

KCH physician authors leadership playbook from the Pentagon’s best

BY HILARY BROWN
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When R. Thomas Collins II, M.D., started down the path of leadership development, he wanted to learn all he could from the best leaders in the world. While earning his master's degree in leadership from The Citadel and enrolled in a Ph.D in educational leadership from the University of Kentucky College of Education, he has read more than 350 books on the topic of leadership. But for all the wisdom and enlightenment amassed during his research, there was a void — the absence of insight from the leaders he admired most.

“The book I wanted to read was the leadership of four-star generals,” said Collins, a veteran of the Air National Guard with a lifelong interest in the military. “I imagined this book would be a Swiss army knife of leadership books that would help people survive from a leadership standpoint. That book did not exist.”

Collins knows a thing or two about leadership. As the vice chair of faculty and academic affairs in the UK College of Medicine Department of Pediatrics, he guides approximately 200 faculty members through academic and professional development. In addition to his clinical role in Kentucky Children's Hospital as a pediatric cardiologist, he works as an executive leadership coach and hosts a podcast called “The Science of Leadership.” As an expert in the field, he's well-suited to fill the void in leadership literature.

Collins began his research while in a clinical and leadership role at Stanford University and was able to contact several generals through the university's Hoover Institute. The first general to agree to an interview was former Secretary of Defense and retired Marine Corps Gen. James Mattis. From there, he asked each general or

admiral he interviewed to introduce him to five more. Collins' goal of 50 interviews, which initially seemed out of reach, was quickly coming to fruition.

“There have only been something like 900 four-star generals and admirals in the history of the United States,” said Collins. “There are approximately 250 living. So, the idea that I was going to interview 20% of the living four-star generals and admirals is something nobody else has come remotely close to. And I did it in nine-and-a-half months.”

Approaching it as a research study, he asked each of his subjects the same four questions:

What are the three most important leadership lessons you learned across your career?

What was a leadership lesson you learned the hard way?

How do you want to be remembered as a leader?

What are five leadership maxims you always try to keep in mind?

The result of hundreds of hours of interviews, 385,000 words transcribed from 51 high ranking military officers with a combined 2,000 years of experience was “The Four Stars of Leadership: Scientifically-Derived Principles from the Experiences of America's Highest-Ranking Leaders.” While the stories and experiences of each of his subjects varied greatly, Collins noted four recurring themes in each of the interviews, common principles demonstrated by truly effective leaders: character, competence, caring and communication — the four C's.

Some of those themes presented themselves overtly in the interviews. During a conversation with Les Lyles, the retired Air Force general stated the three most important leadership lessons were to “communicate, communicate, communicate.” For Tony Zinni, retired Unit-



Don Wilkins/Messenger-Inquirer
R. THOMAS COLLINS II

ed States Marine Corps general and a former commander-in-chief of the U.S. Central Command, competence is the most important trait; no one will follow you if don't know what you're doing.

But the other two traits emerged in a more subtle way, through the stories told by the generals. Charles Krulak, a retired United

States Marine Corps general and former commandant of the Marine Corps, spoke of the importance of character. Every Christmas while he was commandant, he and his wife delivered homemade cookies to every Marine on duty in the Washington, D.C. area. On a stop at the control center in Quantico, Krulak asked the sergeant

on duty who the officer of the day was. The sergeant replied that the officer was none other than Gen. Mattis. Thinking the sergeant misunderstood the question, Krulak asked again, and was told, again, that the officer of the day was Gen. Mattis, former Secretary of Defense. Just as Krulak, frustrated by the perceived miscommunication, asked again, Gen. Mattis appeared, dressed in his Marine Corps best with his sabre at his side. He told a baffled Krulak that he had taken the overnight shift so a young Marine captain could be home with his family. And this story showcased the other two principles of leadership: character and caring.


Collins said there are countless stories like these in his hours of recordings, demonstrations that at the end of the day, the most lauded and celebrated leaders are humans, trying their best to guide and shape

those in their charge.

“The core principles are interconnected,” he said. “If you don't care about people, people won't care about your mission. You may be the person of the greatest character, and you may have immense competence. You may care about people, but if you can't communicate successfully, they won't know it and they won't follow you. These principles all hinge on each other.”

The lessons in his book aren't just applicable to people in the military or leadership positions. Communicating effectively and clearly, having a solid knowledge base and demonstrating compassion and respect are the core pillars necessary to build both personal and professional relationships.

“This isn't just leadership, it's about life,” Collins said. “There's not a human situation where the four C's don't come into play.”



LEGAL NOTICE

**RFB # 4441
2025 FALL PAVING**

The City of Owensboro (City) is seeking a Contractor to provide all labor, material, supervision, equipment, construction staking, and incidentals necessary to rehabilitate certain streets, parking lots and walking trails by milling and texturing the existing surface, and resurfacing all as directed by the City Engineer. Specifications for the above are on file and may be downloaded from the City's online Bonfire portal at <https://owensboro.bonfire-hub.com>. Bids must be submitted through the Bonfire portal on or before 2:00 P.M. prevailing local time on Thursday, August 28, 2025, at which time bids will be opened and publicly read aloud via Microsoft Teams meeting. The Team meeting link can be found on the Bonfire portal. The City of Owensboro reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to waive any irregularities in said bids. This advertisement was paid for by the City of Owensboro using taxpayer dollars in the amount of \$168.96.

Kalyn Fox
Purchasing Manager




LEGAL NOTICE

**MASTER COMMISSIONER SALE
UMB BANK N.A. V.
SCOTTIE W. BARTLETT, ET AL.
CIVIL ACTION NO. 18-CI-00253, MAP #74-49
AMOUNT OF JUDGMENT: \$14,846.85
ADDRESS: 3560 THRUSTON DERMONT RD., OWENSBORO, KY**

By virtue of Judgment and Order of Sale of the Daviess Circuit Court the undersigned will, on Monday, August 18, 2025, at 10:00 AM, at the Courthouse 2nd Floor Fiscal Court Room in Owensboro, Ky., expose to PUBLIC SALE the above real estate. For a complete legal description of the property see the Court record in the Circuit Clerk's Office.

TERMS: CASH OR 10% DOWN & BALANCE 30 DAYS. If on credit purchaser must post bond with approved surety for the balance of the purchase price, plus 6% interest per annum from the date of said bond. The buyer shall be responsible for the current year's property taxes. MASTER COMMISSIONER



LEGAL NOTICE

**LEGAL NOTICE FOR
BID # 2025-07
INSTALLATION OF CELL BAND AND REPAIR CELL REQUEST FOR BIDS
OWENSBORO RIVERPORT AUTHORITY**

Notice is hereby given that the Owensboro Riverport Authority is requesting proposals to provide labor and materials to install cell band and repair cell. Copies of the Request For Proposals are available from the Owensboro Riverport Authority, by contacting Michelle Payne, Purchasing Agent, at mpayne@owensbororiverport.com. All proposals shall be submitted in accordance with requirements set forth in the RFP and shall be received at 1771 River Road, Owensboro, KY before 2:00 p.m., (CST), August 20, 2025. All late proposals will be returned unopened. Emailed proposals are not accepted. Owensboro Riverport Authority reserves the right to postpone, accept or reject any and all proposals and to waive any informality in the bid process as Owensboro Riverport Authority deems in its own best interest.

CENTRAL

TRIPLETT ST, 2011
7-? TODAY

Backyard sale Home decor, Christmas decor, end tables, storage items. Vintage items. Women's 1x clothing. Books and records. Old postcards.

EAST

CREEK BRANCH CV, 3012
SATURDAY, AUG 9TH 7AM-12PM

Girls clothing (size 7-8), Women's clothing (sm/med), Toys, dog crate, Dog pen, comforter/pillows, & Misc. items

HUNTERS CHASE CT, 4811

TODAY 7AM-12PM

Home Decor, Boutique clothing, school decor, & much more!

SOUTH

WESTERN PKWY, 2908
AUGUST 8TH, 9TH 7AM-1PM
Saturday 7 - ?

Downsizing, wedding apparel, all categorizes of clothing (Lg-XL), shoes, glassware, furniture, etc. Priced to go.

WEST

MARTIN WAY, 122
HUGE HOME MOVING SALE
SATURDAY 7AM - 1PM

Commercial Equipment: AvaMix Wall Mount Drink Mixer, Waring 2QT Ice Cream Maker, 36" Gas Griddle, 12" w gas charbroiler; carnival king warmer with pump; carnival king bottle warmer, Flashforge Pro 3D Printer, cornhole boards & bags; Power tools, tools, wood framing stuff, random electronics, small appliances, bakeware, dishes, Open hearth rotisserie/broiler, Home/Wall Decor, wall shelves, wall scrabble tiles; board games, Inversion Table, workout resistance bands, 7ft Christmas tree, Christmas decor. Clothes & Shoes for women, men, young men & girls sizes 6/7-14, swimsuits & so much More! **Also ask about our Toy Poodle & Shihpoo Puppies For Sale!!



WEST

SOUTH YORK STREET, 2418
OFF CARTER RD.
YARD SALE TODAY

Lots of nice women's xs - 3x, men's, and children's clothes. Shoes, glassware, linens, lots of DVD's & CD's, stairstepper, fireplace screen, lots of jewelry, houseplants, toys, materials & crafts, knives/coolers, lots of jigsaw puzzles.

CAMDEN CIRCLE, 524

MULTI-FAMILY YARD SALE
IN GRAYSTONE ESTATES.
FRIDAY, AUG. 8TH 7AM- 10AM
& SAT., AUG. 9TH, 7AM- ?

W 1ST ST. 1733

AUG. 8TH & 9TH 7AM-2PM

Mower, tools, plus size clothes, pictures, wares, linens, Christmas decor.

YORK DR., 2118

AUG. 9TH, 7AM- NOON.

MOVING 32 years of items. Tools, ladders, drills and lots of misc.

Scan for the Garage Sale Map!



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Only \$28

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