

**A Furious Hunger** by Dr. Edward Hoffman



**Dr. Edward Hoffman**

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Societies move by great people. Behind every accomplishment is a person who had a soaring presence to energize the rest of us to do great things. Carolyn Griner has been one of those people for NASA.

At Carolyn's retirement party the other night, I was struck by how the crowd there represented NASA's past, present and future, a veritable who's who in every direction, all gathered to honor and offer warm wishes to a great leader.

I have attended many such events, but have never felt so impressed or humbled. This was more than "thanks for the nice job," but a reflection of admiration, respect and love for a special person. Fueling it all, or certainly the better part, was a furious hunger. A hunger that we have for genuine leadership.

For the last few years I was fortunate to work for Carolyn as a member of the Project Management Council Working Group. In my two decades at NASA there have been just a handful of leaders I worked with who blew me away. Each one inspired in me a desire for more ... a furious hunger either to keep working for them, or to find another as good.

Some people pull it all together and make great things happen. You watch them, try to learn from them and still wonder how they do what they do. Steal a page from Carolyn's playbook, I thought ... I wish it were that simple.

During my time around Carolyn I found myself watching closely for tips. What makes her so good? The strengths are obvious – monumental competency and smarts, focus, nurturing, and a broad perspective (the rare perspective of what benefits NASA as opposed to just the local sandbox). However, what makes her so distinct is her honesty (or integrity). Honesty that you can learn from by observing her behavior. The consistency between her words and deeds is Carolyn's hallmark.

The evening was special because so many people brought thanks to a person who for so many years satisfied our furious hunger for the elusive elixir of leadership. Genuine leaders are rare. Thanks, Carolyn, for being one for so long.