



Earl Anthony Wayne

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KEY POSITIONS

Distinguished Diplomat in Residence, School of International Service, American University

2019 to present

Public Policy Fellow, Co-Chair Mexico Institute Advisory Board (2018), Woodrow Wilson Center

2019 to present

United States Ambassador to Mexico

2011-2015

Deputy U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

2010-2011

Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs, Afghanistan

2009-2010

United States Ambassador to Argentina

2006-2009

Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs (EB)

2000-2006

Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (EUR)

1997-2000

Leadership in Organizations Interview with Earl Anthony Wayne By Alfonso H Revollo



Earl Anthony Wayne has dedicated himself to serving the United States, the American people, and defending the U.S. Constitution. He served as United States Ambassador to Mexico and Argentina and was Deputy U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan. A former Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs, Mr. Wayne left the U.S. diplomatic corps with the rank of Career Ambassador. Today, he is Distinguished Diplomat in Residence at American University's School of International Service. He is also a Public Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center. While serving as U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Mr. Wayne led a Mission of 2,700 employees comprised of 29 different agencies. In words and deeds, he embodies the principles of professionalism, integrity, respect, patience, and humility that I most admire in a leader. Mr. Wayne kindly accepted my request for a telephone interview, and on 13 September 2019 we talked at length on the phone. These are the lessons I learned from a great leader.

First, there is a fundamental difference between being a manager and a leader. Managers are concerned with ensuring that organizations operate effectively, that resources are allocated efficiently, and that mission objectives are met. Leaders, on the other hand, seek solutions or better outcomes to problems. Leaders need not be managers or formal authority figures. Any employee can be a leader within their area of responsibility. What distinguishes effective from non-effective leaders and managers, is that effective leaders and managers communicate clearly and are genuinely interested in people. This is the foundation upon which they build great teams and meaningful relationships. They try to understand where the other person is coming from, recognize their strengths and skills, and anticipate challenges they might face. Similarly, understanding another person's point of view is a best-practice approach to negotiations and problem-solving, even though there is no guarantee of success.

Second, I learned that one of the most valuable and rare commodities in any organization is creativity and that the leader or manager's first task is to foster it, valuing employees who share their ideas and who think beyond their immediate responsibilities. A good manager or leader will assemble a team with this in mind or nurture it in an existing team. It is important to note that in certain sectors such as government, a manager might have limited flexibility in selecting a team or in removing those who might not be a good fit.

Third, motivating staff—a challenging task for any manager or leader—is accomplished through positive feedback, fair pay, awards, and recognition. If employees are demoralized, it is imperative to find out why. Mr. Wayne shared a story with me, passed on to him by former Secretary of State, General Colin Powell. General Powell had watched a documentary about the history and operation of the Empire State Building. Towards the end, the documentary's focus turned to the personnel in the basement. When the interviewer asked an employee who was responsible for garbage disposal what he thought about his job, he replied that his purpose was to ensure the building ran properly. Symbolically and literally, this man worked in the building's lowest level, but he was, nevertheless, indispensable for those who worked at the top. General Powell's story illustrates the importance of encouraging autonomy and purpose in every employee and that nobody is so exalted that he does not depend on the industry of others.

The most surprising thing I learned from the interview was that leaders, to be effective, do not have to be managers. The best are modest, taking pride in the accomplishments of the organization as a whole while motivating their employees to be the best they can be in their areas of responsibility—and beyond.