



The Fayetteville Observer  
fayobserver.com

## Willis M. Watt: Trust in leaders is essential

Jun 22, 2016

Surprise - it's a presidential election year. Who will be elected our 45th president? Who do we trust to lead us in these difficult days of social turmoil, economic crises, terrorism, wars and rumors of wars?

You may have thought this op-ed piece was about politics and electing a president, but it isn't. This is about finding people we can have confidence in to lead us in our 21st century world.

Andrew J. DuBrin, a leadership researcher and scholar, says trust is a foundation behavior for effective leadership. Recent history continues to underscore the importance of our leaders needing to be trustworthy, honest individuals with integrity. We need leaders who not only talk the talk, but who walk the walk. We need individuals who demonstrate consistency in their words, motives, intentions and behavior as leaders.

As for the upcoming election, only time will tell who and what type of leader our next president turns out to be.

But what about local leadership? Who is going to step up? Who will take the reins in hand to accept the responsibility for leading our community? Will it be you?

The board of directors of the Institute for Community Leadership is interested in and committed to helping you become that next leader who helps make Fayetteville the best place to live and work in this state.

The institute is a program that provides a free grassroots leadership development program. Its vision statement is: "To identify, develop, and empower community members, especially those not previously identified, who are able and willing to commit to leadership roles in addressing the issues of the Fayetteville/Cumberland County area." The institute seeks to educate and empower people like you to become trustworthy, effective civic leaders who are prepared to lead in city and county government, schools and colleges, arts and culture, religious organizations, and not-for-profit agencies.

If you're interested in being a member of Class XIII 2016-2017, or you know someone who should be involved in this program, ICL is now accepting applications online: [www.leadership4us.org](http://www.leadership4us.org). Applications are due by July 11.

Additional information about ICL is available by contacting Drew Ziegler at [aziegler@methodist.edu](mailto:aziegler@methodist.edu) or Bill Watt at [wmmwatt@methodist.edu](mailto:wmmwatt@methodist.edu).

As DuBrin noted, being trustworthy is a foundation behavior of leadership. We need people who we trust, who have trained for leadership, people we can depend on to do what is best for our community. So, will you take advantage of this free opportunity? Will you come forward to provide trustworthy socially responsible leadership in our community? Only you know the answer to that question.

**Willis M. Watt** is a member of the Observer's Community Advisory Board. He is a professor at Methodist University, where he teaches communication and leadership courses and chairs Applied Communication Department.