Profound Simplicity of Leadership Wisdom: Exemplary Insight from Miami Nation Chief Floyd Leonard

David A. Cowan
Miami University

Native American nations are often overlooked as part of the multinational terrain that informs leadership theory even though they typically hold exemplary status as cultures that embody wisdom. Native American chiefs have been long admired as wise leaders who have sustained the survival of their tribes amid overtly hostile forces. In a world suffering from widespread conflict among groups of all characters and sizes, it seems appropriate to attend to the potential insight of such chiefs. Consequently, this study focused on one of the most desecrated Native American nations with the purpose of illuminating patterns of leadership wisdom that have enabled survival amid European invasion and relocation and, more recently, a renewal of prominence as they emerge in today's business environment. At the helm during this comeback is Miami Chief Floyd Leonard who has served the Miami Nation for over 50 years. To understand Native American wisdom, it is arguably necessary to be open to metaphysical and epistemological beliefs that are not purely Western European. To facilitate the challenge, I have spent a decade engaging Native American culture, which helps to frame the study and enable reasonably informed interpretations. These interpretations reveal three defining qualities of leadership wisdom that align with a longstanding leadership framework: (a) nested values as a way of being, (b) embedded meaning as a way of knowing, and (c) collective orchestration as a way of doing. Together, these qualities support the proposition that leadership wisdom manifests as profound simplicity rather than expert complexity. Presentation of the study begins with an explanation of theoretical foundations and includes descriptions of methods, interpretations of data, tentative contributions, and a discussion of value added.

> Leaders can be intelligent in various ways and creative in various ways; neither trait guarantees wisdom. Indeed, probably relatively few leaders at any level are particularly wise. . . . [Yet,] arguably, [this] is the most important quality a leader can have. (Sternberg, 2003b, p. 395)

Cross-cultural research frequently has required that researchers expand their perspectives in order to see more inclusively what is otherwise unseen, appreciate more clearly what is otherwise unspoken, and respect more genuinely what is otherwise unknown (e.g., Hall, 1981).

Cross-*national* research can carry this need a step further if dominant beliefs and values obscure awareness of minority cultures. In general, wisdom tends to promote the employment of integrative capabilities amid diverse contexts, for example, to avoid distracting preconceptions, see in relatively inclusive ways, and act in a reasonably practical manner that unites individual freedoms with common good (cf. Aristotle, as cited in Hutchins, 1986). Throughout history, exemplary leaders often have been framed as those who possess and employ such wisdom, which Sternberg (2003b) acknowledged as a scarce resource. By comparison to the naive person who possesses superficial simplicity, wisdom is thought to be complex in breadth and depth of understanding. By comparison to experts who possess complex understanding, however, wisdom is thought to be profound in simplicity (cf. Weick, 2007).

Only in the past few decades have Western scholars earnestly begun to create frameworks that explicitly characterize and formally categorize internal mechanisms of wisdom. Most extensive, if not also prominent, among such work is that of Robert Sternberg who has devoted considerable attention to the study of alternative forms and levels of intelligence and to integral intelligences including wisdom. For example, his theories of tri-archic intelligence (1985, 1998b), successful intelligence (1999), and leadership (2003a) underlie his theories of wisdom (1990, 1998a). Together, these have been opening doors of understanding to various realms of higher consciousness. Other prominent studies of the composition, development, and expression of wisdom include those of Baltes and his colleagues (e.g., Baltes & Smith, 1990; Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Baltes, Staudinger, Maercker, & Smith, 1995). In addition to these relatively comprehensive works, other authors have pursued the meaning and roots of the wisdom concept (e.g., Meacham, 1983; Ryan, 1999), descriptions of its development (e.g., Pascual-Leone, 2000) or emergence (e.g., Bassett, 2005), scientific approaches for measurement (e.g., Jason, Reichler, King, Madsen, Camacho, & Marchese, 2001), manifestations in contexts such as leadership (e.g., Cacioppe, 1997) and management (Bigelow, 1992), and potential collective manifestations (e.g., Waldron, 1995). For in-depth coverage of existing wisdom literature, interested readers should look to comprehensive reviews such as those provided by Kessler and Bailey (2007) and by Sternberg (2003b).

The purpose of this study is to explore a longstanding Native American culture in search of insight that moves our understanding of leadership wisdom beyond what I consider the expert complexity level where most scholarly understanding resides today. Whereas scholars have helped to shift understanding from naive simplicity to expert complexity, there has not yet been sufficient examination to move our understanding to what is called elegant simplicity (Schultz, 1979). Naive simplicity involves seeing little variation that exists in a given field, for example, in music, mathematics, or life. At this level, people often tend to think they know more than they actually do because they have little or no awareness of the variation that comprises a given field. With a shift into confused complexity, people begin to realize extensive variation and become overwhelmed. What I consider expert complexity manifests as people begin to acquire ways to categorize and organize complexity, which seems to be the current state of scholarly understanding of wisdom. What resides on the other side of expert complexity is referred to as profound simplicity. Profound simplicity involves paying less attention to details and categories and more attention to significantly meaningful patterns. At this level, there is less *thinking about* wisdom than there is *being wise*—a higher order of consciousness (cf. Argyris & Schon, 1978).

To provide a foundation of expert complexity on which to build, I employ a representative set of insightful patterns of understanding from some of the most well-formulated studies. This includes work of Sternberg (1990, 2003b), Baltes and his colleagues (e.g., Baltes &

Smith, 1990), and Wilber (e.g., 1995, 2003), who all framed wisdom in general terms rather than specific to contexts. As a result, this study draws contextual insight from literature that has framed wisdom amid organizational processes (e.g., Bigelow, 1992; Cacioppe, 1997). Where appropriate, I also draw from fairly ancient wisdom sources, some of which date back to philosophers such as Plato (Adler, 1986) and to various religious domains (e.g., Novak, 1994). In addition, to help interpret and organize results of the study, a longstanding and notable integral leadership framework (e.g., Leader-to-Leader Institute, 2004) provides substantive value.

Underlying the study are several key premises worth noting. One is that, compared to most Western civilization, wisdom has been more consistently valued by and intentionally pursued within Native American culture. Another is that Native American nations warranting unique attention regarding their employment of wisdom are those that have not only survived European assault but also begun a return to prosperity. This latter premise supports the Miami Nation as a uniquely exemplary candidate for study because of the extreme forces they endured and the constructive resurgence they have created. What adds additional value to the Miami Nation focus is their highly regarded chief whose longstanding leadership tenure connects years of tribal attack and deterioration with more recent years of renewal and revitalization.

More than most topics of scholarly scrutiny, wisdom is not one that can be explored at arms length under the pretense of objectivity (e.g., Meacham, 1983). To examine wisdom meaningfully, it is necessary to acknowledge the observer within the frame of what is being observed. With this in mind, several related premises are notable. One is a guiding belief that wisdom not only transcends complex understanding but also includes such complexity (Wilber, 1995). For example, strategic decisions are not made without understanding relevant tactical complexity even though such complexity may not arise in explanations of a strategic decision. A related premise is that although wisdom emphasizes common good (e.g., Sternberg, 1998a), it also includes attention to individual welfare (i.e., it transcends but includes individual good). For example, shifts in perspective from oneself to one's family and nation may appear increasingly selfless but can retain local interests as integral parts of a larger concern.

More specifically, this study attempts to capitalize on a unique opportunity that brings together increasing interests in the scholarly study of wisdom, revitalization of a nation that survived more than its share of abuse; and the presence of a leader who has been a notable exemplar of resilience, guidance, and inspiration during his nation's return to healthy prosperity. The Miami Nation provides a unique context because of their many decades of attack, devastation, relocation, epidemics, and myriad forces for assimilation. What truly creates the opportunity, however, is the Miami Nation's vitality to weather the storm, reinvigorate cultural identity, and emerge as a successful player on various societal fronts including business. The following sections of the paper provide an explanation of conceptual underpinnings of the study; a brief overview of the Miami Nation and Chief Floyd Leonard; an outline of methods, data, and results; and a discussion of contributions, limitations, and suggestions for further exploration.

Conceptual Foundations

Learning to drop one's tools to gain lightness, agility, and wisdom tends to be forgotten in an era where leaders and followers alike are preoccupied with knowledge management, acquisitions, and acquisitiveness. Nevertheless, human potential is realized as much by what we drop, as what we acquire. (Weick, 2007, p. 6)

The direction, framing, and interpretation of results in this study are influenced by frameworks that align with the premises mentioned and typify the profound simplicity of leadership wisdom. It is profound, rather than superficial, simplicity that transcends but includes relevant complexity (Schutz, 1979). Chessmasters learn, from years spent filling-in relevant cognitive terrain with experiences and insights, how to discern patterns and respond in effective ways (e.g., Newell & Simon, 1972). Similarly, orchestra conductors blend flows of music, and racecar drivers maneuver among moments of opportunity. Such integrative consciousness is becoming an increasingly significant focal point of exemplary leadership (Martin, 2007), but it arises only after sufficient work with complexity. Stated differently, it arises from patterns of connections that reside in complexity. Wisdom may be defined loosely as strange attractors (e.g., Wheatley, 1992) or synchronicity (Strogatz, 2003) within complexity. Yet, as Wilber (2003) duly noted, it is impossible to skip stages and awaken such integration without paying adequate dues.

An important implication of wisdom as profound simplicity is that cultures that have respected, valued, and nurtured the process for millennia are likely to manifest wisdom in ways that are not overly complex. Looking for the complexity of wisdom may tune observational lenses to frequencies that miss its presence. In this respect, Einstein may have been wise in supposedly advising (paraphrased), be as simple as possible but no simpler. If any form of consciousness can embody this advice effectively, perhaps it is wisdom. As a consequence, I employ a relatively simple leadership framework to accompany Schutz's (1979) framework of profound simplicity. Earlier, I noted a fourth level within his framework, expert complexity, to depict movement away from confused complexity by discerning pattern amid detail, but which has not yet prioritized the patterns. As Weick (2007) concluded about such priorities, "Knowledge involves acquiring. Wisdom involves dropping" (p. 15). Weick noted as a preface to this statement that "the question of what to keep and drop, and why, lies at the heart of adaptive excellence" (p. 14). Thus, the wise person realizes which patterns are relevant and which are not, which patterns are significant and which are not, which patterns are extraneous and which are not, and so forth. In this study, the aim is to discern patterns that are both relevant and important to leadership wisdom as profound simplicity.

Unlike scholarship that focuses on the general efficacy of wisdom, it remains an empirical question whether wisdom sustains such descriptive and prescriptive forms when employed in practical social contexts (e.g., Phelan, 2001). Relevant propositions toward this end have arisen, suggesting that there may be a unique dimension inherent within, or a unique combination of dimensions comprising, wisdom at collective levels such as crowds (Surowiecki, 2005), teams (Katzenbach & Smith, 1992), or organizations (Bierly, Kessler, & Christensen, 2000). Given the salience of close ties within Native American culture (e.g., Storm, 1972, 1994), questions of collective wisdom seem viable. This possibility provided some of my motivation for examining wisdom as a potential outcome of leadership processes (cf. Zander & Zander, 2000) but not as a purely collective process in itself.

Keeping a scholarly eye on a unique leadership aspect of wisdom requires employing a leadership lens, at least as a backdrop, to sustain awareness and/or facilitate interpretations accordingly. Consistent with profound simplicity, therefore, the choice of leadership lenses was guided by the intent to provide a simple but integrative overlay of leadership qualities. The leadership framework employed to help guide interviews and frame interpretations was the leadership triad of "be, know, do," employed as a foundation for the armed services (Leader-to-Leader Institute, 2004). Because the armed services has studied and worked to develop leadership as long as or longer than any other institution, and because their framework is more

integrative than most leadership theories, this choice seemed appropriate (cf. Martin, 2007). The "be, know, do" framework illuminates interdependent levels of leadership and its development based on the premise that what one does (the level of doing) is a function of what one knows (the level of knowing) which is a function of who one is (the level of being). Particularly over the past 3 decades, emphasis in military leadership development has moved from a focus on doing to a focus on being, to provide values and beliefs that enable learners to be less bureaucratic and more improvisational in situations that are increasingly uncertain at the surface.

In combination, these frameworks emphasize a way of being that favors core values and profound simplicity. The framework of "be, know, do" presents levels of consciousness anchored at one end in core values—what Orit Gadiesh (n.d.), CEO of Bain and Company, called *true north*—and at the other end in mindful awareness. Grounded only in awareness, leadership tends toward spur-of-the-moment assessments and decisions, clearly not exemplifying wisdom. Grounded in core values yet including mindful awareness, leadership exemplifies the capacity to connect current circumstances to meaningful aspirations. Profound simplicity adds to this state of being a flexibility of awareness that does not accompany superficial simplicity or expert complexity (e.g., Matthews, 1998). One of Weick's (1993) unique comments supports the value of such flexibility: "Wise people know that they don't fully understand what is happening right now, because they have never seen precisely this event before" (p. 641).

Inherent in this argument is a realization that wisdom retains an understanding of relevant complexity even though it manifests as profound simplicity. It provides keen direction for thinking and doing, both of which derive from its true north sense of being. In both ways, wisdom transcends details of current circumstances yet includes relevant patterns of understanding that provide significant meaning. Accordingly, Weick (1993) added: "Wisdom is not *just* a way of thinking about things; it is a way of doing things. If people wish to be wise, they have to act wisely, not just think wisely" (p. 641). Equally so, wisdom is not just a way of thinking and doing; it is also a way of being that properly guides such thinking and doing.

To help focus this study on wisdom in Native American culture, it is important to recognize Native American conceptions of wisdom but also, at least for comparison, Western European conceptions of wisdom. As a result of sheer volume, however, reviewing all such literature is beyond the scope of this study and better left to others (e.g., Sternberg, 1990, 1998a, 2003b). Nevertheless, it remains important here to identify important themes that help to provide direction and framing. Thus, the following section includes a brief overview of relevant themes from Western European scholars who typically take a hands-off, outside-observer approach to wisdom. Following this is a brief overview of relevant themes from Native American scholars and elders whose implicit preference is a more hands-on, participative approach to wisdom as if one must first understand relevant contexts and processes to have any real chance of understanding the wisdom of another. Reviewing both camps suggests not only that value can be derived from each but also that each helps to illuminate potential blind spots of the other.

Leadership Wisdom Through Western European Lenses

Aside from philosophical arguments and debates, little scholarly attention to wisdom seems to have emerged until fairly recently. From Plato and Aristotle to many of today's current scholars, explorations and arguments focus intently on the nature of wisdom and who does or does not possess wisdom. Underlying such inquiries is an implicit assumption that those who ask the questions understand wisdom sufficiently to frame them well and to formulate answers.

Conversely, it is seldom admitted that such questions and answers can only be framed at the level of understanding of the scholar(s) involved. Most everyone in Western culture seems to presume that he or she understands wisdom reasonably well. This presumption enables most scholars, including me, to toss an argument into the ring of inquiry. It even motivates some scholars to pursue measurements of wisdom. Problematic in this regard, however, is Sternberg's (1985) argument—long noted about our understanding of intelligence—that the meaning of wisdom becomes only a function of what we measure.

At the surface, Western European understanding of wisdom has reinforced the importance of at least one essential dimension which embodies a distinction between philosophical pursuits and practical pursuits. While the former often revel in elegant arguments and pay little attention to contextual significance, the latter begin with contextual fit and only then tend to define proper examples for study and insight. Throughout Western history, other commonly shared ideas seem few but perhaps include the ideas that few people ever truly attain and employ wisdom and that the nature of wisdom revolves around a clear sense of common good. "Wisdom sees that behind all the multifarious forms and phenomena there lies the One, the Good, the unqualifiable Emptiness, against which all forms are seen to be illusory, fleeting, and impermanent" (Wilber, 1996, p. 253-254). Beyond this, however, differences in conceptions vary in terms of number, quality, interrelationships, and significance of dimensions. Conceptual approaches also differ in terms of purpose, as mentioned earlier, focusing on the essence of wisdom (e.g., Guorong, 2002; Ryan, 1999), structure of wisdom (e.g., Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Sternberg, 1998a), development of wisdom (Bassett, 2005; Bigelow, 1992, Pascual-Leone, 2000), measurement of wisdom (e.g., Jason et al., 2001), and employment of wisdom (e.g., Cacioppe, 1997; Capra, 2002; Cooperrider, 1998; Kessler & Bailey, 2007; Sternberg, 2003a). Various scholars today seemingly presume that wisdom involves complex arrays of knowledge that reside within view of Western analytical minds. To borrow a fitting analogy, this approach to wisdom may be comparable to the pursuit of understanding a hummingbird by pinning it down and dissecting it.

Leadership Wisdom Through Native American Lenses

In Native American culture, wisdom seems to equate more directly to a living, free hummingbird. Implicit in this side of the analogy is a presumption that to understand a hummingbird or to understand wisdom requires engaging them on their terms. Through these lenses, holding either one still disrupts its fragility and suffocates its livelihood. Wisdom, therefore, tends to be conveyed through actions and stories of elders (e.g., Armstrong, 1992). Altering the words of an elder's stories actually may be seen not only as arrogant but also as sacrilegious. Metaphysical roots of Native American life embody sacred interconnectedness of all life. Epistemological foundations, therefore, tend to favor keeping contexts intact, resulting in stories as a primary means of educating toward wisdom. Dissecting a story loses its meaning. Filtering a story through an outsider's lens typically reveals more about the outsider than anything else. In various Native cultures, a community's storytellers are its historians, charged with keeping intact vital and vibrant lessons to wisely illuminate tomorrow's path.

Implications of such beliefs reveal wisdom in Native American culture as more implicitly and integrally understood than it is in Western European culture, more in tune with Eastern wisdom (e.g., Lao Tsu, 1972). Understanding wisdom is a process that unfolds on its own terms and timeframe, not particularly accessible to analytical processes of study. Other significant

distinctions are perhaps attributable to the degree of holistic understanding, a way of knowing that engages not only the mind but also the heart, body, and spirit. Understanding with the mind is only one piece of the pattern. Wisdom is not located in the words of a story but rather in the integral patterns of meaning that a story ignites. Read or heard by a person with different philosophical roots, genuine meaning may be obscured or simply missed as if the story was being transmitted on one radio wave while the listener was tuned to another.

Examining wisdom literature from Native American culture consistently repeats this pattern, whether explicitly or implicitly (i.e., conveyed directly through context-rich stories or via advice that highlights realizing such interconnections). For example, studies of Native American elders typically depict wisdom as an inclusively contextual counterpart to knowledge. In other words, it is framed as a lifetime pursuit of wholeness, accessible only to those who engage the pursuit properly. Exemplary compilations such as *Wisdomkeepers* (Wall & Arden, 1990), *Wisdom's Daughters* (Wall, 1993), and *Wisdom of the Elders* (Suzuki & Knudtson, 1992) all depict Native American culture as valuing knowledge as an ingredient of wisdom, realizing a need for metalevel or integral understanding to guide the acquisition, prioritization, and use of knowledge. A significant difference between this understanding and understanding within much of Western culture is apparent in the Native American dedication to preserving goodness and beauty in addition to truth, in what Wilber (1996) framed as the Big Three of Reality and Sternberg (1999) implied as essential to "successful intelligence" (p. 47). Through an acquisition of knowledge alone, what one typically learns to value are local truths reinforcing ethnocentrism if not also egocentrism. Enriched with wisdom, however, one can discern layers of connection that illuminate the importance of goodness and beauty in addition to truth. Without exception, it seems, the elders speaking of wisdom in the mentioned books all conveyed a call for such integral understanding.

While highlighting integral patterns of understanding in Native American culture, it is important to note that Native American culture is comprised of more than 150 subcultures (Waldman, 1999), each unique in significant ways. Nevertheless, most of these subgroups share certain values and beliefs (e.g., Meadows, 1989, 1990). Common unifying threads manifest across Native American philosophies and practices, such as those described in *The Great Hoop of Life* (Underwood, 2000) and *Look to the Mountain* (Cajete, 1994). While each sovereign nation retains a distinctive identity defined by a unique history and context, common metaphysical and epistemological roots provide unity at a deep level. For example, shared understanding of the four directions of life, represented in the medicine wheel as physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual (e.g., Bopp, Bopp, Brown, & Lane, 1984), retains subtle interpretative variations across Indian nations. Whereas most relate the directions to common elements of life, such as earth, water, air, and fire, individual nations often differ in how they align particular directions with local manifestations of life such as unique animals and plants.

Research Question

The central research question that emerges from the literatures mentioned is fairly straightforward and simple at one level, yet considerably more subtle and integrative when framed within the Native American context of the study. At a simple level, the relevant question is: What can we learn from a prominent Native American Chief who has not only helped his nation to survive for decades amid unfriendly, turbulent forces, but also helped to enable his nation to revitalize and emerge as a successful player in the business world? The more subtle and

integrative question arises when we look more deeply into the unique context of the Miami Nation and its longstanding chief, Floyd Leonard, which I describe in more detail below. For purposes here, it is important to realize the degree of devastation incurred by the Miami Nation by moving them not just once but twice, first into eastern Kansas and then into northeast Oklahoma. Lost in the process was not only land, but also community, language, ritual, self-esteem, and sovereignty. Western European invaders were never intent on supporting the Miami Nation or even wanting them to survive as a culture and community. Thus, the contextual significance of the Miami Nation experience is not only its downslide but also its return to prominence. Clearly, there are lessons to learn from the chief of a nation who enabled survival and resurgence. Also important to the context are the number of borders and boundaries that Chief Leonard has had to traverse. His involvement with various levels of government, constituencies in business, and roles in education make Chief Leonard an unusually exemplary leader for a study of this kind. Thus, the more subtle research question pertains to nuances of wisdom that enable a leader to traverse such diverse terrain for such a long period of time in increasingly effective ways (cf. Porras, Emery, & Thompson, 2007).

Methodology

Moving from one perspective to another is no simple matter, and consequently, Indian education and educators badly need a generation of original thinkers who can scan both points of view. They can build models and interpretations of the world that serve as transitions to enable Indians to communicate with the non-Indian body of knowledge and demonstrate the validity of Indian understandings. (Cajete, 1994, p. 13)

The inevitable difficulties of dealing effectively with Cajete's (1994) call apply to both sides of any cultural divide and should not be understated. Sharing meaning across cultural or national borders has always been problematic for many reasons including lack of common experiences and differences in philosophical premises that shape reality and ways of learning about that reality (e.g., Cooper & Cox, 1989). In a world where crossing boundaries among cultures and nations is increasingly critical, being able to traverse the gaps meaningfully becomes both a leadership and scholarship necessity. The further apart cultures reside in terms of fundamental values and beliefs, the more helpful it becomes to engage in experiences of the other in order to understand such distinctions. A vital implication for this particular study is that whoever reads written words of Chief Leonard will interpret his meaning using their own experiences and premises rather than those of Miami nation members. Without finding effective ways not only for understanding differences but also for communicating on both sides of relevant boundaries, cross-national and cross-cultural studies inevitably cannot realize their potential.

With variations of such precautions implanted along most of my career, methods employed for this study actually must be framed as beginning with a 10-year period of engaging Native American experiences (e.g., Cowan, 2005) and philosophies (e.g., Cowan, 1995; Cowan & Adams, 2008). It is this foundation that realistically guided my attention to the Miami Nation as a rich context and to Chief Leonard as an exemplary leader for studying wisdom across cultural and national boundaries. Methods employed also included a 3-week immersion into Miami Nation culture in Oklahoma during the summer of 2003, providing first-hand exposure to Miami Nation ways of being, thinking, and doing and first-hand experience of Chief Leonard in action. This opportunity arose through a university-funded field project involving students who

traveled with me to Oklahoma for an educational program involving close-up examination of Miami businesses and culture. The opportunity provided time for me to interact with each member of the Miami Business Committee, members of the headquarter staff and of staffs of each Miami business, as well as various elders who regularly came to the Miami headquarters for lunch in their on-site cafe. During the following year, I arranged what became Phase three of this study, two days of interviews with Chief Leonard in May of 2004. These took place primarily in Chief Leonard's office at the Miami Nation headquarters in Miami, Oklahoma; however, they were interspersed among conversations that, for example, occurred over off-site lunches. Each day of interviews totaled approximately three hours of one-on-one communications and all interviews were semistructured to provide springboards for interaction that did not unduly restrict Chief Leonard to researcher-directed topics. Consequently, although selected questions provided parameters for his responses, the process unfolded in a flexible manner enabling Chief Leonard to include topics as he saw fit.

Data from the interviews were tape recorded for later transcription and handwritten notes were taken throughout each interview to track nonverbal reactions, interruptions, apparent emotions, and so forth. During the 6 months following my stay in Oklahoma, the interview tapes were transcribed as literally as possible (e.g., including notation of pauses) by a third party and then reviewed and validated by me and by Chief Leonard. Transcribed interviews were also reviewed by several Miami Nation officials, including their chief librarian, who provided additional historical information for me to include.

It is important to highlight two particular aspects of the methods, one of which was to use a key-informant strategy. Given the explicit leadership focus of the research orientation and the unique opportunity of having access to such a longstanding Miami Nation leader in Chief Leonard, the decision seemed valid to employ Chief Leonard as the prominent voice of Miami Nation leadership and as a key leadership voice for the Intertribal Council of Northeast Oklahoma. However, I also interviewed three other members of the Miami Nation who had been close to Chief Leonard for substantial periods of time. Each of these additional interviews took place during the Spring of 2005, after my interviews with Chief Leonard had been carefully reviewed and patterns identified. This enabled me to focus questions for the other interviewees more substantively on Chief Leonard's leadership responsibilities, struggles, accomplishments, efficacy, and wisdom. One of these interviews was with Julie Olds, Miami Nation Cultural Preservation Officer, one was with Ken Bellmard, Miami Nation Attorney, and one was with Joe Leonard, son of Chief Leonard and Strategy Professor at Miami University.

The other aspect of the methods that warrants careful explanation is the structure of the interview process (e.g., Morgan, 2003). Inevitably, researchers cannot engage in research of this kind without influencing the outcomes to some degree. Some of this influence is desirable and some is not. For example, it is critical in such a study to gather data on Chief Leonard's leadership experiences, thoughts, and premises. What is potentially undesirable, however, is unduly restricting Chief Leonard's commentary or promoting contrived commentary that would not otherwise be forthcoming. In an attempt to handle these issues, a semistructured interview format seemed a reasonably good choice as long as I provided adequate space for Chief Leonard to say as little or as much as he wanted about each topic and let him move the conversation in other directions when he saw fit. With a topic as potentially unique as leadership wisdom, this dimension of methodology is critical. Thus, not only did I consciously provide Chief with plenty of room for commentary, I had also interacted with him multiple times during my previous visit

so that he was comfortable with my purpose and style. Out of respect for his support and time, I also made him a handcrafted gift which I gave him at the end of our interview sessions.

Data from the study included not only interviews and interview notes but also field notes taken during my 3-week engagement in 2004, part of which included multiple conversations as indicated. The opportunity to examine in considerable depth several Miami Nation businesses also expanded my foundation to help inform relevant questions about Chief Leonard's leadership wisdom. In addition, bringing students to the Miami headquarters enabled specific exposure to various cultural traditions, including a pow wow, cooking, dancing, beading, and language preservation efforts. It also provided opportunities to tour all Miami Nation businesses and facilities, including their Long House and the casino over which they share ownership with the Modoc Nation, as well as the surrounding community of Miami, Oklahoma and the Native American Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa. Miami language and language preservation were further examined in discussion sessions with Miami Nation language expert Daryl Baldwin. Miami Nation history and culture were also explained more thoroughly to me and my students in discussion sessions with Daryl Baldwin and Joe Leonard.

Analysis of such varied data is not straightforward and involved a three-step process. The first was reading and rereading transcribed interviews and field notes, seeking notable highlights and meaningful patterns. Notable highlights are summits that stand out in terms of apparent significance. Meaningful patterns represent the more common scholarly notion of central tendencies that emerge from repetition more than exception. A second step involved sharing my interpretations with Miami Nation members who provided commentary and clarification. For example, I shared an early draft of the study with Chief Leonard and with members of the Miami Business Committee and Administrative staff. The third step was an iteration of the first, reviewing data to fill gaps and assess support for each interpretation. Before sharing results, I will provide an overview of Miami Nation history and culture and of Chief Leonard.

Research Context: Miami Nation History and Culture

Our continued existence is due to, and in honor of, those who walked before us, who fought and worked and struggled to remain. Their efforts brought us here. Therefore we, in respect and steely determination, work to build for our community, provide for and teach our children, and care for our elders. Our economic development efforts are vital to the solid foundation needed to allow us to rise to these responsibilities today, and to continue to support them tomorrow. We work to assure that the sun will continue to rise on the people known as the myaamia. (Miami Business Services, 2008, ¶ 7)

To appreciate the consciousness and potential wisdom of a Miami chief, it is critical to understand historical roots of the Miami Nation. Prominent among these are the realities that the Miami were a productive, sovereign nation prior to European invasion; they were forced off their sacred ancestral lands, damaging their sense of community and identity, and moved to Kansas and then again to northeast Oklahoma; their culture and language were diminished by thoughtless outside forces; nevertheless, they sustained sufficient identity and community throughout such chaos; and they have been reemerging in the latter part of the 20th and the opening years of the 21st century with a committed sense of regaining productivity and sovereignty. The following sections provide a brief outline[1] of key issues comprising four recognizable time periods: (a) Miami sovereignty (mostly prior to 1680), (b) European invasion (approximately 1680 to 1840), (c) uprooting and reorganization (approximately 1840 to 1970), and (d) tribal resurgence (approximately 1970 to present). Using the seasons of a year as an analogy to frame the essence of each period, Miami sovereignty aligns most with summer, when livelihood was fully apparent; European invasion brought signs of autumn's deterioration; uprooting and reorganization represent the hidden hibernation and renewal of winter; and cultural resurgence is opening a door to the fertile blossoms and beauty of spring.

Miami Sovereignty (Prior to 1680)

The Miami Nation was part of the Algonquian branch of the Algonquian–Wakashan language tree, closely related in both language and culture to the Illinois. Prominent characteristics of their tribe were the exceptional degrees of respect that they held for their chief and the authority that their chief possessed. "Much of the traditional authority of Miami chiefs has been retained to the present and it still takes a unanimous vote of the tribal council to override his decisions" (Sultzman, 1999, ¶ 8). Also true of their earlier periods as it is of today, a Miami chief was chosen by the people rather than passed down within a given family. Throughout their early history, Miami chiefs held notable religious responsibilities, involving Middiwiwin society healing practices, which became an increasingly contentious, if not also divisive, issue when Jesuit missionaries began to arrive, preaching conversion to Christianity.

Generally, the Miami shared cultural practices with Eastern Woodlands and Plains tribes, some of which involved agriculture and the growing and harvesting of white corn as a staple ingredient of their diet, and others of which involved hunting buffalo. Throughout these years prior to European invasion, the Miami freely lived across the lands south of Lake Michigan, on what now includes the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. The Miami apparently had a wide reputation for being polite if not also soft spoken, and they favored not only decorative, beautiful clothing, which was often prominent on their chief, but also decorative tattoos that were worn by both men and women. They were known as well for their design and use of longhouses, which remains an architectural style of today particularly for community gatherings. Overall, the Miami were a prominent and vibrant community throughout the upper Midwest and still view areas of Ohio and Indiana as their rightful and spiritual home.

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[1] Information for this Miami historical outline was drawn mostly from the following resources which provide considerably more detail for the interested reader: Miami Business Services (2008), NativeAmericans.com (2007), Sultzman (1999), and Waldman (1998).

European Invasion (1680-1840)

> Few Americans realize today how crucial the conquest of the Ohio Valley was for the survival of the U.S. in 1790. Enormous Revolutionary War debts made U.S. currency worthless and the new nation was in danger of economic collapse unless these could be paid through the sale of Ohio land. . . . Taking Ohio was also a factor in the American decision to replace the Articles of Confederation with the Constitution. (Sultzman, 1999, ¶ 45)

With such motives and forces in play, the Miami stood little chance of retaining their sovereignty on free lands. Thus, it began in approximately 1670 that Europeans brought their ignorance and self-centeredness, starting with well-intended Jesuits and soon bringing both the French and the British who continually fought for ownership of Miami territory. In the early years of European invasion, the Miami numbered in the tens of thousands, a quantity that would radically shrink with the onslaught of imported diseases and multiple wars.

Early in this time period, the Miami held good trading relationships with the French and helped guide the French westward to the Mississippi. Over these years, the Miami also had reasonably good, but frequently variable, relations with nearby tribes including the Illinois, Iroquois, Shawnee, Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Ottawa, Winnebago, Fox, Sauk, Kickapoo, and Mascouteen. In the mid-1700s, as battles for land control escalated and tribal territories began to shift, some of the eastern Miami began to move westward into Indiana and Illinois. Often violating existing laws, European immigrants began moving into this region and claiming land as their own. Battles and bloodshed followed, leading to notable confrontations such as Lord Dunmore's War of 1774 which killed a large number of Shawnee in West Virginia. Along with increasing devastation of this kind came epidemics such as malaria and smallpox which further reduced the number of Miami along with the number of many other tribes in this region.

In spite of such attacks, the Miami were able to hold ground for a notable length of time, periodically helping the French (e.g., in the French and Indian Wars) or the British (e.g., in the American Revolution), depending on changing directions of supposedly supportive relations. Then, in the late 1700s, one of the most famous and successful of all Indian warriors, Miami Chief Little Turtle earned his reputation by repeatedly winning battles against attacking formidable forces. Little Turtle was not only exemplary for his battle skills but apparently also for the intelligence that enabled his strategic capabilities. For example, he defeated General Arthur St. Clair at Fort Recovery in 1791, which "was the greatest defeat the Americans ever suffered at the hands of the Indians, even worse than the loss suffered at the Battle of Little Big Horn or Custer's Last Stand" (NativeAmericans.com, 2007, ¶ 1). However, such strength and intelligence could only delay the onslaught of European immigrants, and "in August, 1795 . . . the last battle of the American Revolution was over, and settlers poured into the new lands" (Sultzman, 1999, ¶ 55). Soon thereafter in 1802, Ohio became a state, and the Miami culture was in jeopardy.

Uprooting and Reorganization (1840-1970)

The early 1880s brought waves of treaties that overtook Native American lands, forcing Native Americans westward onto reservations. The treaty of 1840 finally ordered the removal of the Miami to land west of the Mississippi River. Although some Miami stayed in Indiana and still maintain tribal offices in Peru, Indiana, the U.S. government never upheld their tribal status.

In October of 1846, the rest of the Miami were forcibly moved to eastern Kansas, near what is now the city of La Cygne. Hardly more than 20 years later, the Treaty of 1867 forced them to move again, this time into Indian Territory where they still reside in northeast Oklahoma. By the time the Miami made this final move, they evidently numbered only a few hundred adults. In their move to Oklahoma, they were not placed on reservations but instead were given 200-acre allotments of land to each family, which further fragmented their community because it did not align with the unified values of their culture. As a consequence, the Miami removal and relocation ultimately caused destruction not only physically but also structurally and ideologically, dismantling many cultural values, political structures, identities, and deep connections to the land. The following 100 years or so brought little hope, few signs of livelihood, rapidly decaying language, and forced compliance to government controls. Over this period, various families also sold their land, which further deteriorated the Miami imprint on U.S. soil.

Tribal Resurgence (1970-Present)

It is apparent to the keen observer of Miami history—and considerably more so to members of the Miami Nation—that no single person or event enabled their revitalization over the past 40 years or so. Thus, changing tides in politics, economics, the composition of U.S. citizenry, organizational structures, Miami Nation readiness for change, as well as the invigorating guidance of its leadership all likely have helped to facilitate the return of Miami Nation prosperity. What arguably stand above all other catalysts over the past 50 years, however, are the focus, hard work, inspiration, and wisdom of a particular Miami Nation chief, Floyd Leonard. At the same time, it is a virtually certainty that Chief Leonard would not take credit—as typical U.S. leaders in business and politics do—for altering the course of history. Nevertheless, history books of tomorrow will inevitably tell stories not only of Miami Nation warriors such as Little Turtle who fought valiantly to hold back the tides of European invasion but also of Miami Nation leaders such as Floyd Leonard who fought valiantly to rebuild and reenergize the Miami Nation as a sovereign, successful player in today's world.

Close examination of this resurgence period by the Miami Nation illuminates many significant patterns, including a growing population now estimated at nearly 3,500, increasing solidarity of Miami Nation community, greater awareness and use of Miami language, expanding range of tribal-owned lands, more genuine and mutual relationships with Miami University, and increasing prosperity on multiple business fronts. For example, the Miami Nation currently administers grant programs that spread across a diverse array of interests including environment, library, nutrition, housing, childcare, job training, and education. In addition, they now own and operate multiple successful business ventures including a small gaming facility located within the Miami Headquarters complex, a casino in Miami, Oklahoma in partnership with the Modoc, a company that designs software and builds bingo machines, and embroidery and silk-screening businesses. Other business ventures involve sales of culturally themed gifts, a state-of-the-art daycare facility, and environmental testing services. The Miami are also strategically purchasing land in northeast Oklahoma and pursuing various other business opportunities.

On cultural, political, and business fronts, the Miami Nation Business Committee remains intact as a U.S. government-instituted body. The Miami also have a Business Manager who helps to oversee and strategically guide their array of business operations. Another prominent administrative role is the Miami Cultural Preservation Officer who is charged to help restore

Miami heritage, language, and cultural knowledge. Furthermore, as noted on the Miami Nation website, the Miami are increasingly committed to

> building a National land base that includes land holdings in four states, providing scholarships and employment for Tribal members, [sustaining] language and cultural education efforts, as well as maintaining the massive buildings and infrastructure to [support] it all, [which] was made possible through the economic development efforts of the Nation directed by Tribal Leadership. (Kiiloona Myaamiaki, n.d., ¶ 8).

Miami Nation Chief Floyd Leonard

> We believe that, with the centuries, knowledge can be steadily increased and learning advanced, but we do not suppose that the same progress can be achieved in wisdom. The individual may grow in wisdom. The race does not seem to. In the tradition of the great books, the moderns usually assert their superiority over the ancients in all the arts and sciences. They seldom claim superiority in wisdom. (Adler, 1986, p. 780)

Standing at the helm throughout Miami's resurgence has most notably been Chief Leonard. As Joe Leonard (personal communication, March 2005), Chief Leonard's son, described, "[Before Chief Leonard,] the Miami Tribe had no assets, no direct money, no programs, no land, no buildings—but we had our culture, our membership, our stories, and our heritage." Thus, although certain ingredients for reconstruction were apparently falling into place, it was largely through the orchestration of Chief Leonard that these ingredients have been coming together in constructive ways. Furthermore, there are few leaders in the world today whose leadership continually crosses as many different kinds of boundaries (cultural, economic, political, educational) as Chief Floyd Leonard of the Miami Nation. Chief Leonard is also Chair of the Intertribal Council of Northeastern Oklahoma, comprised of nine Indian Nations including Miami, Eastern Shawnee, Modoc, Ottawa, Peoria, Quapaw, Seneca-Cayuga, Shawnee, and Wyandotte. He also frequently interacts with numerous state and federal agencies and with people involved in various programs at Miami University, founded in 1809, during the tumultuous years of the Miami Nation, for whom the university was named.

Chief Leonard's unique experiences inform a philosophy that has insights for all leaders, whether Native American, Western European, or otherwise. One vital lesson is the importance of context (both spatial and temporal) to the values and beliefs that guide Native Americans' actions. Visually, it is as if waves of increasingly distant context keep wise leaders from becoming two dimensional, which Wilber (2000) called "flatland" (p. 160) consciousness. When we do not understand where other people have been, we unknowingly restrict our understanding of who they are and where they are going. Although breadth and depth of such understanding do not create wisdom, they provide a requisite foundation for it to grow.

Chief Leonard's history includes a strong educational core that enriches his leadership story. With a graduate degree in hand, he served as a school administrator in Missouri for many years. Thus, as Julie Olds (personal communication, March 2005) described, he not only appreciates knowledge, he gets involved in the process of its creation, interpretation, and dissemination. Apparently as an outgrowth of such experiences, he lives the life of a genuine leader–educator, for example, by continually motivating Miami youth to learn and by advocating college education for all of them. In recent years, a small but steady stream of Miami youth have received degrees from various universities including Miami University. Part of Chief Leonard's

educational prowess may be his capacity to listen intently to all who cross his path. As such, he takes seriously the fact that he and each other member of the Miami Business Committee is a voice of 3500 Miami. As Julie Olds highlighted, "We know who elected us; we know who we serve; and we know that our responsibility is to the people." Chief Leonard not only advocates this philosophy, he consistently lives it.

Unfortunately, little of Chief Leonard's life can be conveyed in a subsection of a single study. The purpose is only to offer a sketch of relevant issues. Without them, discernment of Chief Leonard's wisdom is jeopardized. In the following section, I attempt to piece together insight conveyed by Chief Leonard about his leadership philosophy, development, and practices with information obtained from various Miami Nation members who have lived nearest to Chief Leonard and from archival sources (e.g., the Miami newspaper). As architect of this project, I take full responsibility for limitations that I may have placed on Chief Leonard from my attention or lack thereof, my choice of questions and observations, and my subsequent interpretations. Ultimately, portraying Chief Leonard as wise is not intended as an objective measurement as much as it is a professional judgment, less comparable to measuring his IQ than to assessing the intellectual quality and expansive impact of his leadership.

Results

Results of interviews with Chief Leonard derive from iterative efforts to identify valid, meaningful patterns that situate his comments in relevant contexts including his leadership experiences, history, culture, and community. These efforts are intended to reveal integral qualities of leadership wisdom that reside beyond expert complexity. This does not mean that elements of expert complexity do not exist in wisdom but rather that tuning scholarly assessments to that particular frequency was not the aim of this study. To the degree that other scholars may seek and detect complexity amid Chief Leonard's comments and behaviors, they may help to build bridges among emerging frameworks that now inform leadership wisdom.

Three defining qualities (cf. Rosch & Mervis, 1975) of leadership wisdom (cf. Lord, Foti, & Phillips, 1982) are apparent in the data from this study, keeping in mind that the leadership lens guiding the framing of questions and, to a large degree, the interpretation of responses, was also three-dimensional (being, thinking, and doing) (Leader-to-Leader Institute, 2004). Thus, as is true of categories comprising motivation theory as well as the color spectrum, it is possible to slice reality into fewer or more pieces depending upon theoretical preferences and practical purposes. The preference in this study is simplicity. The three defining qualities, presented and interrelated in Figure 1, are nested values (as a way of being), embedded meaning (as a way of thinking), and collective orchestration (as a way of doing). Figure 1 frames these qualities on two intersecting dimensions to facilitate interpretation. The horizontal dimension is temporal, moving from past to future, and the vertical dimension defines scope, moving from telescopic to microscopic. The third quality resides at the intersection of these dimensions, representing the only location where leadership can make a difference: here and now. In the following paragraphs, I offer evidence for each quality and clarify how it pertains to leadership wisdom.

As a preview, nested values reveal a holarchical structural form (Wilber, 1995, 2003) in which, for example, self-interest resides within tribal interest, which resides within Indian interest, which resides within human interest. Wisdom manifests by evoking an appropriate level for a given situation, while not losing sight of smaller levels of which it is made or larger levels of which it is a part. The second defining quality, embedded meaning, involves aligning

historical insights with future aspirations. Wisdom manifests by creating decisions that are embedded in a combination of both directions, serving as a bridge between the past and the future. The third defining quality, collective orchestration, combines respect for all relevant voices with an overlay of mindfulness (Hanh, 2000; Langer, 1989). Wisdom manifests by combining interests and inputs of all those who have a legitimate say in a current issue, while letting outcomes arise naturally rather than in predetermined or otherwise restricted ways. Although presenting these qualities as distinct should help understanding, it is both likely and apparent that they manifest in concert. Using Wilber's (2003) analogy to highlight this distinction, we understand the reality of height, width, and depth, even though we do not experience these separately.
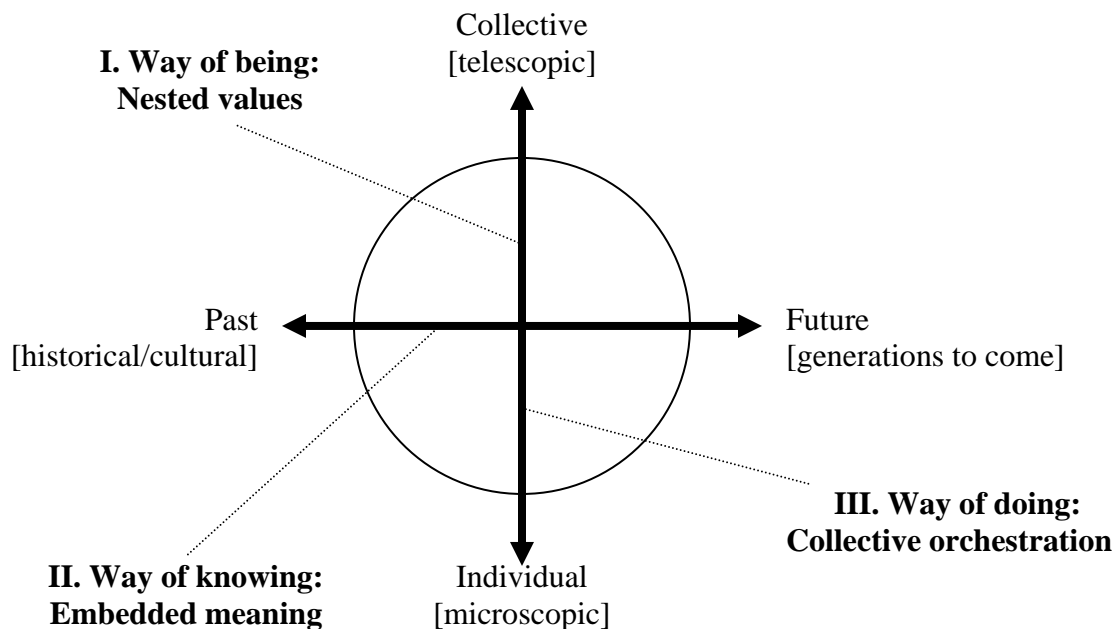

Figure 1. Defining qualities of leadership wisdom.

First Defining Quality: Nested Values as a Leader's Way of Being

> A whole letter is part of a whole word, which is part of a whole sentence, which is part of a whole paragraph, and so on. Reality is composed of neither wholes nor parts, but of whole/parts, or holons. . . . The Kosmos is a series of nests within nests within nests indefinitely, expressing greater and greater holistic embrace. (Wilber, 2000, p. 40)

The reality of this pattern does not always manifest amid human values and beliefs and altering its shape can undermine natural flows of life. Evidence from Chief Leonard, however, supports such nested values in many ways—from his humble behavior, to how he talks about himself, to insights he finds memorable from prior chiefs and colleagues, to ways that others describe his behavior. Such evidence runs subtly throughout his commentary. For example, when

highlighting joys of being chief of the Miami Nation, his values reveal interconnections among levels, from the Indian world, to the Miami Nation, to individuals:

> [One of the greatest joys in being chief of the Miami Nation] is to see . . . the improvement of the Indian world in general and the improved livelihood of the Miami people. We've proven in the last 20 or 25 years that you can retain the culture and also advance yourself educationally and economically. (F. Leonard, personal communication, May 2004)

In a similar manner, Chief Leonard (personal communication, May 2004) mixed value levels when he commented about his outlook: "Ten years from now I would like to see not only the Miami Nation, but all Indian nations in the country, become more self-sufficient, more self-determined, and better able to produce the things that they want for their people." In addition, he (personal communication, May 2004) defined exemplary business leaders in this manner:

> [What I admire in a business leader is] a person who is a leader in the community, not only a leader in business working for a company or stockholders. These are people of good ethics . . . people who will work with others, who sometimes will be involved in things away from business . . . not only a business leader but also a community leader. He or she is a person who is interested in social improvement of the community. The same way with an Indian tribe, . . . we must remember that we're all related. It's one big family.

Further evidence of nested values comes through insight from a deceased Miami friend of Chief Leonard:

> Jake White Crow used to say that "there are many times when you have to think Indian and then think tribal." Frequently, we all have a tendency to think close to home too soon. When working with groups of Indian people, you have to think Indian. (F. Leonard, personal communication, May 2004)

Likewise, Chief Leonard (personal communication, May 2004) recalled insight from "[Chief Olds' who] was a role model to me because I saw that his true concern was to do what was right for the people. He always kept the people and the Tribe itself in mind." Perhaps as a consequence of such mentors, Chief Leonard embodies capabilities for reading situations well and for responding from appropriate value levels while not losing sight of the other value levels that make the world whole. In many respects, it becomes apparent that Chief Leonard's way of being a leader integrates all such levels. Even when he spoke of educating Miami youth, he (personal communication, May 2004) added: "We try to instill this in our members: respect for themselves, respect for other people, respect for government, and respect for the surrounding society."

Commenting about Chief Leonard's leadership, Julie Olds (personal communication, March 2005), prior Miami Cultural Preservation Officer, reinforced this quality:

> The thing that I appreciate most about Chief Leonard's leadership is . . . that he has a wealth of knowledge that enables him to maneuver, to recognize a situation for what it is, and to apply himself as he is to the situation. It's really just application of who he is more than it's changing from situation to situation. . . . He just thinks Miami.

What Julie Olds identified, I believe, is the central tendency that perhaps best signifies Chief Leonard's way of being. Although he can adapt fluidly to more inclusive or more local value levels, he likely stays primarily centered as a voice of the Miami people. My personal observations of Chief Leonard in action, when educating students, accommodating visitors to the Miami Headquarters, interacting with Miami University administrators, or orchestrating

meetings of the Miami Business Committee or the Intertribal Council of Northeast Oklahoma, further reveal his calm but inclusive and energized presence in the world, and his dedication to improving the lives of all whom he touches. Like any leader, perhaps, Chief Leonard admitted to distractions, but he seems well able to get his ship back on course. For example, he (personal communication, May 2004) noted the following:

> My purpose is to provide services for the Miami people. We sometimes get sidetracked with little things that seem important, so we have to learn to pinch ourselves and think, "Well now, how is that going to affect the tribe in general?"

Ultimately, he recognizes the interconnected levels of values that unite all businesses, all tribes, and all humanity: "I know that businesses have to work together, the same as nations have to work together, the same as groups have to work together, because we all live in one world" (F. Leonard, personal communication, May 2004). Thus, he (personal communication, May 2004) concluded the following:

> I would like to be remembered as one who tried to do the best that he knew how to do for the Miami people. That's always been my goal in life: to see the people of the Miami Nation grow in stature.

Second Defining Quality: Embedded Meaning as a Leader's Way of Knowing

> To be ecologically embedded as a manager is to personally identify with the land, to adhere to beliefs of ecological respect, reciprocity, and caretaking, to actively gather ecological information, and to be physically located in the ecosystem. (Whiteman & Cooper, 2000, p. 1265)

Similar to Whiteman and Cooper's (2000) concept of ecological embeddedness and Evans' (1995) concept of embedded autonomy, embedded meaning possesses a similar structure, representing a way of knowing that is embedded in a combination of past and future. Too often, it seems, wisdom is portrayed as primarily future oriented, which it certainly is. At the same time, however, what I believe is revealed in the evidence provided by Chief Leonard is that wisdom is also integrally embedded in the past. There appears to be no either/or in the equation; wisdom arises as a combination of past and future, providing a bridge that connects them in the here and now. The more salient or impactful the wisdom, perhaps, the more of the past and of the future are brought to bear on current thinking, whether explicitly or implicitly.

Words of Ken Bellmard (personal communication, March 2005), Miami Nation Attorney, reinforce this quality of embedded meaning as he described Chief Leonard transforming a difficult past into a constructive future:

> [Chief Leonard is] very forward thinking, looking ahead to where this or that may lead; looking at all the realities of the possible. He understands that it is as important to know where you've been as it is to know where you're going. He's seen a lot of real tough times, but he's always had the vision, by being able to keep everyone together, that things were going to benefit the Tribe. He's looking at what he does in his leadership as influencing the people 50 years from now.

A distinct leadership advantage of "knowing where you've been" comes from being able to learn and grow from difficult experiences. Chief Leonard and his entire generation of Miami experienced enormously tough times. Over the course of Chief Leonard's tenure, however, not only have Miami culture and language begun to resurface in lively ways, for example, through

language and cultural preservation efforts of the Myaamia Project at Miami University, but also through economic stability and Miami optimism and pride.

In the language of Chief Leonard (personal communication, May 2004), "You can still maintain cultural values and historical values while pushing forward into the business world." When he talked about experiences and role models that have influenced such thinking, he highlighted important lessons from the past through two particular Miami Chiefs, Palmer and Olds:

> I consider myself fortunate at such a young age to have known [Chief Harley Palmer] personally and to have served on the council under him as chief. . . . I was [also] fortunate to serve with [Chief Olds] and to be able to do some things that he was not able to do . . . [such as] appear before Senate committees and House of Representative committees concerning Indian claims. (F. Leonard, personal communication, May 2004)

As Chief Leonard draws upon such roots to explain the tribal-level importance of carrying knowledge of the past forward into the present, he added, "Tribal governments need to be stable, where we can have a continuing administration from one leader to the next without losing sight of everything that has happened before."

Chief Leonard (personal communication, May 2004) also talked about this quality at an intertribal level:

> [As chiefs on the Inter Tribal Council,] we all have similar visions of where we want our tribes to be, and we all have similar cultural backgrounds which is important. Probably, the thing that is most difficult for people outside a tribe to really understand is the very close connection from shared cultural backgrounds and historical backgrounds, which affects issues even into the business world. Our decisions in business are governed by the culture.

He (personal communication, May 2004) then also highlighted the significance of this quality in a multinational world:

> I think that what is very important, whether it be Indian tribes or a group of nations uniting, is that you all at least have an understanding of each other's history and culture. Sometimes situations are misunderstood because of differences in cultural values. . . . We need to understand the other person's culture as well as our own.

Of particular note about the process of blending the past with the future is Ken Bellmard's (personal communication, March 2005) intriguing statement that Chief Leonard "deals in the realities of the possible" (cf. Sternberg, 2001). In so doing, Chief Leonard obviously refrains from pursuing possibilities that are not grounded in substance yet remains unconstrained by preconceptions that overlook innovative ideas for consideration. As an example of this, he had the foresight to establish a gaming contract for the Miami Nation years before other tribes in Oklahoma did so. In similar fashion, he envisions a better future for upcoming generations of Miami in ways that are practical but not old fashioned. In support of this notion, he (personal communication, May 2004) claimed, "We have to do all that we can for the young people to progress above and beyond where the people from the last generation progressed." In the form of advice, he (personal communication, May 2004) added, "I would tell all young Miami people who are going out into the world to remember their culture, to remember where they came from . . . [and] to gain all the knowledge they can from their elders, number one."

The importance of "knowing where you have been as well as where you are going" is a unifying thread of Chief Leonard's leadership style and success, particularly for developing a constructive vision out of a sea of formidable struggles. Thus, unlike Native Americans who

avoid change in order to live only as their ancestors did but also unlike Native Americans who seek to jettison their past in order to assimilate more easily into mainstream culture, Chief Leonard thinks in ways that avoid such restrictive extremes. By embodying important cultural values and continually translating and realigning them in ways that enable opportunities for new development, Chief Leonard is definitely an exemplary leader for all of us.

Third Defining Quality: Collective Orchestration as a Leader's Way of Doing

> To become a carrier of council, the leader [has to become] a steward of council. . . . Becoming a steward . . . requires *surrender to the wisdom of council* as primary teacher. (Zimmerman & Coyle, 1996, p. 118)

> Surrendering oneself to the process is a very difficult concept. It violates one of the primary rules of the normalized model: "Always appear to be in control." (Quinn, 2000, p. 187)

Evidence from Chief Leonard supports the proposition that wise leadership brings not only properly nested values to guide decisions and actions but also thoughts that are appropriately embedded in the past and the future. Stated differently to amplify the importance of this relationship, effective leadership brings the past into the future in a way that focuses attention meaningfully among individual and collective values. To understand the act of embodying such relationships, it is important to keep in mind the Native-American context from which they derive. To assist in this regard, consider the insight of Joseph Marshall III (2001), a member of the Lakota tribe, who was born on the Rosebud Indian Reservation in South Dakota and whose first language is also Lakota:

> [Within Native-American culture,] virtues such as humility, respect, sacrifice, and honesty carry a different weight and substance than they do in western culture. For us these qualities are not so much elusive goals as they are essential parts of everyday life. . . . I knew growing up that at some point I was supposed to *be* the things I learned in the stories: compassionate, honorable, brave, and so forth. (p. xiii)

Marshall's statement implies something unique for understanding relationships among the three qualities I describe. Thus, ways of being and thinking are intimately embodied in a way of doing. Evidence from Chief Leonard points to collective orchestration as a defining quality of such behavior (cf. Cooperrider, 1998). It means valuing others enough to let decisions emerge from the whole story (i.e., including perspectives of all relevant interest groups rather than of certain dominant, privileged, or majority subsets) (e.g., Underwood, 2000). The doing of wise leadership then derives from and embodies the thinking and being described above.

As exemplified by Chief Leonard, collective orchestration involves a synchronization of the minds, hearts, and will of the people in real time (cf. Strogatz, 2003). Such a process is comparable to the entrepreneurial conception of effectuation, which takes "a set of means as given and focus[es] on selecting between possible effects that can be created with that set of means" (Saravathy, 2001, p. 245). Thus, it is apparent that Chief Leonard does not presuppose or predetermine outcomes, as much as he enables them to arise naturally in context and from resources at hand, particularly among people who have relevant insights to contribute. Wise people do not seem to carry around answers in their pockets or try to invent them on their own. Instead, they identify and orchestrate appropriate resources in ways that genuinely capitalize

upon unique possibilities. In certain respects, this is what Ken Bellmard (personal communication, March 2005) implied in his concept "realities of the possible." Meaning making in real time involves orchestrators who can artfully blend a myriad of relevant beliefs, values, and knowledge (cf. Churchley, 2004). Wise leadership serves more as a conduit blending significant inputs (Drath & Palus, 1994) than as a lone hero (e.g., Semane, 1995).

Faced with the leadership challenge of bridging "where you've been" with "where you're going," while staying true to integral values, requires sensitivity toward multiple and often conflicting perspectives. Leaders who are able to creative effective and inclusive paths out of such turbulence must interact uniquely well with people of all walks and backgrounds. Joe Leonard (son of Chief Leonard) (personal communication, March 2005) provides evidence of this quality in his father's leadership:

> [Chief] can change gears quickly. If he's in Washington, DC, and he's in a room with 10 lawyers—not that he can speak legalese—but, he can sort of talk their language and get along with them pretty well. Then, if he's out at the Longhouse, and 10 farmers come in there for lunch, and they're talking about how it rained too much or didn't rain enough, he can relate to them. And, increasingly, he spends a lot of his time on the business and economic development sides. . . . [Thus,] he must talk business jargon. Then, other times, such as when he was at Miami University helping with the opening of a Miami art exhibit, he's dealing more on the artistic, cultural side. He's also a political leader, and, for some people, he's very much a spiritual leader. He serves as a role model for almost everyone, particularly those 60 years old and under, in a cultural and lifestyle way.

Chief Leonard is obviously looked upon in different ways by different constituencies and, through such varied relationships, is arguably more capable of collective orchestration and of building meaningful interconnections that others do not readily see (cf. Capra, 2002). Were he able to speak the language of only one group, he could not blend multiple stakeholders well.

Adding to the evidence of collective orchestration, Chief Leonard is also notably astute politically and in public relations. He can move intellectually and smoothly among topics that include culture, politics, business, environment, and education because he lives in and learns from all of these realms of reality. Similarly, he moves among diverse audiences such as Federal and Oklahoma officials; representatives of various Indian nations; business professionals; lawyers; Miami Nation children learning Miami language and culture; Miami University administrators, faculty, and students; as well as visitors passing through northeastern Oklahoma. With respect to unexpected visitors, for example, I was impressed how, while interviewing Chief Leonard at Miami headquarters on a busy day, he created workable means to interact with an unanticipated family passing through Oklahoma by including them as his guests at lunch.

In further support of collective orchestration, Chief Leonard (personal communication, May 2004) noted, "Our culture still is one that respects all other members of the Tribe, particularly our elders. It's a natural part of growing up in our culture." He (personal communication, May 2004) then added "[Respectful relationships] hold the people together and make things work better. They create more respect for other people's views and other people's ideas. This then carries over from the culture into everyday business operations." At the same time, Chief Leonard spoke about difficulties of employing collective orchestration. For example, he (personal communication, May 2004) said the following:

> The thing about working through problems is that sometimes you have to realize that maybe your idea isn't correct, and this is very difficult. . . . Sometimes, you might move a little too quickly to bring it before the group, and some of the group or the majority of the

group is opposed. Then I think you need to sit back and take a second look. . . . This is probably the most difficult process of any that I know in working with people: to bring them together when there is disagreement.

He (personal communication, May 2004) further explained:

Disagreement among tribes is similar to disagreement among people. It's a matter of sitting down with each other across the table and trying to work out the differences, trying to come to a reasonable conclusion that everyone can accept and maybe give and take on both sides of the fence. . . . Compromise is the name of the game in many such situations.

Thus, it is fair to conclude that wise leadership helps to promote living knowledge—here and now—to enable collectively appropriate decisions to arise. Collective orchestration lets content emerge in context, and the role of the orchestator becomes mostly "holding space" (Daly, personal communication, May 2005[2]) for something constructive to unfold.

Speaking both directly and indirectly about this leadership quality, Chief Leonard (personal communication, May 2004) said, "Whoever the leader might be has to have all the people at heart in final decisions." Furthermore, "Each tribe is a sovereign nation and sovereignty is very important to Indian people. Sometimes we have to work diligently and hard together to keep it tied together and to remember that we're all working for the people" (F. Leonard, personal communication, May 2004). Certainly, he was not suggesting that collective orchestration always leads to effective outcomes; in some cases, an outcome is not so wise. Yet, it is necessary for leaders to avoid suppressing the collective will, as indicated in the two opening quotes of this section. In one such situation, Chief Leonard (personal communication, May 2004) said:

That was the decision of the people, and I think you have to shake your head and say, "Okay, this is what the people want," and then do what the people want, even though at the time I felt they were probably wrong. . . . Maybe, I should have been more persistent. But, it was the will of the group.

Generalizing from this example, he (personal communication, May 2004) added:

[It is] important to respect the people for their ideas. This is very difficult, which is evident right now in our Mid-East situation. It's a clash of cultures. There has to be give and take. However, first there has to be an understanding of the other person's point of view.

Finally, as advice to emerging leaders, he (personal communication, May 2004) said:

[I would advise young adults] to be sure they understand the concepts of the people they are working with. Your typical business is now so diversified and so big that even a small business in a small town may very often be international in scope. They need to understand the people they're working with and the people they're working for in order to determine what the goals are and then make the goals attainable and reasonable.

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[2] Brigid Daly is an integrative biodynamic psychotherapist who practices primarily in Ireland. I met Brigid in 1993 when I participated in a Celtic pilgrimage involving many of the sacred sites in Ireland, which she and Michael Walsh, another scholar of Irish history and culture, created.

Discussion

We treasure leaders who are both effective and wise, those who have lived through a great deal, have drawn lessons from their experiences, and know how to use those lessons. (Gardner, 1999, p. 134)

Chief Leonard is definitely not an ideal leader because no such person exists. Our challenge is not to arrogantly seek perfection nor is it to naively believe all of what others say and copy what they do. Instead, our challenge is to seek exemplary leadership ways of being, thinking, and doing and learn from others in meaningful ways. The Western scholarly model typically advises gathering large samples and generalizing from common patterns. Alternatively, the Native American scholarly model typically implies illuminating exemplary exceptions (e.g., holding up for example and insight the practices of notable leaders). As best as I know how to do, I stand between these approaches, just I stand between nations and cultures, to try to capitalize upon a unique opportunity to gain important lessons about leadership wisdom, a topic that is likely important to us all. A premise of my strategy is that there have been notably few leaders whose communities have been as severely challenged who have admirably succeeded in restoring prominence. Few leaders have had to follow such an arduous path as Chief Leonard. To miss the opportunity to learn from him seems inexcusable.

The strategy, therefore, has been to examine Chief Leonard's thoughts, experiences, style, personality, and context, both directly through personal observations of and interviews with him and indirectly through key members of his community and relevant archival data. The challenge has been to discern insights that may add value to the current understanding of leadership wisdom. In this regard, firsthand experiences with Native American culture and secondhand study of Native American scholarship helped me to set the stage for this study. My perspective is inevitably limited, however, and has been mostly grounded in beliefs that wisdom emerges through ways of being, knowing, and doing which are integrative and profoundly simple. As a consequence, it is important that other scholars also pursue similar terrain with alternative perspectives and methods to illuminate other facets. It is also important to emphasize that I cannot and do not speak for Chief Leonard, for the Miami Nation, for the Intertribal Council of Northeast Oklahoma, or for Native Americans in general. At the same time, however, I position myself within and between cultures and attempt, as all scholars pursuing understanding such terrain must do, to interpret and translate meaningfully across boundaries.

Using selected frameworks of human development (e.g., Keegan, 1982; Kohlberg, 1981; Wilber, 1996, 2003) and leadership efficacy (Leader-to-Leader Institute, 2004; Martin, 2007) to complement prominent research on wisdom, results of this study fall into three domains: nested values as a way of being, embedded meaning as a way of thinking, and collective orchestration as a way of doing. Although other conceptual lenses may suggest alternative ways to organize these results, it is a premise of my approach that simplicity is helpful and appropriate for bridging the gap between Western and Native American understanding. Although the three qualities offered in this study do not duplicate the complexity inherent in many Western frameworks of wisdom (e.g., Baltes & Staudinger, 2000; Sternberg, 1998a, 2003b), they offer relatively easy concepts for framing conversations around leadership wisdom, particularly if such conversations cross cultural and national boundaries (cf. Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002). I believe qualities of being, thinking, and doing are both practical and helpful in this regard because they apply fairly readily to most if not all humans regardless of cultural or national boundaries,

whereas more complex analytical processes, for example, may not. Leaders in all contexts embody to some degree various ways of being, thinking, and doing that are more or less appropriate for the situations they engage. To the degree that we can better understand which configurations promote wisdom (Cowan & Darso, 2007), particularly as the world scenario increasingly challenges leaders on multinational and cross-cultural fronts, we can perhaps then more readily fill in the details of complexity in contextually appropriate ways.

By carefully listening to the life and times of Chief Leonard, we arguably have a unique opportunity to better understand subtle, inclusive, and powerful ways in which wisdom is developed and applied in today's turbulent world. Wise leaders such as Chief Leonard do not separate the business world from the rest of their world, as novices and experts alike tend to do. Living and leading wisely as an integral quality of one's life extends naturally into living and leading wisely in communities such as organizations and tribes. Thus, embedded values that tie interest groups together at meaningful levels become a fairly good way of being a leader today. From wisdom's perspective, such meaningful levels are intimately and seamlessly interconnected, providing a critical backdrop for wise thinking. Consequently, wise thinking becomes a constructive tool for bringing lessons of the past into the present in order to direct current resources toward collectively desirable outcomes. Wise leadership thus stands at a crossroads collectively orchestrating relevant interest groups to transcend typical myopia and divisiveness so that they can create a collective future that is better for all.

What the results of this contribute to our growing understanding of wise leadership is more integrative than detailed. To understand Chief Leonard requires time and patience to see, as best we can, where he has come from, who he has become, why he thinks as he does, and how all of this influences his behavior and affects those around him. This is not an easy task. To some degree, it requires understanding not only Chief Leonard's path but also the paths of the Miami Nation and Native American culture in general, all in relation to our own path. An important premise to justify such pursuit is that Native American wisdom is too often overlooked in traditional scholarship of these phenomena yet holds potentially enriching insight. Extant literature on leadership wisdom has not yet illuminated many of the relationships that comprise and connect leaders' ways of being, thinking, and doing. As a consequence, it is possible to believe, as Western ways of thinking tend to do, that the best ways for leaders to be, think, and do must arise by understanding Western leaders. The purpose of this study is not to challenge that perspective as much as it is to raise awareness of potential insights that may reside beyond Western practices and conceptions of leadership. Toward that end, I hope that the voice of Chief Leonard is heard and respected well beyond the boundaries of Miami and Native American life.

Without much doubt, proposing visions of common good is difficult for leaders to sustain in today's competitive, myopic, and often violent world. As a consequence, it is increasingly difficult to nurture in boundary-crossing situations, whether multinational, multicultural, or even multiorganizational, because local values tend to trump inclusive perspectives. By contrast, Chief Leonard's exemplary leadership tends to reveal ideas and insights that illuminate potential for inclusiveness. For example, he exudes compassion not only for the Miami Nation but also for surrounding communities, as if the well-being of all humanity is essential to the well-being of the Miami Nation. Awareness and care of surrounding territories is clearly essential to his ways of being a wise leader, thinking wisely as a leader, and creating wise actions through his leadership, even when he experiences disagreement with others. What emerges from studying Chief Leonard's leadership wisdom are lessons about vital qualities that may help other leaders to increase their integrative capabilities. Whereas Sternberg (2003b) claimed that wisdom involves

balancing issues toward "a common good" (p. 152), it may also be helpful to understand that wisdom involves embedding interests inside such a common good. By doing so, common good becomes less homogenous and more of a continuum from local to universal (e.g., Wilber, 2003).

It is likely that all leadership scholars would agree to some extent that wise leaders must read situations well, frame relevant conditions adequately (e.g., as opportunities or threats), and translate available resources into appropriate responses, whether by exerting initiative, altering local behavior, or changing environments (Sternberg, 2003). In this more complex regard, however, insight from Chief Leonard still adds value. For example, from situation to situation, Chief Leonard gets to know the people, understand their challenges and stories, and only then help to empower meaningful potentialities. He continually works in concert with those involved to craft uniquely effective responses. Thus, the value added by Chief Leonard's approach helps to illuminate the vital role that a leader's "not knowing" plays until appropriately collective responses materialize. Although not a new idea (e.g., Meacham, 1983), evidence from Chief Leonard suggests that this process may not be adequately incorporated into our understanding of leadership wisdom. The further back we stand to think about leadership wisdom, the more likely we may be to overlook significant qualities and subtle tendencies of wisdom in motion.

In Native American life, separations between self and culture (e.g., Hobday, 1992) are seemingly not as distinct as they are in more individualistic cultures (e.g., Hofstede, 2001). Accordingly, doing what is good for a community may be somewhat the same as doing what is good for oneself. In this case, evidence from Chief Leonard suggests that wise leaders are those whose community concerns and actions are as essential to their leadership as are organizational concerns and actions. Softening boundaries that constrain or otherwise localize leadership effectiveness may be one of the most urgently needed ingredients of leadership wisdom in today's world for emerging leaders to understand. This lesson may offer another potential enrichment to current conceptions of wise leadership and its development. To what degree do educational processes create or diminish divisive boundaries? What other qualities of being, thinking, and doing promote the development of wisdom for employment within as well as among cultures? Is it even possible to develop enough sufficiently wise leaders to create and sustain healthy living globally? There appear to be substantial and urgent reasons to encourage more examinations of such questions.

What this modest study hopefully highlights is the importance of illuminating connections among sources of wisdom, processes that comprise wisdom, and outcomes that emerge from wisdom. It seems unlikely that we can separate these variables without losing the essence of leadership wisdom or that we can effectively understand them without getting deeply engaged in the lives and context of seemingly wise leaders. Exemplary in this regard, I suggest, are studies such as those by Whiteman and Cooper (2000) and by Weick (1993) who illuminated meaningful connections in particular contexts, over time, and across levels. In both cases, the investigative lenses enabled zooming both in and out in terms of scope as well as backward and forward in terms of time. As a consequence, we gain enormous insight that is nevertheless inevitably muddied with context. An important lesson is simply to accept the fact that *such is life.* At another level, perhaps, it is also helpful to acknowledge the importance of adequately setting the stage with context before (or at least simultaneous to) examining content. In an increasingly multinational and multicultural world, the importance of doing so cannot be understated. Reducing messiness to increase precision is arguably no longer very wise.

Imperfections and Future Direction

Connecting the threads of meaning within the above argument should highlight, not diminish, the importance of traditional scholarly perspectives. We will never understand the profound simplicity of leadership wisdom without understanding the complexity that gives it requisite form and force. Returning to an earlier metaphor, unless we grab a hummingbird and place it under a microscope, we may never understand the complex composition that enables it to fly as it does. This study sheds little to no insight on the internal complexities of leadership wisdom. Readers interested in that pursuit should turn their attention in other directions, such as those identified earlier. This study is one scholar's examination of one presumably exemplary leader within one nation's struggles, rejuvenations, and resurgence, across one period of time, within a particular context of certain Native American nations within one larger country of the world. Anyone wanting to identify imperfections or limitations of this reality may easily have many leverage points to grab. Seeing what this study is *not*, however, is essential for understanding why this study is what it is. Toward that end, I am hopeful that it adds some insight to our understanding of leadership wisdom, particularly in ways that will motivate other scholars to approach the topic from unique and authentic angles.

With this final thought in mind, I close the paper with a key question that emerged from my own contemplations of what I have learned from this opportunity to cross paths with someone as genuine and influential as Chief Floyd Leonard. Ironically and unfortunately, I finished these thoughts on the same day that Chief Leonard died: March 8, 2008. Standing in the gap between his culture and mine, I can still often feel the separation and divisiveness that cultures, on average, project toward each other. I never felt any such separation or divisiveness from Chief Leonard. He was indeed a wise leader and a wise human being, who lived in a realm of possibilities and respect for all humankind. I will continue to question how such people can transcend overwhelming negative forces and tap into such constructive energy. Scholars who can contribute insight to that question may hold the future of humanity in their hands.

About the Author

David A. Cowan, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in organization and administration from the University of Kansas and currently is professor of management in the Department of Management at the Farmer School of Business, Miami University. His research interests are in leadership sense making and preparedness, the development of higher-order consciousness (e.g., wisdom and spirituality), and methods of nontraditional inquiry. His recent publications appear in *The Sage Handbook of New Approaches in Management and Organization* (2008), *The Journal on Excellence in College Teaching* (2008), *The Journal of Management Inquiry* (2007), and *The Journal of Management Education* (2007).
Email: cowanda@muohio.edu

Note

Portions of this paper were presented at the 2006 National Academy of Management Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. Readers of the paper will notice that I speak of Chief Leonard in the present

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