

**Fred Carter, President of Francis Marion University,
Introduction of Senator Hugh Leatherman for the Columbia World Affairs
Council's 2018 Global Vision Award**

November 29, 2018

It's my pleasure to introduce tonight's honoree- Senator Hugh Leatherman. And let me also take a moment to recognize the three members of the Leatherman family who are here - Jean, Ken, and Sue.

Now, virtually everyone in this room knows Hugh and Jean, so I'm not going to stand up here and state the obvious about who he is and what he does. But I thought that I might tell you a few things that you might not know about the Chairman.

- 1) First of all, he's an engineer by education and experience. As a result of this, he possesses a pragmatic understanding of "how things really work" that's sorely missing in the statehouse. He brings practical, analytic logic to every problem placed in front of him- that's why he's so successful at resolving issues and challenging those who have no idea how to resolve an issue. Over three decades ago he authored the state procurement code, and he is widely acknowledged as the most knowledgeable person in SC and one of the most knowledgeable people nationally in the field of procurement and construction law- a rare distinction for a non-attorney, but perhaps not for a master engineer.**

- 2) **The second point- the scope of his responsibility is enormous- everyone here knows that he's President Pro Tempore of the Senate and Chairman of the Finance Committee. What you may not know is that he also chairs another dozen statewide committees, and serves on the State Infrastructure Bank- a source of enormous pride or frustration for him, depending upon the project.**

- 3) **The third point- he is fiercely loyal to the Pee Dee and his constituents. He understands the poverty that permeates our region, and he's determined to tackle the education, health care, transportation and human needs issues while he is in a position to do so. No political rhetoric here. He is committed to the people who live in this region, and no one- governor, house member, senator - is going to dissuade him in this effort. Although I should note that a few have tried.. unsuccessfully.**

- 4) **Fourth point- he believes that the path to prosperity for South Carolina resides with the quality of our economic development. And projects such as Boeing, Volvo, Honda, the Inland Port, and the Port of Charleston Expansion, to name but a few, are a tribute to his tenacity, determination and negotiating skills. Carroll Campbell was one of the most accomplished deal makers that I've ever known, but Hugh is just as cunning, relentless and adept at recruiting industry. And the state is much better for it.**

- 5) **Finally, let me conclude with this observation- There are about 5 dozen agency directors in South Carolina government. If you polled us as to which elected official**

we respected the most, the winner, hands down, would be Hugh Leatherman. Why? Because he doesn't spout political platitudes, because he doesn't wrap himself up in ideological nonsense- he is a fiscally conservative problem solver, who will stand alongside you until an issue is resolved- even if it means making politically tough decisions and bearing the responsibility for those decisions- we all watch him do this when he writes the budget every legislative session. And on top of all of these attributes, he's one of the most principled, honest, and genuinely decent leaders in the state of South Carolina.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you chose well this year.