



Remarks of GVR President Jim Nelson Annual Meeting of Members – March 29, 2018

It is the Annual Meeting. I'm sure some of you didn't expect me to last a full year as president of the GVR Board of Directors! Believe me, I'm as surprised as anyone.

So, what did it mean this past year to be the President? Some of you may think that means to be proud, important, and even powerful. To rule!

However, I am reminded of the scripture, "Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave."

Yes, we are called to serve. So rather than think of ruling as being over someone, I think of ruling as measuring, an alternative definition of the word. As friend told me, "It's like that little wooden ruler we used in grade school, with which we measured everything. As children we wanted to know how everything measured up."

In our form of our Governance, the role of the President truly is a supporting role. The President needs to carefully measure decisions about how GVR plans for the future, about our dues for next year or how to refute false information that is often published. Certainly, I have had some difficult decisions in the last year, some of them not popular. In the course

of my tenure as President, I have at times had to eat my words, but I must confess, as Winston Churchill said, “I have always found it a wholesome diet!” While I may have disagreed at times, I still maintain respect for all our Directors.

Most importantly this year, I’ve tried to follow our membership’s will.

Twelve Directors, are elected by the membership, and are called immediately into service. We are elected by the membership to represent you because we are perceived to be leaders. As leaders, Directors also need to remember to be servants for the 23,000-plus members of GVR.

This could cause some to think of the Board as weak, since servants are sometimes thought of as less than those they serve. However, I want to remind our new board that because your serving is intentional and risky, it gives power. Serving is intentional because you are willing to serve and yet risky because what you do can be misinterpreted, unpopular or even more than that.

As Board members, you need take your commitment to serve the membership and work with serving in mind. You are commissioned to help “bear the burden of the people” so that our CEO and the staff need not bear it alone. By “the burden” I mean it is the trust of the membership in your leadership that you bear. You have been chosen because of your qualities, or gifts. You are responsible to reflect on the needs of the whole to act and serve the entire membership.

To the newly elected Directors, you must remember that you represent all 23,000 members; not just the few who voted for you; all 23,000 members. I challenge you to reflect on this and model it. Set aside personal agendas.

Every member of the Board is blessed with different gifts. Can you see the gifts in you? Can you see them in others around you? Gifts come in all shapes and sizes to fit everyone who gets and everyone who gives.

For me, it has always been my way to serve my community. When I was called on to be Director and later serve as President of the Board, I thought somebody had made a BIG mistake. How could I even be considered? Did I really have the gifts to serve our 23,000 members? Honestly, there have been times when I have even questioned myself...but I am still here...I'm still serving. It is because I have faith and trust in the future of GVR.

I admit, at times my term as President has been a challenge. Guest card passes, Pickleball courts, the member survey, GVR4US and a few others. Do you recall at the beginning of my term I set a personal goal of opening new doors? There were challenges. Instead of seeing difficulty in every opportunity to open a new door, I saw an opportunity to open a new door in every difficulty. And yes, we opened several new doors! I am an optimist and see a great future for GVR!

I've been personally challenged by a small anonymous pessimistic group of people that say we are off track and have disagreed with our mission and vision. Thankfully, I have been supported by many of you members. This is profoundly appreciated. The recent survey reinforces that GVR is on the

right track and shows that our Vision, “*a preeminent destination of choice for active adults*” is supported by a majority of the membership.

Ruling is measuring. Measuring what we do and how we do it by design. By design, we are measured by how we serve our membership. All of us...all of us; staff, administration, Board and you members are measured by how we serve each other. Serving each other!

Maybe if we remember what my friend said about that little wooden ruler we used in school to measure, we can remember to measure ourselves. It is in your service to our members, demonstrated by your service to each other, that truly will set you apart.

My charge to you new Directors... In this place and time, it is for you to make a commitment to serve our 23,000 members, not a minority of anonymous few.

I challenge you to open new doors and to embrace one another reaching out in service.

This is a mission you can do and can accomplish.

Think of the things that can happen here for the whole community.

Remember, as you serve you also lead. Show the way for the future of GVR.

I ask that the outgoing Directors on the GVR Board please come forward and accept my thanks and recognition for your service to our uniquely wonderful community:

- **Vice President, Kathy Palese**
- **Treasurer, Bob Allen**
- **Don Lathrop**
- **David Messick**
- **Tim Stewart**

(Present 'Certificates of Appreciation' to each)