

# Leaving A Lasting Legacy: Part I

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A legacy is a generous thing to leave behind. It is a gift given by an ancestor or predecessor. The best legacies involve dreaming of something bigger than yourself, with no thought of remuneration—like a farmer planting a grove of trees, knowing it will mature and be enjoyed by her grandchildren many years after her death. We all leave stories and a love of family behind for those we hold dear. Many also leave a legacy of money, stocks, or the family home. Still others leave a legacy of purposeful living—marrying action with values, talent with thoughtfulness. This legacy inspires us with stories and lessons learned. It gives us hope that we can be better.



**My Next Season's** first client was Liam McGee, the CEO of The Hartford. After successfully transforming The Hartford, he pursued a vigorous next season of family first, authorship of articles on lessons learned, teaching at his alma mater, and mentoring

not-for-profit leaders. He succumbed to cancer earlier than anyone would have dreamed, yet he left behind a robust legacy. His papers are still being published, and a leader he mentored, Linda Novick O'Keefe, founder and CEO of Common Threads, continues doing expansive work in cultural diversity, culinary arts, and nutrition in multiple metropolitan school systems around the country, benefitting children and families.

**Legacies are created with the kind of care and intention undertaken when building a career, establishing a family, and living in a community.**

An essential part of creating a legacy is purpose: knowing what you stand for and uplifting those people and causes that are important to you; living daily with the priorities you have discerned; and being generous with your time, gifts, and care. Giving back—with relationship, kindness, and consideration—are hallmarks of a living legacy. Begin with the end in mind: what values and ideas are important to be passed forward?

Eugene Cernan is best known as the last man to walk on the surface of the Moon. *Apollo 17* flew into space in December 1972 and is remembered as the mission

that captured the iconic image of Earth known as the "Blue Marble." However, Eugene's family likely remembers him best for inscribing his daughter's initials in the lunar dust on the Moon's surface—an act of love that will be visible for millennia. Captain Cernan's love of country, family, and science has literally left an indelible mark.

We each have opportunity now, and in every season of our lives, to create such a legacy. With our purpose defined, what we choose to do with our gifts and talents has important implications to those who know and care about us. Living a life evident of our values and weighing our purpose against everyday choices inspires family and friends to do the same. Passed down to the next generation and then enhanced again, how and what we give back becomes the storyline—not only of our legacy, but of a legacy shared. The best legacies become a collective giving back and allow us to transcend what we dreamed possible.

*Read more about Liam McGee's legacy next month in a blog post by his wife, Lori McGee.*