



Dear Distinguished Eagles and NESAs Outstanding Eagles:

Earlier this year I passed a milestone anniversary. 50 Years. A milestone worth noting, on a date that turned out to matter a whole lot in a good life. August 2, 1968 was the date of my Eagle Scout Board of Review. You can tell from this letterhead that I am still *really* active in the Scouting Movement here in the National Capital Area Council, with almost two decades now in Board leadership. I've received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award, dozens of Scouting recognitions from campfire to Boardroom, a whole bunch of those square knots, and a 50-year membership pin . . . and frankly, all of that is secondary to my Eagle Scout badge!

My Board of Review took place at a picnic table in a quiet forested grove at summer camp—Camp Minsi BSA in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains. (Our new NCAC Scout Executive Craig Poland knows the place well . . . he was the Scout Executive there before he accepted the offer to lead this Council.) My father Walter Pocalyko, who's now 93, drove up from Bethlehem to Pocono Summit that evening for the Friday campfire where I was recognized. Scouting has changed a whole lot since 1968. Truth told, I am one of the "progressives" who strongly support the important advances and evolution that we're now making in National-level Scouting. Most of us truly loyal Old Scouts get it. You can "Scout Me In" for another half-century.

A few years ago, I published a nationally syndicated op-ed about the concept of *Eagle Scouting*—which I believe is kind of a subset of our Movement—and I'd like to share part of it with you here:

Scouting may be the last place a young man can still learn to be a regular guy, with all of the many layered implications of that expression. I was raised into a sort of Emersonian self-reliance embedded within a system of values that are truly timeless and transcendent—the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Here I'm with E. O. Wilson, Harvard professor and the country's best-known naturalist, who once invited his readers to come up with a better code for life, "particularly in 56 words." In truth, "regular guy" penetrates deeper meaning within Scouting's peculiar sociology. Scouting imparts genuine psychological centeredness to young men at a time when, let's face it, guys are gooberish and struggling. I know I was in 1968. Scouting is a safe place where failure is fine if you learn to fix it, where success is measured against demanding standards and never against other Scouts. I don't know any place else where you're encouraged to be kind and friendly and tough all at once, where rough-cut teenagers and reverence for nature meet in dwindling wilderness and an ethic of service.

Our leaders at camp in the '60s, including my father, once lived a kind of woodsman Scouting before World War II. Our Scouting was in turn more primitive than the program is now. What I learned from the woodsmen could be called subliminal lessons of camp: There's time and place for everything, including being profane. Scouts know the difference. Hard work is better than brains. But you can't be stupid, and that's independent of being educated. Fitness matters in

the woods and every other unforgiving place. Respect knives, fire, and firearms—but man, they are cool. There will always be jerks, but you don't personally have to be one. When you give a guy crap, make sure it's because you care about him and never to put him down. Everybody screws





up. Every Scout started out as a Tenderfoot, so give that new kid a lot of breaks, just like you got. Becoming an Eagle Scout, taking on any real mantle of leadership, isn't yours by natural right or because of what you've done. It's because of what's expected from you. And that's a whole lot more than you think.

Along with those lessons, there is also opportunity . . . and responsibility. It's one of those responsibilities about which I'm writing to you now.

We *share* the responsibility to invest in *ALL* our youth. Like the investments you make for the benefit of your own family, these responsibilities are both long term and near term. As Eagle Scouts who still care deeply about what Scouting is and does, we need to preserve our legacy for the *long term*. That's our Council Endowment. As men who know what it takes to inculcate in young boys and girls those subliminal lessons of camping, we need to provide a robust program of support for more than 58,000 youth and 20,000 volunteers in our Council. All of that is for the *near term*, recurring every year—our Council Annual Fund, what we call “Friends of Scouting.”

I loved serving our country as a Navy pilot, and I am still playing varsity as a CEO, novelist, and corporate director. But every year it becomes clearer to me how success is never your own—none of us do it alone—and how foundational Scouting has been in shaping my life. You are an Eagle Scout. So, I know that's true for you, too.

If you're interested in our Council's Endowment for future generations, you should know that gifts there are “permanently restricted.” We don't use the principal, only the return on capital. In 2017 our Endowment created annual interest that sent 182 Scouts to camp who otherwise could not have gone, provided the first uniforms to more than 400 deserving young people who needed some financial help, and contributed over \$250,000 to top priority camp maintenance.

I ask you to please consider investing in our youth as part of your Scouting legacy, to join me and your fellow Eagles now and annually for planned giving and for including NCAC Endowment in your estate plan. Please visit www.ncacbsa.org for further information or call our Development Office at 301-214-9110 with any questions. I have also asked our Scout Executive Craig Poland and Endowment Chair Forrest Horton to follow up with you personally to provide their latest Council update.

With gratitude, respect, and yours in the Scouting spirit,

Michael Pocalyko
Eagle Scout, 1968; Distinguished Eagle Scout, 2011

