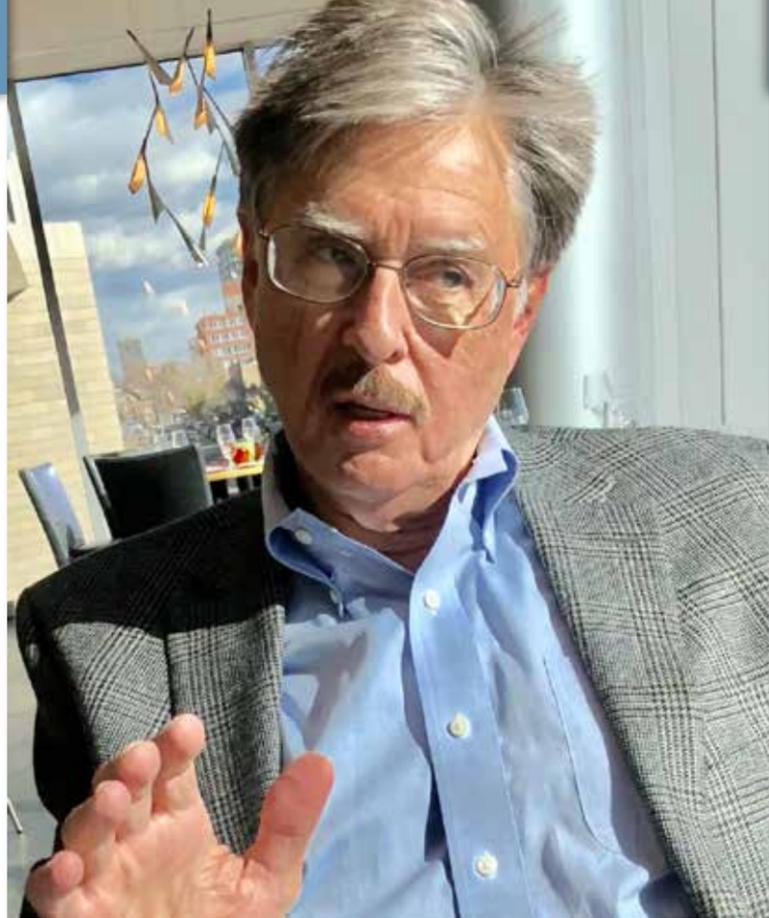


DR. GEORGE Manning

BY SHEILA D. GRANT



Dr. George Manning, 75, of Trenton, Maine, is a Professor of Psychology and Business at Northern Kentucky University (NKU), and an internationally known speaker, author, and consultant. His client list includes AT&T, the American Medical Association, IBM, Marriott, the IRS, the United States Navy, and the National Institutes of Health.

Manning has also taught leadership skills and ethics closer to home, and in ways that have touched the lives of many Mainers.

"I've had a chance to serve this state, and I'm so glad," Manning said. During an Art of Leadership session for Maine's superintendents and principals, he challenged them to develop 15 ways to create a healthier workplace that would attract and retain good personnel. "They came up with a 16-point plan and have been working it for the last several years," Manning said.

"Dr. Manning has keen insights on the importance of developing a positive culture of leadership within a school district," said Steven Bailey, executive director of the Maine School Management Association. "He knows and helps establish the importance that relationships play between leaders and other stakeholders within the organization and high-quality performance of leaders and the organization. His passion is endless, as is his willingness to give of himself to help leaders and organizations succeed!"

Manning has also done trainings for Northern Light Eastern Maine Medical Center, Colby College board members and staff, and for the Maine Public Broadcasting Network, "which I think is significant because they tie the state together culturally speaking," he said.

Manning and Peter Vigue, chairman of the board and former CEO of Cianbro, teamed up to present leadership training for the Maine State Police in April, 2018. Manning spoke about leadership theory; Vigue, leadership practices. A second session was held in the fall for officers unable to attend the first.

"Our recent leadership training provided by Dr. George Manning and former Cianbro CEO Peter Vigue was an important milestone within our agency," said Maine State Police Lt. Col. William Harwood. "Dr. Manning and Mr. Vigue collaborated to provide current leadership training that translates well from business to law enforcement. Dr. Manning used exercises mixed with great humor to present current leadership theory. Mr. Vigue explained his life lessons

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Dr. George Manning presented a seminar recently for the Commonwealth Hotel Collection leadership team.

fused with practical applications of the theory. What we have learned from them has caused us to build more of a community within our agency, making us stronger and better positioned to serve the public."

Manning also presents to a cohort of new Cianbro leaders from all over the country each year. The group spends two or three days in Portland, and then has eight weeks to apply what they've learned before coming to Pittsfield for their capstone.

This year, Cianbro leadership students will find the training has a theme, based on the advice of former UCLA basketball coach John Wooden. "He always taught his players three lessons," Manning said. "Show up and do your best; be considerate and kind to others; and make your life your masterpiece. He ingrained that into their brains because it was ingrained into his brain by his father. So many good sayings like this get passed down from older to younger. I think for Maine seniors, every one of them can relate to the idea of making their life their masterpiece!"



Dr. George Manning presenting on leadership for Maine's Associated Builders and Contractors.

Manning said *he wasn't always this focused*. "I was your *typical college student* that would be a lifeguard or a bar tender or that kind of guy," he said.

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A roundabout path to a "worthy life"

Manning said he wasn't always this focused. "I was your typical college student that would be a lifeguard or a bar tender or that kind of guy," he said. "But I got my eyes opened by going to Vienna for a semester abroad during my junior year, where I was influenced, as many people have been, by Viktor Frankl." The Austrian neurologist, psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor was also the author of *Man's Search for Meaning*. Studying under him provided direction and focus to Manning's academic and professional life.

Manning studied philosophy and psychology. After graduation, he was interested in the Peace Corps, but didn't want to be away for another three years. He chose to attend graduate school, but less than two weeks into his studies in Arkansas, Manning realized that the program was not for him. "It was all pigeons and rats and experimental this and experimental that," he said. People seemed left out.

He considered military service, but poor eyesight and flat

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Dr. George Manning and Peter Vigue, chairman of the board and former CEO of Cianbro, pose with graduates of a leadership summit they presented for the Maine State Police in April, 2018.

"I thought to myself, if the world of work really is that important, what if we could help morale be higher and productivity be higher in all jobs."



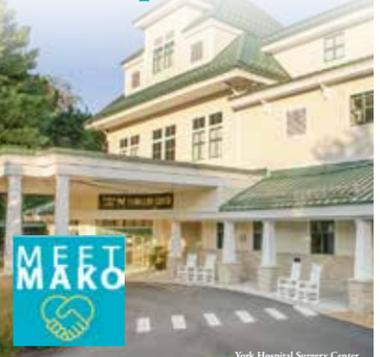
Dr. George Manning walking and talking with Peter Vigue, chairman of the board and former CEO of Cianbro, on Cadillac Mountain.

feet ruled that out. Luckily, Manning discovered a people-centered psychology program at the University of Cincinnati. And while pondering Karl Marx's theory that how a society does its work determines most other things about that society, Manning became fascinated by workplace psychology and how that might impact...everything.

"I thought to myself, if the world of work really is that important, what if we could help morale be higher and productivity be higher in all jobs, from nursing to engineering. That would be a worthy life," he recalled. "So I bought into the psychology of the workplace in my heart."

After graduation, Manning held a labor relations job with Ford Motor Company while also studying for his doctorate. In the late 1960s, cutbacks led to Manning accepting a severance package from Ford and finishing his doctorate ASAP.

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Dr. Manning on Aging Well

"One very important thing about older people is that everybody our age needs two things – love and work – you need someone to love and something important to do," Manning said. "So older people need to be sure they have those things going."

"Maine seniors are in a position to mentor younger generations," he said. "Young people pay attention to what older people say and the way that they are. These people are role models, whether it's a grandpa, a CEO, or an older doctor. People are watching them, to learn what they need to do."

Manning advised that we all take a page from a Danish philosopher who stated that there are two kinds of people in the world – drifters and drivers, i.e. givers and takers. "What the world needs is driving givers, not drifting takers, so older people need to model that going forward. They have got to speak up and have their words be known because they are experienced. They know things. People may disregard, or say yes or no, but at least they would be saying what they think, and they need to do that."

Manning cited the collaboration between country singer Toby Keith, 57, and actor/producer Clint Eastwood, 88, as an example. The pair was golfing, as Manning tells it, and Keith asked Eastwood, who was making a new movie, how he kept up this pace. Clintwood replied that he gets up in the morning and "doesn't let the old man in." Keith pondered that, and wrote the song, *Don't Let the Old Man In*, which ended up in the soundtrack for Eastwood's movie, *The Mule*.

"This is a good thing for people to know about," Manning said. "Clint Eastwood was being a good role model of making his next act his best act, and this is a great example of collaboration between an older and younger person. Any older person can make their next act their best act, whether they're a school crossing guard, serving lunches, volunteering at a hospital or starting a business – anything that's going to be driving and giving, not drifting and taking."

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By that time, he had met and married Nancy (Miller) Manning, who had two sons, Page and Larry. The couple soon added a daughter, Heather, to the family.

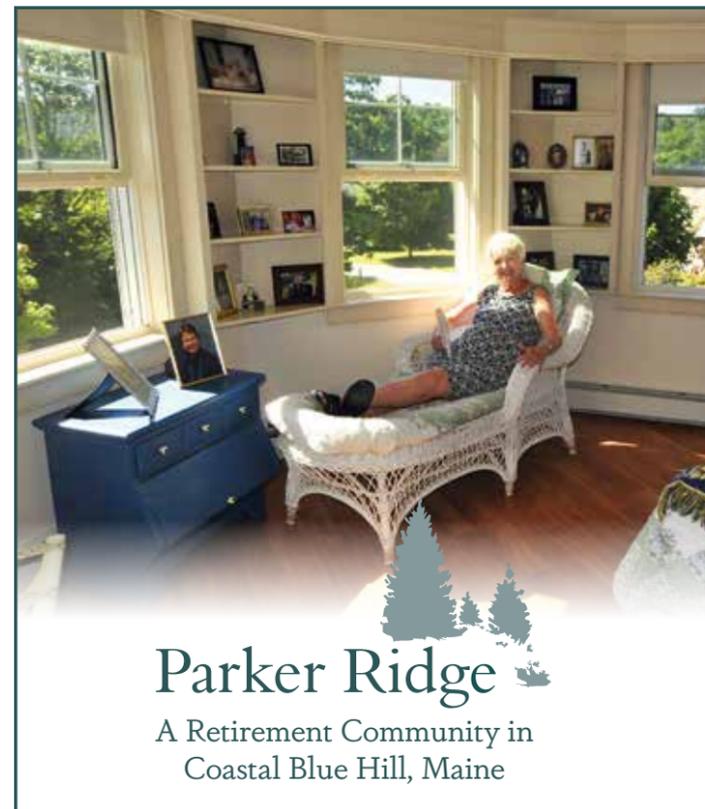
For a time, Manning worked as a consultant to make ends meet. Then, when a four-year school was created at NKU, Manning was the first teacher hired. "It was like a dream job to have that, and a solid income," he said.

Manning blended humor and philosophy into the subjects he taught, making him popular with students in his economic, management, organization and leadership classes. "I've been there for 49 years," he said. "It's been a great success!"

Workshops and writing spread leadership concepts

To earn extra income while teaching at Northern Kentucky University, Manning began offering leadership workshops for business, industry and government leaders.

"Leadership means social influence," Manning explained. "And that won't happen unless leaders care about the work and



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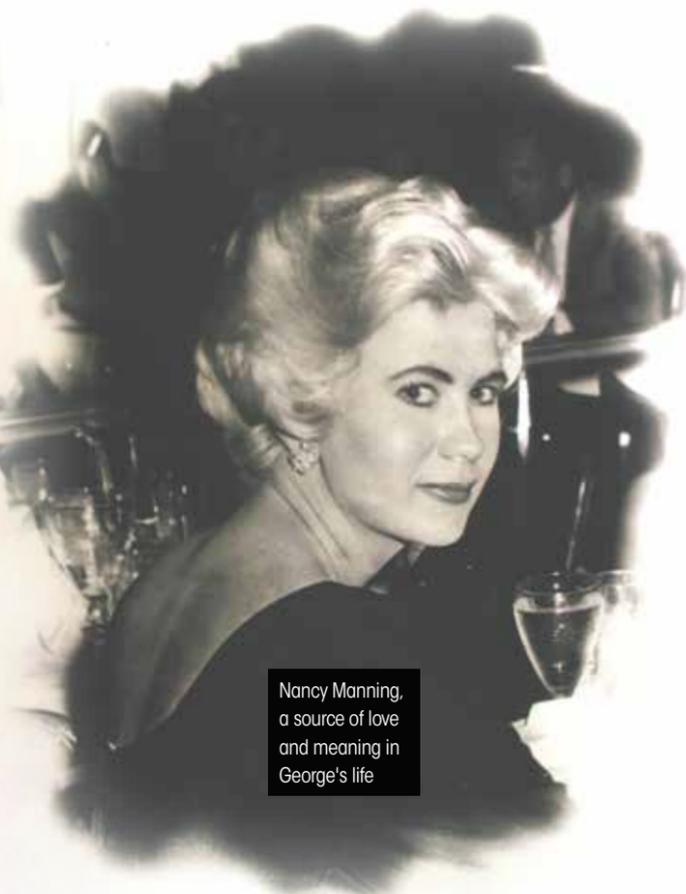
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Even after all these years, *Manning enjoys his work*. “Every teacher *loves to learn* and teach. It’s *better than a cheeseburger* and fries!”

care about the people. One without the other isn’t enough.” Whenever possible, he also works leadership ethics into his presentations.

Manning found himself in demand with the courts and criminal justice system, and increasingly, from the transportation industry.

“I still do airports and the FAA, but it got to be more the corporate world,” he said. “Last year, it was healthcare.” Manning uses his wide variety of contacts to help students secure internships, and for real-world examples that keep his classes fresh.



Nancy Manning, a source of love and meaning in George’s life

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Manning also used sabbaticals away from NKU to create eight books on human behavior, stress, and “other things that would impact morale and performance.” The books sold well. Eventually, a publisher requested titles on the three most popular topics: building community through communication; the art of leadership; and stress in a rapidly changing world.

Manning and his friend/colleague Kent Curtis wrote the first book, but then a shakeup with the publisher’s management left the duo with no publisher for the latter two – until McGraw-Hill accepted the projects. *Stress: Living and Working in a Changing World* is now in its third edition; *The Art of Leadership* is in its sixth, with plans for a seventh.

Even after all these years, Manning enjoys his work. “The reward is the doing of it,” he said. “Every teacher loves to learn and teach. It’s better than a cheeseburger and fries!”

Love and purpose give life meaning

George and Nancy were married for 50 years. Nancy passed away two years ago, after a series of strokes beginning in 1990 left her first wheelchair bound, and later, bedridden.

Associated Builders and Contractors’ President Hope Perkins, Dr. George Manning, and ABC Member Services Director Tami Staples.



“No one really knows me as a person unless they know of our relationship all those years,” said Manning. “What matters most to people is family. That’s how I feel about Nancy. She is always with me.

“Nancy was a knockdown gorgeous model, but by the time I met her she was done with all that traveling and wanted to be a homemaker. A normal working man and homemaking mother – that’s what we were. She loved horses, dogs, cats, goats, critters of every sort. When I was on the road and would call home, Nancy was always in the barn,” recalled Manning.

“We had a wonderful life,” he said. “We moved to Maine in 2000. Although we are Midwest folks and always will be, the

beauty and the people of Maine won us over. She would be here all the time while I would fly back and forth when school was on. Now my status is professor emeritus, so to speak. I still have an office, staff and money if I need it back at the university, but primarily, my home is in Maine and I swing by the university occasionally.”

When in Maine, Manning enjoys spending time with his children and three granddaughters ranging in age from 6 to 33. “That’s my fun, for sure,” he said. He also enjoys “walking and talking” with friends.

MSM

To learn more about George Manning, visit www.nku.edu/~manningg.