Fort Wayne's most influential leaders. I have to admit that it is been quite a challenge. As it is with most quest papers, there is the initial shock after receiving the topic. After doing some research, the real challenge is to find an interesting perspective to synthesize all the information. This was especially disconcerting to me as so many of you in the audience knew Ian very well. Indeed, you know more about him than I will ever know.

As I usually do, I asked some of you what you might do with this topic? I heard many anecdotes and I was given the names of other people I might contact. And as I made those connections, I occasionally encountered conflicting information. Quest papers are ideally more factual, and I could not confirm some information. And with regard to his business acumen, I am not qualified to comment intelligently about various mergers and acquisitions, stock prices, etc., where, there again, were differences of opinion on the merits and successes of some of his business decisions. I relied on his biography for most of my data.

I wondered what I could possibly tell you that you don't already know about Ian. After all, you already know what a great leader he was. You already know about most of his accomplishments and, unfortunately, his one major failure – to keep Lincoln life in Fort Wayne. So why talk about him? It's not like he lived 100 years ago. He is still a familiar figure to those of us in the room. So why talk about him?

Perhaps my fellow Questers yearned for some nostalgia. With all the conflict in our society today, and with all of the polarization, it may be nice to review the history of one of Fort Wayne's finest. He was not afraid to take a stand on some controversial issues, and he made Fort Wayne a better place. But if there is anything that is consistent in all of my reading, it is that he was a man of action. He was thoughtful and listened to many perspectives, but once he deciphered what the proper action would be, he was unstoppable. And it appears that he began to get a reputation for having good solutions

to the issues of his day, so his opinion was widely sought both locally and nationally. So, I don't think we can just honor him by talking about what he did. We need to try to understand what made him so unique in order to emulate him and penchant for action. Otherwise, we risk doing nothing. the beauty of doing nothing is that you can do it perfectly. Only when you actually do something do you risk making a mistake. Therefore, people who contribute nothing to society, except their constant criticisms, can feel both intellectually and morally superior (Thomas Sowell). I think that concept is profound, and if we just nostalgically honor Ian's character and deed, we risk feeling better about ourselves without doing anything. (There are doers and those who do nothing, who I will refer to as "doughnuts." If he were here today, he would want to hear about what we are doing to make Fort Wayne a better place. And so, my challenge to you is that if we really want to honor him, we should continue to try to work to make Fort Wayne an even better place to live and work. And if I am going to honor him and honor his courage to do the right thing, I think that we need to try to decipher how he was able to do what he did. If we are able to discover the secret sauce that made him so special, maybe we can emulate him and better carry on his work. If you came here just for nostalgia, let me apologize in advance.

And speaking of courage to do the right thing, I would like to dedicate this talk to two people – one you know and one you don't. The first is my older sister Susan who taught me that if you're ever going to bother to do something, take the time and effort to do it well. And secondly, John Crawford, another statesman who was not afraid to do the right thing and made Fort Wayne a much better smokeless place to be.

One of the first things that I learned about Ian Rolland was that he, Jack Lehman, and Jim Johnston shared an office downtown in their retirement, and they liked to refer to themselves as the Three Musketeers. Why would these movers and shakers call themselves the Three Musketeers? I did a little research and found that the novel was written in 1844, set earlier in the 1600s, and it was written in French! It is part of the swashbuckler genre about European adventure literature. Heroic protagonists are skilled in swordplay, acrobatics, and possess chivalrous ideals. He rescues damsels in

distress, protects the downtrodden, and uses duels to defend his honor. Duels? Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr were in a duel.

Maybe there was something about one of the Musketeers that merited this analogy. The Three Musketeers were Athos, Porthos, and Aramis. Athos was described as never recovering from his marriage to Milady and sought solace in wine. Porthos was the least cerebral of the bunch, fond of fashionable clothes, and keen to make a fortune. And Aramis was described as a handsome young man who hesitated between his religious calling and his fondness for women and scheming. Maybe Ian, Jack, and Jim just yearned to be daring, romantic, and flamboyant. This reminded me of Kathy Callen's Quest paper a few years ago about the allure of bad boys. There is something exciting about crossing the line. Why just a few weeks ago while driving home from Indianapolis, I encountered a terrible rumble. I thought my car might be in trouble until I saw some motorcycles coming up quickly from the rear. They were in the passing lane, 2 x 2, 10 deep, they weren't wearing helmets, driving 80 miles an hour, and most had leather jackets proclaiming to be members of the "outlaws." I guess there is an allure to dare to challenge authority with righteous indignation.

This figurative association with the Three Musketeers puzzles me. If they were going to pick a romantic hero to identify with, I thought that they might have chosen the man from La Mancha. Published in 1605, *Don Quixote de La Mancha* was written when there were only two social classes, nobility and peasants. At the time, chivalry was manifested as being generous, honorable, and always taking the high road, especially toward women. Few nobles cared about the plight of the peasants. Yet, as Don Quixote sallied forth on his quests to "right the unrightable wrongs" and "dream the impossible dream," readers see the stories through the rose-colored glasses of Don Quixote and through the more realistic eyes of his peasant squire Sancho. Don Quixote addressed the inequalities of his time, but he did not have the power and resources to make much of a change. But Ian Rolland did have the power and resources to make a change. Ian Rolland took business and community issues head-on, as only he could. He did not fight windmills. I think that may have been his greatest talent: to separate the real problems

of his day from the imaginary foes represented by windmills. We need that skill even more today as we are constantly bombarded in the media by contrived enemies and conspiracy theories. We are fighting too many windmills.

Ian was born in 1933, the eldest of three children in a comfortably middle-class household. His parents were of Scottish descent and they instilled in the three children a solid work ethic. He was a strong student and was initially interested in chemical engineering. He wanted to get a good education and have a successful career that would lead to a comfortable lifestyle. He thought that might be about \$10,000 a year. After graduating from Northside high school, he went to DePauw University in Greencastle. He graduated with a degree in mathematics and economics. He had had the good fortune of working during his collegiate summer breaks at Lincoln National. He gained an interest in actuarial science and so after his bachelor's degree at DePauw University, he went to Michigan to get his masters in actuarial science. In his rush to be the provider to his new bride Mimi, he graduated from a two-year program in much less time, and started his professional career at Lincoln in 1956.

His first role was as a technical assistant and group administration. But in one special assignment after another he distinguished himself. In the early days of computing, he was assigned to master Lincoln's first computer programming machine with a few other actuaries. He took a class on how to write computer programs and was soon leading others as well. In the mid 1960's, Lincoln's president, Henry Rood, selected Ian to take on the new and potentially significant variable annuity product. Soon he knew more about variable annuities than anyone. Variable annuities became the largest part of Lincoln's core business and his career began to accelerate.

All throughout his history, he seemed to have the unique ability to see both the forest and the trees. His attention to detail allowed him to understand the minutia of each product and yet also see a much more global picture of the market for each product and how Lincoln might leverage that market. This was especially true with variable annuities.

Although he said that he didn't plan to be a CEO, when Tom Watson announced his retirement in December 1976, Ian took over the reins in the summer of 1977. Chance favors the prepared mind, and Ian was prepared for a lot of things.

I have to pause here to say that in conversation with many of you, and also in the writings about him, there seems to be a yearning to be like him. He possessed many qualities and it is as though we would like to bottle that recipe and emulate him ourselves. It is said that he was a lifelong learner, but I think that there is more to it than that, as there are many smart people that lack wisdom. So, what was the great source of his wisdom? For a possible answer, I reviewed some developmental psychology.

Erik Erikson described eight stages of psychosocial development. Erickson suggests that healthy individuals must go through each stage, and that each successive stage depends upon the health of the previous stages. An examination of his life demonstrates to me that he went through all of these at an accelerated pace, especially the more mature levels. I will address Stages 7 & 8 shortly, allow me to digress for a minute and call your attention to the teenage years. Since there is so much controversy now about gender identity, it was refreshing to examine stage 5 again where identity development occurs. This is where a teenager begins to identify his role in the world. What role will the child occupy as an adult? It is the turning point where "what the person has come to be" meets "the person society expects one to become." And there are two identities involved: the sexual and the occupational.

I wanted to focus just a minute on this because gender fluidity is such a hot button issue today. Adolescents can be very uncomfortable with the biological changes that are occurring in their bodies and the societal pressures to conform. This can be a very difficult time in adolescent's lives, and we need to remember to appreciate how difficult the transition can be. Ian surely would have suggested that we save some compassion for them.

Back to the topic at hand, I wanted you to note that stage 7 starts around age 40 and stage 8 around age 65. At stage 7, middle-aged adults feel the urge to be productive and make contributions to the society. For example, they may volunteer at their church or mentor the younger generation. They want to leave a legacy and make this world a better place for future generations. Ian did this when he was in his mid-20s! And with stage 8, it is said that people at this stage develop wisdom, characterized by composure, broad-mindedness, emotional forbearance, and peace of mind. Ian was developing this wisdom in his 30s. How did he do this? What allowed him to evolve so quickly and thoroughly?

Let me give you an example of cognitive development. Imagine a young soccer superstar entering his freshman year of high school. His career has been a success story from day one and he is looking to continue to bask in all the glory. But he quickly learns that for him to score the goals and get the glory, his teammates have to pass him the ball. He must learn to play nice even if he doesn't want to. But hopefully over his four years, he will evolve and come to understand that the friendships are worth more than the newspaper clippings and the medals. That represents cognitive development to a higher level of understanding of what it means to be human and to be in social relationships. Our churches help with this development as well. When our children pass through stage 4, they learn about the pleasure of applying themselves to tasks: the Protestant work ethic. And when adolescents go through stage 5, the church can help with character development. The church supports development a healthy sense of right and wrong through all these lower stages, as well as encouraging us to accept a higher calling.

Ian navigated these stages well, developing a solid work ethic and achieving his dream of being financially comfortable within just a few years after college. But in 1963, he had an epiphany. He and Mimi were members of the Crescent Avenue United Methodist Church and Ian had become head of Social Concerns Committee. The old Turner Chapel building had become available and they wanted to get involved with something

in the eastern part of the inner city. “Through that, we began to see the plight of underprivileged people. This exposed us and educated us to what was happening in our town.” Ian had admitted that he had been naïve about the needs of the city before his work on the East Wayne Street Center. This was the beginning of an extensive and lifelong dedication to nonprofits. I believe that this epiphany represents a momentous leap in he and Mimi’s conscious development. There are two ways that this represents a stunning leap in consciousness.

Ian redefined what wealth is. Joseph Heller, the author of *Catch-22*, understood this too. When asked if he was jealous of a hedge fund manager who was hosting a party, Heller replied that he had something that the billionaire would never have—enough. And with Ian Rolland too. He realized in his mid-20s that he had “enough wealth.” That was a monumental achievement for his age. For many people there seems to be no limit on what “enough wealth” entails. He and Mimi both knew that they had enough to live very comfortably and that wealth is about more than money.

Secondly, his recognition of his own naivety about the plight of the underprivileged, made him ask more questions. His humility forced him to ask himself if there were other things that had missed. It was this awareness of his own blind spots that opened his eyes wide. He looked more carefully at the trees and the forest. And then he started to grasp that the trees and the forest were both part of a larger ecosystem. It was no longer just about Lincoln life’s employees, shareholders, and customers. It was also about the city of Fort Wayne, its schools, its roads, its airports, and its culture. I cannot stress enough what a monumental achievement that was for his age. His humility allowed him to take so many different perspectives and see things that other people literally could not see because of their blind spots.

I believe that this is the cognitive capacity that separated him from most others. He could now see the world with more empathetic eyes. He could now see things that were already there, but no one in power had noticed. He looked around and saw that there were female employees that needed childcare. The entire ecosystem would benefit if he provided childcare. How blatantly obvious, but only if you had the courage to look around. And then he would ask himself “what else have I missed because of my blind spots?” Gee, it turns out that the ecosystem had gays and lesbians. Gays and lesbians were employees, customers, and also citizens of Fort Wayne. It simply made sense to offer healthcare benefits to same-sex couples. What else have I missed. Maybe the workday should not just be limited to 9-5, and viola, flexible working hours. To his opponents, these and other issues would seem countercultural, against norms, or violate religious dogma. But Ian could see that these norms were outdated and becoming obsolete. He understood that these changes practical and functional, and the changes would be welcomed once implemented. And all those objections: The objections were just windmills. They were just distractions that did not address real problems. This has happened many times before. The car companies went before Congress pleading that they would go broke if they had to install seatbelts in every car. A few years later the same argument about airbags. When John Crawford insisted on a smoke-free environment, his opponents predicted that all of the taverns in town would go out of business. More windmills. John did temporarily lose his seat on the City Council, but he soon got it back as people realized how nice a smoke-free environment was and it didn’t kill the economy.

The ability to see the whole ecosystem did create a problem with some of the more traditional and conservative churches in town. The most conservative would object to women becoming ministers or working outside the home. Some of these churches have still yet to reconcile LGBTQ with church teachings. This would lead Ian and Mimi temporarily leave organized religion and to begin to host church services in their own home on Sunday mornings. For you see, although churches can lift many people up, after you have been lifted up to higher levels of consciousness, after you have

developed some character and moral values, you begin to see that church dogma has difficulty addressing modern problems. Dogma does not easily inform the ecosystem about issues such as climate change, diminishing natural resources, and gender identity. It would only be much later that Ian and Mimi would return to an organized religion at Plymouth Congregational Church where John Gardner, one of the brightest theologians that I have ever known, has merged theology with modernity, and encouraged all of us to be more empathetic.

But like so many of us, he found it hard to slow down. When he became CEO in 1977, he thought that 10 years would be enough and planned to retire at age 55. But he saw many mountains still to climb, and he kept on climbing. In the late 80s he spearheaded Parents for Quality Education with Integration to desegregate the lower schools in Fort Wayne. He hired a civil rights lawyer from Washington DC and sued the city of Fort Wayne. It took three years to reach a settlement with the school system and by 1992 all 36 elementary schools in Fort Wayne had reached racial balance. For Ian, this was about equal opportunity. As he stated, “many applicants coming out of the inner-city schools couldn’t pass the requirements to be hired. We were forced to pick most of our workforce from white males, leaving women and minorities out of the running.”

Desegregation was important, but it was not enough to improve the quality of education and to meet the other needs of the city. I knew very little about the politics of Fort Wayne, but I do remember Ian’s editorial in July 1990 challenging Fort Wayne to do better. Lincoln would postpone building a new office building downtown as he didn’t see a bright future for Fort Wayne if the city followed its current path. “Lincoln now has trouble finding enough qualified employees in the Fort Wayne area. The airport is giving it real headaches. The community is making no real effort to fix roads, water and sewer systems, let alone expand the basic infrastructure. Most of all, bickering and fragmentation are blocking resolution of these problems.” In some ways, he set the stage for his greatest fear: Lincoln life moving its headquarters out of Fort Wayne.

In retrospect, as he was taking on these challenges, it was too much for one individual. By 1990, he needed to have picked a successor who was from Fort Wayne and was dedicated to keeping the headquarters here. That successor may not have been able to keep the headquarters here forever, but that would have been a necessary step. Ian would've had to relinquish the reins and disappear for a while to let the new CEO get established. Ian could then have returned to work on his many projects with the full force of Lincoln life behind him. But that's 20/20 hindsight isn't? And great minds, even ones that are highly evolved, have difficulty letting go of the reins. Knowing when to hand over the reins to someone younger, less experienced, less mature, less evolved, may be the most difficult thing that any of us do. We fear that the successor may not grasp the dangers ahead, but we also fear the loss of our own relevance. We could probably think of many other people who feared that loss of relevance and stayed on too long – Woody Hayes and Ruth Bader Ginsburg come to mind. There are many more. But Ian didn't get the succession plan done soon enough, he became distanced from the board, and Lincoln moved its headquarters to Philadelphia soon after Ian left the board. Ian still remained very active in the community, but I'm sure that the headquarters move haunted him for the rest of his life.

Ian Rolland was an extraordinary human being. Never seeking the limelight, he was thrust into it by his wisdom and success. He was brilliant, compassionate, and generous. He sought to get it right, not to be right. He saw the whole ecosystem before he created his action plans. The result was a more vibrant city of Fort Wayne. Thanks in large part to Ian, we have a thriving downtown, Headwaters Park, a new airport expansion, preservation of the wetlands and Oakwood Hotel at Wawasee, renovated landmarks including the Old Fort, The Historical Museum, and the Embassy Theater, creation of the Fort Wayne Sexual Assault Treatment Center, curbing crime and violence with the Roundtable on youth and violence, the Boys and Girls Club of Fort Wayne, the art museum, the civic theater, the St. Francis university's creative arts

building, Junior Achievement Center, and last but not least, where I think it all started, the East Wayne Street Center.

That is quite a legacy. I haven't mentioned his numerous awards because, well, like that soccer player, Ian learned at a very early age that actions mean more than words, and that relationships are more important than medals. If he were here today, I think that he would want to know about us, and about what we are doing to continue his legacy. The more we would try to shift the conversation back to him, he would shift the focus back to us, inquiring about our visions for the future and insisting that we have a pragmatic action plan. He would encourage us to see the whole ecosystem and make sure that our efforts were directed at real problems, and that we not be distracted by windmills. He was practical yet he dreamed big. He has big shoes to fill, but he would be disappointed if we didn't try carry the torch. We need his courage, his wisdom, and his leadership even more today. We live in chaotic times.

Chaotic times: In just the last 3 days

Alex Jones: found responsible for spreading hateful and harmful conspiracy theories.

Nikolas Cruz, a young man with fetal alcohol syndrome convicted of killing 17 in Parkland school.

Nury Martinez of the Los Angeles City Council demonstrates that she can be as racist as anyone.

Local Huntington University embroiled in an abuse scandal.

January 6 committee subpoena the former President after making a compelling case that....well, he is no Ian Rolland.

These are chaotic times. Where are the Ian Rolland's of today? We could use a few of them. Maybe Don Quixote's observation is appropriate today.

“When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies? Perhaps to be too practical is madness. To surrender dreams — this may be madness. Too much sanity may be madness — and maddest of all: to see life as it is, and not as it should be!”

— Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *Don Quixote*

Ian Rolland wanted us to see life as it should be, and that is worth emulating!