



# LEADERS TO FOLLOW

International Leadership Institute: Providing Leadership Development Services and Programs in the US and Europe since 1985

## BOYD FINK: HOST OF THE CENTURY

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By Jarda Tusek

Right now we are getting over the very sad news of the departure of one of our closest friend here, Boyd Fink, who died September 26th, 2007. His funeral, organized by his wife Kit and family members in Jacksonville, was attended by many of Boyd and Kit's family and friends, and gave the people present a chance to remember Boyd's life and legacy.

One of my best memories of Boyd recalls a visit we made to Europe ten years ago. On September 26, 1997, Boyd (with his wife Kit and myself) were visiting with my brother Zdenek in Wurzburg, Germany, and then heading for Augsburg and Munich. We had a very pleasant visit to Germany and greatly enjoyed our time together.

Prior to that we had visited many former participants in our *Business Leadership Forum: USA* programs in different places in Czech and Slovak Republics who had stayed over the years (since 1993) in Kit and Boyd's home in Arlington for at least two weeks. More than twenty executive participants had been welcomed by Boyd and Kit, into their home and into their



Graduation: Boyd, Alex Solovyev, Sergey Kondrenko of the Ukraine (ILI grad) and Kit.

### The International Leadership Institute

Was founded in 1985 in Princeton, NJ

Remains dedicated to leadership development

Has run more than 50 Executive education and Leadership Development programs in the US, for European clients

Has partnered with the US Department of State, the University of North Florida, the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce and more than 700 other businesses, universities, religious organizations, private citizens and government agencies.

The impact that Boyd and Kit made on the lives of many of these Czech and Slovak participants was clearly demonstrated in those meetings in Prague, Jihlava, Olomouc, Bratislava, Senec and Trencin.

The trip to Europe was a time of reunion and renewal of ties. We thank God for that blessed time with Boyd and Kit, and that so many people were uplifted by their presence. We will be missing Boyd very much, and count it a privilege to have known him. No thanks can be enough for the wonderful ways that he and Kit helped our *Business Leadership Forum: USA* participants to learn about American culture and business.

Please turn to the other side for excerpts from an interview with Boyd and Kit in the article "Hosts of the Century" from *Leaders to Follow*, January 2000.

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**Quotes from a 2000 interview, originally printed in the January 2000 issue of *Leaders to Follow*:**

**Q.: Why have you found hosting participants to be such a rewarding experience?**

**A. BOYD:** I get real pleasure from trying to explain my country to these visitors and I also know it helps me better understand what the world is all about. Gaining a new friend from a very different background, with a different way of thinking enriches our lives and gives us an opportunity to be of help to someone who is in need.

We are trying to help them understand what's required for the free enterprise system we have in this country, since learning about the American economic system is part of the program. Yet the impact of the program goes beyond just doing business or learning English. We have all been enriched from many aspects of this program, and feel our lives have been touched in many ways

**KIT:** My hosting participation dates back to my Texas years, when I hosted a German student. I also hosted an Arab student who had spent the previous four years in the U.S. but had never been invited into an American home; he was understandably rather bitter about the U.S. It was then that I decided to make my contribution to building a more peaceful world by helping foreign students gain a better attitude toward our country.

My first time hosting visitors from a communist country was in the late 1950's, when I hosted a Hungarian exile (his friend practically lived with us as well!). Seeing both these young men become successful in the U.S. business world, I thought it would be wonderful to get involved in the Institute educational programs, working with program participants from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and other east central European countries. I wanted to help them understand and even use their opportunities in the United States to the fullest.

Since we began hosting with the Institute, we've had some great times, with harmonicas, guitars, turkeys, and tennis games—not to mention swim parties, going to the zoo, cars that wouldn't start and late-night discussions about God.

**Q.: Is there anything that stands out in your hosting experience so far?**

**A. BOYD:** When we started to take part in the *Executive Education Programs for Central European Professional Leaders*, we never thought we'd visit any of our guests in their own homes. We just enjoyed having them in our home, taking them out on the boat and entertaining them with our friends. Little did we know that one day we'd have the most interesting time of our lives . . . when we went to Europe and visited with our visitors! The experience was unforgettable.

**KIT:** We and our friends gave many parties for the program groups which were here. Our home became one of their favorite hang-outs. We hosted executives and students, male and female, enjoying all of our visitors in special ways. But what stands out for me is our wonderful times with executive participant Jozef Frco of Slovakia, our dear and much-loved friend. Jozef started our close American friend, Rosie, on the path to recovery from a crippling disease. I never thought such a miraculous healing could come through the program. It was as if the hand of God was directly involved in this wonderful healing.

**Q.: What would you most like to see accomplished through the Institute programs for European executives and students?**

**A. BOYD:** Kit and I would like to continue to keep in touch with all our former guests and the other friends we've made through the programs. We want them to get the maximum impact from the programs, by remaining in contact with their American friends

**KIT:** We would like to see matters of faith and the spiritual dimension of life as an integral part of the programs. One of the original program goals was to help European participants regain their Christian heritage, which was cast aside during the years of communism. The impact of the program goes beyond just doing business or learning English. I would be remiss if I did not say, "We loved them all!"

*The Institute would like to thank Kit and Boyd for their kindness and generosity in hosting so many program participants, and for articulating so well the surprising and rewarding aspects of bringing European participants into their home and their lives.*

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