Guest Editorial

William E. "Bud" Davis - Chancellor
Oregon State System of Higher Education

What Price Leadership - Is It Worth It?

The following remarks were delivered at the Colorado Water Congress Summer Meeting at Keystone, Colorado on August 15, 1986.

It's great to be back in Colorado. My wife and I are natives of Loveland. We brag about being Coloradans wherever we've lived, although it's been all over the west and sometimes all over the world.

People often ask, "With your kind of work - being president of the university or Chancellor of the State System of Higher Education - what's the toughest problem you've had to cope with in the last 20 or 25 years?"

I thought about it, and really, it was the time of the streakers. I remember one day being on the campus, and I had decided to go over to the student union to get a cup of coffee. As I started walking up the stairs to the student union, I heard all these screams and yells and cheers, and more screams and more yells. I looked up in time to see these two naked bodies go whizzing past, clad in nothing but their tennis shoes. What I didn't see was the third body, and he didn't see me either. We collided there in mid-stairs and we tumbled all the way down to the bottom of the stairs. I picked myself up and with what dignity I had left, dusted myself off. He got up, and, although he was skinned and bleeding, he dusted himself off with what dignity he had left. I said, "Young man, do you know who I am?" He said, "No sir.

"I'm Dr. Davis, the President of your University." He said "President Davis, do you know who I am?" I said, "No," and he said, "Thank God!" And I want you to know, Ralph Curtis, it's good to see you after all these years!

I left Colorado under some very harrowing circumstances in 1962. I had been appointed as the head football coach, the interim football coach to replace Sonny Greeneleus at the University of Colorado. He had been dismissed along with the coaching staff and 39 players who were declared ineligible. The President called me in and said, "You're the coach." I was Alumni Director at the time, so that was quite a shift of duties. I was the first coach in the country to be hung in effigy before he got the job. What started as a bad season began to deteriorate. I remember as we went along, we had only three seniors and six juniors, and the rest of the people had never heard a shot fired in anger. Only two of them had ever shaved. We were in such bad shape that we were playing out that season with students.

People predicted that we wouldn't win a game but we fooled them. We did beat Kansas State. I remember we played Oklahoma, and it was pretty awful as the score was 63 to 0. The President called me in the following Monday and said, "Bud, the alumni are getting restless. What do you have to say about Saturday's score?" I thought about it and replied, "Thank God we were up for the game."

He said, "Unless we win this next week, I think we're in big trouble. By the way, whom are we playing?" And I thought, where do you get this "we," but mumbled, "Well, we're playing Missouri. They're undefeated and untied and unscorched upon any measure of humility is to be at Columbia, Missouri, on a Saturday afternoon at their home."

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The above widely reported excerpt from an otherwise carefully worded study by the Western Governors' Association has chewed on. Colorado's water system, in particular, the following principles which can be gleaned from the Governors' report, from the reaction this writer has heard recently, is that the public and people in power will actually be misled into believing that agriculture can take a ten-percent cut in water use, everybody will benefit, and no more dams or reservoirs will be needed.

Fortunately, there's more meat in the report than the press has chewed on. Colorado's water system, in particular, emerges in the forefront of innovation. Consider, for example, the following principles which can be gleaned from the

Continued on page 2
Colorado Water Rights

Throughout the west is the idea that more men have been killed over water than over women. As important as knowing the leadership, as identifying the decision-makers, it is equally important to know who your friends are, who the people are who have something in common and who will back you.

We have 11 counterparts to water in California that mean the University of California, Oregon State University, the Health Science University, are programs throughout the state. We have a presence in every state's chief official. There's an old Persian proverb - "He who does not walk on the crest of the wave is a turtle." And I think that in terms of the legislative issues, it's important to get others to toe the water for you. The best lobbyists have for higher education in the State of Oregon are the lobbyists who are working for people who have common and like interests. Oregon has not had great amounts of money to allocate to its various services. But it's a state of water resources, and its water is important to the public good.

Continued on page 3

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Published by Colorado Water Congress

1330 Logan St., Suite 312
Denver, Colorado 80206
Phone: (303) 897-0122

Member of National Water Resources Association, Water Resources Congress

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L. Dextor & Associates
Edgewater, Colorado
Publication Printer

Dick Mackery, Denver

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Continued from page 1

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Davis: The Price of Leadership

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None of the aforementioned events or bill enactments would have been possible without – as already pointed out – dedicated involvement of CWC members. This involvement is reflected in the following statistics as they relate to a phenomenal number of CWC Board and Committee meetings:

- Board of Directors – 1/23/86, 2/26/86, 2/28/86, 5/14/86, 8/14/86, and 12/9/86.
- CWC Official Business Meeting – 2/28/86.
- State Affairs (Legislative) Committee – 1/24/86, 2/10/86, 2/18/86, 3/7/86, 3/21/86, 4/17/86, and 12/19/86.
- Water Quality Section of the State Affairs Committee now called Federal & State Water Quality Committee – 1/27/86, 2/10/86, 2/18/86, 3/7/86, 5/15/86, 6/20/86, 7/24/86, 9/9/86, 11/7/86, and 12/19/86.
- Groundwater Section of the State Affairs Committee – 1/24/86, 2/10/86, 2/18/86, 3/7/86, 3/21/86, and 4/17/86.
- Surface Water Section of the State Affairs Committee – 1/24/86, 2/10/86, 2/18/86, 3/7/86, 3/21/86, and 4/17/86.
- CWC Nominating Committee – 1/23/86.
- Aspinall Award Committee – 1/23/86.
- CWC Litigation Advisory Committee – 1/23/86 and several conference call meetings.
- CWC Committee on Liability Insurance – numerous meetings.


CWC’s Fish & Wildlife Special Project Principal’s Meetings – 1/15/86.

CWC Fish & Wildlife Special Project Political Committee – 9/16/86.

CWC Fish & Wildlife Special Project Legal Committee – 3/21/86, 8/21/86.

CWC Fish & Wildlife Special Project Technical Committee – Technical Subcommittees – numerous meetings.

CWC Special Committee on Sand & Gravel Matters – 11/24/86.


CWC Special Committee on the Role of the State Engineer – 10/31/86.

CWC Special Committee on the Electric Consumer’s Protection Act of 1986 – 9/9/86.

CWC Special Committee on Reserved Rights/Wilderness – 1/15/86, 2/20/86, 3/26/86, 4/26/8, 4/7/86, 5/15/86, 8/11/86.

CWC Special Committee on News Media Relations – 7/24/86.

CWC Membership Development Committee – 12/18.

In addition, CWC members have also been actively involved in CWC’s national affiliate – the National Water Resources Association (NWRA).

CWC sponsored meetings were another dimension of membership involvement and activity and these were:

1. 28th CWC Annual Convention held February 27-28, 1986.
2. CWC Leadership Workshop held June 13, 1986.
4. CWC Water Law Seminar held September 11-12, 1986.
5. CWC Workshop on Endangered Species Act & Western Water Law held October 1, 1986.
6. CWC Workshop on Water Conservation Developments and issues held October 3, 1986.
7. CWC Workshop on Planning & Financing Water Projects held October 14, 1986.
8. CWC Workshop for Board Members of Water Conservancy Districts held October 15, 1986.
11. CWC Workshop on Nontributary Ground Water held October 29, 1986.

There were a number of other actions that enhanced and assisted greatly in making CWC more effective. These actions were:

- Secured 26 new sustaining and 27 new individual members during 1986.
- Published the Colorado Water Almanac and Directory 1986 Edition (100 pages).
- Named Fred V. Kroeger as the 6th recipient of the "Wayne N. Aspinall Water Leader of the Year Award" at the 1986 CWC Convention.
- Awarded the "Ed Roerson" scholarship to A. Bruce Johnson of Plattville for the 1986 CWC Water Law Seminar.
- Published Colorado Laws Enacted in 1986 of Interest to Water Users (106 pages).

In regard to CWC’s written communication (newsletters), the following newsletters were published during 1986:

5. Water Legislative Report – 1/12/86, 1/18/86, 4/7/86, and 5/20/86.

Finally, in regard to CWC’s financial status at the end of 1986, we are happy to report that CWC is operating in the "black" for the seventh straight year. Again, your two member staff is, indeed, proud and honored to be associated with such an outstanding and dedicated group of people as the CWC membership.

Dick MacAskill, Executive Director