



**A Message from the Director of the  
Inamori International Center for Ethics and Excellence  
Gregory L. Eastwood, MD**

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The purpose of the Inamori Center is to foster ethical leadership around the world.

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March 10, 2008

In this Message...

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**(1) Higher Principles**

“A [person] does not fight merely to win.”  
- Cyrano de Bergerac

I have read Edmond Rostand’s play *Cyrano de Bergerac* several times since I was a teenager. I remember with great nostalgia the 1950 black and white movie starring Jose Ferrer, and my wife and I share good memories of Christopher Plummer in the title role four decades ago in Stratford, Ontario. Suffice to say, Cyrano, the incurable romantic and idealist with a big nose, resonates with me. Maybe it is because I have a big nose, too. After all, Cyrano says, “A great nose indicates a great man.”

Cyrano seemed always to be in a fight or provoking one – a load of logs dumped on his head while he was walking down a narrow passage resulted in his death – righting some wrong, defending some principle. Cyrano seemed driven to win, certainly with his sword, but even more with his wits. So when he says, finally, “A man does not fight merely to win,” I always need to stop to make sure I have it right. It reminds me of John F. Kennedy’s contention that “In the age-old contest between popularity and principle, only those willing to lose for their convictions are deserving of posterity's approval.” (*Profiles in Courage*)

I think what Cyrano and Kennedy are saying is that some principles are more important than winning, so important that we are willing to risk losing for them. Cyrano would acknowledge that winning is one successful outcome of a fight, but a person fights for certain things even if winning is unlikely. For most of us this translates to picking our battles and not engaging in others. Alas, for Cyrano, I am afraid that any fight was a good one.

So what does this have to do with leadership? I believe that most effective leaders are driven by principles. And most effective leaders want to win, or at least want to accomplish something important to them. These people are highly motivated to do what they are doing. The motivation is a sort of internal energy that is sustaining, both to the leader and to others. But what happens when winning becomes more important than the principle? The contemporary world is full of

examples of that, in which hubris dictates action, and this has been around since the early Greeks, who wrote plays about it.

Clearly, effective, ethical leadership calls for behavior that is not quite Cyrano's, always spoiling for a fight over a cause or an ideal. Effective, ethical leadership *is* characterized by persistence that is driven by principles. Popular psychology, and plain common sense, also tells us that there does not always have to be a loser. The win-win mentality, sometimes exaggerated, applies often when leaders exercise their other leadership qualities of respect and inclusion, and seeing the world through the other person's eyes. But in the final analysis, Cyrano and JFK would caution us that winning is not our highest calling and that fighting for what we believe in is.

I don't know whether I have advanced the conceptual understanding of what my hero Cyrano de Bergerac was saying. I do know that every time I read or think "A man does not fight merely to win," I will ponder its meaning again and try to prepare myself better for the next fight.

## **(2) Upcoming Events**

- March 12-14, 2008: **North American Kyoto Laureate Symposium**, San Diego, CA  
 March 12, 5:30 PM: Kyoto Laureate Symposium Opening Ceremony and Gala  
 Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina  
 March 13, 9:30 AM: Advanced Technology Presentation with 2007 Kyoto Prize Laureate  
 Hiroo Inokuchi, PhD; San Diego State University, Montezuma Hall  
 March 13, 4:00 PM: Basic Sciences Presentation with 2007 Kyoto Prize Laureate  
 Hiroo Kanamori, PhD; University of California San Diego, Price Center Theater  
 March 14, 3:30 PM: Arts and Philosophy Presentation with 2007 Kyoto Prize Laureate  
 Pina Bausch; University of San Diego, Shiley Theatre
- April 18, 12:30 PM, Inamori Center: "**Moral Dilemmas in Politics and Fiction**"  
 Novelists Megan Whelan Turner and Anne Ursu,  
 with Joseph White, PhD, Professor of Political Science.  
 Inamori Center Ethical Leadership Series with the Public Affairs Discussion Group