

A Touch of Magic



Earl as he appeared in *Life* magazine, December 20, 1948, as a senior at Denver's South HS.

Earl Reum touched so many lives with his magical approach to successful student leadership.

*Earl Reum
February 27, 1931–December 5, 2010*

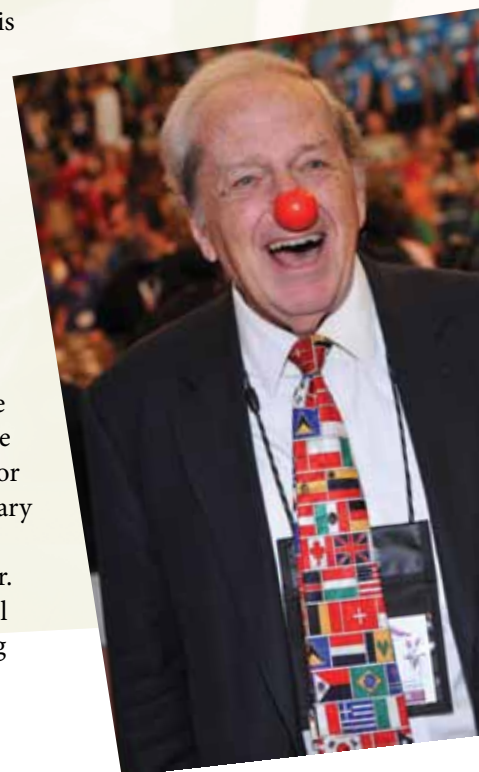
As we announced online and in previous publications, Earl Reum, one of the best-known, most prolific, and best-loved advocates for student leadership, died recently. He was 79.

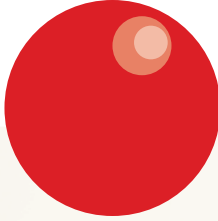
Born in 1931, the same year the National Association of Student Councils (NASC) was founded, Earl provided a lifetime of training and leadership to millions of students and activity advisers around the nation. For those who knew him, and for others who were not fortunate enough to experience his amazing talents, we share the following as a tribute to Earl's legacy of leadership in the world of student activities.

Conferences

Anyone who ever heard Earl present at a conference or workshop can readily tell you it was "one of the single, most significant learning experiences of my life." Earl was a master at incorporating films and music into his presentations before multimedia shows became widespread. He added two crucial ingredients to every presentation: humor and magic. These were his hallmarks and his passion. Whether a red nose that would disappear followed by the line, "Too much paprika!," a rope trick, a fake finger, a flaming book, or a giant American flag, the imagery was always well timed and essential to his remarks. Even more, these elements always appeared when meeting the man face-to-face—anytime, anywhere.

Earl's involvement with NASC national meetings was extensive. Although it may be mere coincidence, Earl's birth coming in the same year as NASC created opportunities for him throughout his life. He was in elementary school when he first showed up at the 1942 conference held in his hometown of Denver. In 1950, as a recently graduated high school student, he participated in the next meeting held at West High School in Denver.





In 1960, Earl was working as an educator in Denver, first as a teacher and then as the coordinator of student activities, and he arrived as a delegate at the 1960 NASC National Conference hosted by Janesville (WI) High School. Earl presented a workshop at this conference and continued to contribute his expertise at every NASC National Conference through 2009. His half-century of active participation with the NASC National Conference is unrivaled.

Publications

Some of Earl's most famous writing was done for NASSP. His oldest work appeared in 1973 titled *The Effective Student Council of the mid-'70s*. In the '80s he created the *Book of Forms*. His *Middle Level Student Councils: A Guide for Students and Advisers* remains an essential resource (although now out of print), along with the extensive *Leadership Profiles*, forerunner of today's *NASC Officer Profiles*. The *National Leadership Camp Curriculum Guide*, and the adviser guide that he created for the NASSP summer camp programs, have influenced the development of thousands of student leaders over the years. Well-worn copies of the little yellow book, *Fundraising for Student Councils*, still rest in many student council adviser files. In addition to the more than a dozen major works for NASSP, Earl is famous for his collection of quotations, *Little Leads for Leaders*, his *Rainbows of Leadership*, and *A Place To Stand*—which expressed Earl's driving desire to assist every student in finding a purpose in life.

State and local leadership development

While a full accounting of Earl's involvement with state student council and Honor Society associations has not yet been collected, it is well known that Earl was a regular feature at summer camps and at state conferences through the years. He was the consultant for the Missouri Association of Student Councils for more than 30 years, for Kansas for 35, and in Wyoming, he appeared every year at their state workshop for 45 years in a row.

Add to this countless workshop sessions and state conference keynote addresses and you can readily see how Earl, by his own accounting, had reached more than 4 million students in his career.

National Leadership Camps

Perhaps Earl's greatest contribution to student leadership development through NASSP came with the establishment of the National Leadership Camp programs in the 1950s. Working as the assistant to George Mathes, then director of student activities from the Denver Public Schools, the two developed a summer leadership development program for high school students and later middle level students from Denver. The name "national" was attached to the program because in its first year, Mr. Mathes's nephew from Wyoming joined the Colorado delegates for training. In 1959, Gerald Van Pool, director of student activities for NASSP, visited the camp, then situated at Camp Cheley near Estes Park, CO, and followed his visit with a request to promote it as a special program for student council leaders from NASC schools throughout the nation.

Earl was a director of the camp program at Cheley and helped form other camp staffs and programs from 1960 through 1995. His doctoral dissertation on student leadership development greatly informed the curriculum that was used at these camps and formed the basis for what eventually became the *National Leadership Camp Curriculum Guide*. These programs are the shining stars of Earl's career working with NASSP.



Earl ended his quest last December. From NASSP and all of those who knew him comes the familiar phrase, "Well done, oh good and faithful servant." He loved acronyms—they appeared throughout his publications and presentations. As a final tribute, we present the following:

Educator extraordinaire

Advocate for student activities

Reams of brilliant writing, and a

Legacy of leadership

Earl always signed off as "Dr. Earl Reum, Itinerant Sorcerer." Perhaps he offered this as his final acronym: Earl IS. His legacy of leadership continues in the millions of students and advisers whose lives were changed by meeting and learning from Earl Reum.



The signature red nose.