

A PATH FORWARD

PAUL PALMER'S LEGACY OF CONNECTION AND COMPASSION

BY STEVEN P. DINKIN

Over the course of our lives — if we're lucky — we will meet someone who has a profound effect on us, even if our time together is short. Paul Palmer was someone who had that kind of impact, not just on me, but on so many others. Sadly, Paul was killed in a car crash on Oct. 28. Monday, I will speak at his memorial service. Paul worked as a consultant to the National Conflict Resolution Center for the past several years. He was fueled by a desire to better the San Diego community. Paul loved the work we do to create a more civil society and especially NCRC's restorative justice program, an alternative for youth facing suspension or expulsion from school, or even imprisonment.

Paul had a long and successful tenure in the broadcast industry, with a voice that befitted his chosen career. He served as the manager of local radio station KFMB for 22 years. In 2002, Paul joined Big Brothers Big Sisters as CEO. During his 12-year tenure, Paul started Operation Bigs, a one-to-one mentoring program for military children. It was the first of its kind in the nation. Paul will be remembered as a bridge-builder and peacemaker. His remarkability at this time of polarization was a warm, unconditional, welcoming nature: Paul was blind to status, politics or other beliefs. He saw the good in everyone. When you talked to Paul, he always took a genuine interest in the conversation. At NCRC, we teach a course titled "The ART of Inclusive Communication." Paul

was a master at it. He asked a lot of questions and attentively listened to the answers, an important skill that can help us build more satisfying relationships. While Paul had many stories to share, he was judicious in their use. Rather than dwelling on the past, he only told stories that could illuminate a person's understanding in the moment or their thinking about the future. Paul was a natural networker who reveled in connecting the dots between people. He paid attention to the details of their lives and even took meticulous notes. A family member said, "So many people thought they were at the very center of Paul's life. He made everyone feel that they were most important." Paul's humility was instructive, too. He never bragged about himself but possessed a "humble

pride." While pleased with his many accomplishments in life — and aware of his catalytic effect on others — it was never about Paul. Writing in *Forbes*, author Jeff Boss puts it aptly: "To be humble is not to think less of oneself, but to think of oneself less." Humble people know their self-worth and as a result, don't feel the need to show others how much they know. Instead, they realize that what really matters is that people know how much they're cared for. Boss shares this quote from former University of Louisville basketball coach Rick Pitino: "Humble people share the credit and wealth, remaining focused and hungry to continue the journey of success." While Paul Palmer's journey of success came to an abrupt end, the care and compassion that he so generously sowed will benefit

the San Diego community for many years to come. Paul's grandson says, "He was like the conductor of a train that everybody wants to ride — but nobody ever wants to get off. He would take people on his train to places where they could make connections they wouldn't have had otherwise." Riding on Paul's train, we learned lessons of self-awareness, generosity and optimism — a model for all of us to follow. He will be missed. Steven P. Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC), a San Diego-based organization that is working to create innovative solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. NCRC is nationally recognized for its conflict management and communication strategies. To learn about NCRC's programming, visit www.ncrconline.com.

NOTEBOOKS

From Union-Tribune reporting staff

BIOTECH: BRADLEY J. FIKES

Success tips from women in science

Seek advice. Get mentally tough. And let your enthusiasm show. That's some of the advice nearly 300 high school girls from San Diego got Wednesday from local female scientists. As described in an earlier story, the scientists discussed career challenges in the event at the Salk Institute in La Jolla. But they also gave tips on how to succeed, gleaned from their own experience. One of them is Pantea Khodami, associate director of global marketing at gene sequencing giant Illumina. "When I joined Illumina, I was the youngest ever product manager, and I think through my career I've constantly been the youngest ever." Khodami said when she was 24, she wanted to get in on the launch of a sequencing product. After a few months, her persistence paid off. She got on the team. The team leader briefly commented on her youth and inexperience in their first discussion. "I made it a point to actually work extra hard to prove her wrong, and within 23 months, she actually gained so much respect for me," Khodami said. This seeking out help extended to that perpetual concern of work-life balance. "I would just look at... who are the female execs that have kids, have working partners, and are also in senior positions," she said. "I would reach out to them, have a one-on-one and try to figure out what's the magic formula." Karen Nelson, president of the J. Craig Venter Institute nearby in La Jolla, said there's a lot to be gained just by asking. That's how she joined the institute as a newly minted postdoctoral scholar. Out of the blue, she emailed Craig Venter and said she wanted to work there. "And he hired me," Nelson said. "Sometimes you've got to be creative and take chances, and realize that you're taking a risk. But it worked out for me." Nelson cautioned that it's essential to mentally toughen up when rejection happens, as is often the case with any scientist. This is especially true for grant applica-

tions, Nelson said. "And they tell you that you suck, and you're really not that good ... Your experiments don't work every time you try," Nelson said. "And so you just have to realize that it's a part of your research career that you're gonna have a setback sometimes. But you just keep on going at it and believe in yourself." Asked what she thought about failure, Nelson said even that has a positive side. "Failure might be a tough word, but I don't think it's a bad thing," she said. "Plus, it builds character." Enthusiasm also helps, said Charlotte Miller, who works in the plant biology laboratory of Salk Institute professor Wolfgang Busch. Miller said her path was improbable. As one of five sisters from a low-income family, she wasn't able to attend the top schools as a girl. They were too expensive. So while Miller loved science, she didn't think she had the grounding to pursue a scientific career at a university. She decided to major in art, with the goal of becoming an art therapist. "Two months in I was like, I really want to be a scientist, but it just seemed kind of stupid," Miller said. "I begged the university to let me swap to science. And they let me, even though I definitely didn't have the grades to do it. Once I had made that decision, everything just made more sense to me." Miller said that experience drove home how enthusiasm can overcome challenges that seem at first glance insurmountable. "If you really care about stuff, people will love that about you as well," Miller said. "And that means that you get the luxury of asking for help and people will want to help you. And then you just become part of this beautiful thing where everyone is helping everyone and you're just doing amazingly at the thing that you love." The event is part of the STEAM Leadership Series. The San Diego Foundation is the lead sponsor.

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San Diego Unified School District high school students listen as Karen Nelson, Ph.D., president of the J. Craig Venter Institute, delivers the keynote address during the fifth annual Women in Biotech event held at the Salk Institute Wednesday in La Jolla.

HOWARD LIPIN U-T

THE READERS' REPRESENTATIVE: ADRIAN VORE

Readers give thoughts on quotes

Should quotations be changed slightly to correct grammatical mistakes? Last week I asked readers their thoughts. It was in response to a quotation that had an incorrect "me." It should have been "I." This example had a rub, though. The quotation came through an interpreter. Some journalists believe quotations must not be changed in any way. Others believe a slight tweak is OK to correct a minor mistake in grammar — and that's only sometimes. I believe last week's example could have been changed. The editor on the story, Dana Littlefield, disagreed. Readers reflected the two thoughts as well. **Jim Redhead, San Diego:** "I believe that any oral content should be repeated verbatim, without any sanitation. However, I do support corrected punctuation in any written content." **Paul Baird, Oceanside:** "I think the statement should have been translated into proper English for two reasons: 1) Using improper English might reinforce an ethnic bias in some people; and 2) using improper English might reinforce the use of improper English by others." **David E Gold, Escondido:** "This was not a quote attributed to the speaker. It was, rather, a characterization from a third party — the interpreter. Unless the writer could verify that the quote was in fact faithfully translated from the ungrammatical original (unlikely to be the case; even more unlikely to determine), the error should not have been presented to your readers."

"Ungrammatical quotes shouldn't be corrected. Ungrammatical (re)characterizations absolutely should, possibly via paraphrase." **Marty Fink, Allied Gardens:** "The translated quote ... should have been printed grammatically correct. It's actually a 2nd-hand quote. Things get lost in translation. "Bottom-line: Written material and first-person verbal communications should be directly quoted as is. A translated 'quote' should give the benefit of the doubt and corrected." **Pat Green, Oak Park:** "Anything in visible quotation marks should be written in the paper exactly as it is spoken or written, whether it is correct or not, and whether it is provided by an interpreter or written translation. "I don't think it is the responsibility of an editor to correct things that have been sent or submitted. The exception would be if there is a word that would be offensive to the general public, and that can be indicated by symbols, blank spaces or dots." **Michael-Leonard Creditor, Clairemont:** "I agree that such an inadvertent grammatical error should be avoided, especially in spoken quotes of another person. As an editor I favor use of square brackets in such occasions to show the writer has replaced a word or phrase: 'All we are looking for is a safe environment where [my children and I] can live. ...' "For errors in quotes from written matter, '(sic)' still works perfectly for me."

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PUBLIC SAFETY: LYNDSAY WINKLEY

When did SDSU freshman die?

Three days after a San Diego State University freshman was found gravely injured, a local TV station published a story saying the 19-year-old had died. About an hour later, however, a correction was issued. University officials said they had not confirmed Dylan Hernandez's death. It would be another day before the campus community was informed he had died. Then the county Medical Examiner weighed in. A medical professional had declared Hernandez dead on Nov. 8 — two days before the TV station published their piece. The confusion raised questions about who is responsible for declaring someone dead. And in Hernandez's case, when exactly did he die? Alex Saint, spokeswoman for the Medical Examiner's Office, said the county agency relies on medical professionals to tell them when a person dies — a determination that families don't always agree with. Saint said the office was informed Hernandez was declared brain dead Friday, which was then recorded as his date of death.

University officials said this week that they released information provided to them by the family, not by authorities. Although there is no recovering from brain death, family members can sometimes struggle with that finding, especially if their loved one is on a ventilator like Hernandez was. Machines can force lungs to breathe and hearts to beat even after death. Sometimes this is done to give faraway family members time to say bed-side goodbyes. Other times, it is done to facilitate organ donation. Hernandez likely appeared very much alive days after his actual death. "A lot of times, from the family perspective, if their loved one is on a ventilator or some kind of a machine, even if, medically, it's been declared they're not coming back, they don't see it as a death," Saint said. That perception may also explain why SDSU officials waited until Monday to announce Hernandez had died.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

WHEN RELIGION AND POLITICS CLASHED IN SAN DIEGO

In 1989 San Diego Bishop Leo T. Maher barred Lucy Killea, then a Democratic candidate for the state Senate, from receiving Communion because of her support for abortion rights. The bishop's edict became national news, and Killea won her election in a district where half the voters were Republicans and just 36.7 were Democrats. Bishop Maher passed away in 1991. Killea honored the local ban until she left public office. She died in 2017 at age 94.

From *The Evening Tribune*, Friday, November 17, 1989:

LUCY AND THE BISHOP

Church ban may be blessing in disguise

By Ray Huard, Tribune Politics Writer Nothing state Senate candidate Lucy Killea could have done on her own would have given her the boost she got from Bishop Leo T. Maher's decision to refuse to allow Killea to take Communion because of her outspoken support of legalized abortion. That was the consensus yesterday among political consultants and others watching the 39th Senate District battle between Assemblywoman Killea, D-San Diego, and Assemblywoman Carol Bentley, R-El Cajon. Killea's strategy was to quickly make abortion a central theme of her campaign,

and the Roman Catholic bishop's action plays right into that strategy. Bentley — who opposes abortion except in cases of rape or incest or to protect a woman's health — has tried to turn the campaign to other issues, saying abortion is low on the list of voters' concerns. Most California voters are "strongly pro-choice" and "the more the candidate's attacked for being pro-choice the more often the candidate can tell voters that they're pro-choice," said consultant Bob Wickers, who has worked for Republican candidates in the past but has no involvement in this



campaign. "It seems like Killea is making a real effort to dominate the agenda," Wickers said. Even Bentley's own political consultant — David Lewis — said Maher's action "certainly raises the visibility of the campaign and certainly, at least for a couple of days, tends to focus the campaign on the issue of abortion." Yet, Lewis said, "We expected to discuss abortion. We will discuss abortion. The events of the last day change nothing." Maher Wednesday told the 78th District assemblywoman that she could no longer receive Communion because abortion-rights television advertisements she began airing

Monday were "in complete contradiction to the moral teaching of the Catholic Church." The bishop said today that he is unconcerned about the political implications of his letter to Killea denying her Communion. "My purpose is not to be involved politically," Maher said in a telephone interview. "It is only to present the pastoral teaching of the church. "I'm not involved in this campaign. I'm not trying to tell anyone how to vote. I want to make certain our people recognize every Catholic must adhere to the full teaching of church, and that no Catholic can be a pro-choice Catholic." Maher, who is retiring in July, oversees 98 Catholic parishes with more than 462,000 registered Catholics in San Diego and Imperial counties. The bishop said he would not have barred Killea from receiving communion is she had not made "a public proclamation" of her pro-choice views. "This is most important to emphasize," he said. "If this had been a private affair it never would have happened, but she has defiantly taken a stand against the teachings of the church in a public manner." Killea's campaign workers said yesterday they were already feeling the impact of the bishop's action. Campaign manager Craig Reynolds said 201 people called between 9 a.m. and noon yesterday, and all but six backed Killea. "Hundreds, literally hundreds of people have called," said Killea's campaign field director, Cathy Keig. HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND ARTICLES FROM THE SAN DIEGO UNION-TRIBUNE ARCHIVES ARE COMPILED BY MERRIE MONTEAGUDO. SEARCH THE U-T HISTORIC ARCHIVES AT NEWSLIBRARY.COM/SITES/SDUB