

## **Dr. Rodney Marshall**

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June 30, 2015

Re: Interim Head of Schools Dossier

Dear Search Team,

Most of my career has been gladly spent founding, growing, heading, and advising Christian and classical schools in the United States and abroad. As my dossier will confirm, I am passionate about and experienced at building schools that are rich in the liberal arts, or the Western intellectual tradition. I am experienced at ramping up quickly into the leadership and management of a new school, and in providing a seamless transition of leadership as interim head at schools that unexpectedly lost their heads. As a relational, seasoned head of classical and Christian schools, I am well qualified to keep the school on its healthy trajectory, establish a culture of continuous improvement, coach the faculty, and engage the entire learning community in the great conversation.

Please find following this cover letter a professional dossier arranged as one document for your convenience. You will find a resume, three one-page philosophy statements, and references. The reference letter from the chairman of the board of my last assignment in Tucson will send separately. If there is anything else required or desirable I would be pleased to supplement this application.

I look forward to conversing with you and the team about helping your school through the 2015-16 school year and a seamless leadership transition.

Best Regards,

Rodney J. Marshall, Ed.D.

## **Dr. Rodney Marshall**

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### **Objective**

To fill a head of school or other chief executive opportunity that will meaningfully advance classical Christian education in American culture or beyond.

### **Summary of Qualifications**

- Proven leader, chief executive, business starter, manager, and head of school
- Persuasive public speaker and essayist
- Effective, innovative academic leader, curriculum and faculty developer
- Employ a mentoring mentality and attitude of continuous improvement
- Globally aware and well traveled worldwide
- Theologically sound with a historic biblical worldview

### **Education**

- **Doctor of Education (2014) Harrison Middleton University**
  - o Coursework in the great books of the Western world on education
  - o Final project titled: The Western Intellectual Tradition Meets the Digital Age
- **Master of Arts, Philosophy and Religion (2008) Harrison Middleton University**
- **Master of Divinity (1991) College of Ministry Training**
- **Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration (1977) Washington State University**

### **Leadership and Professional Experience**

- **Start-Up CEO, Confluence Courseware, LLC, 2015 – (present)**

Confluence Courseware, an innovative for-profit digital curriculum business, creates and distributes unique courseware rooted in the classics of the Western intellectual tradition that emphasizes a conversational pedagogy. We are a craft company that partners with pioneering educators who aspire to deliver the best of a traditional liberal arts curriculum using a conversational pedagogy to anyone, anywhere, anytime. The concept includes aggregating content at a lower than industry cost by using course creators' original works of authorship, works in the public domain, and freely licensed Open Educational Resources (OER) available for commercial use. The intention is to provide great books curriculum through advanced technological means to any school or student that desires it.

- **President and Owner, Findafuture, Inc. dba Marshall Education Group, 1997 – (present)**

Boutique school management consultancy providing innovative solutions to private, proprietary, and charter schools and organizations through management consulting, start up services, interim head of school service, proprietary learning courseware, writing and recording essays, articles, and curriculum for publishers, providing career and college counseling expertise, and keynote conference speaking. Perhaps our most remarkable accomplishment has been the start up of several schools including founding and leading Coram Deo Academy from 0-1,100 students in 11 years before transitioning leadership to a protégé.

- **Interim Head of Schools, Cornerstone & Pusch Ridge Christian Academies, Tucson, AZ, 2014 – 2015**

Assumed leadership of two schools seeking to unify as one classical Christian school program until a permanent head was put in place.

- **Interim Head of School, First Baptist Academy, Houston, TX, 2012 – 2013**

Assumed leadership of this early childhood through grade eight school in November. Brought immediate stability, coalesced the management team into a collaborative decision making and improvement team, assisted the board with final interviews and selection of a permanent head of school to begin June 2013, and wrote and implemented a comprehensive HOS on-boarding plan.

- **Interim Superintendent, Cary Christian School, Cary, NC, 2011 – 2012**

Led and improved this eight hundred student, classical Christian school preparing management team, programs and processes for transition to a permanent superintendent. Realigned grade 6 – 12 curriculum to increase challenge and add AP, improved accounting systems and wrote a comprehensive improvement document of in excess of fifty pages.

- **Inaugural Arete Fellow, Institute for Classical Schools, Leesburg, VA, 2010**

Provided advisory services as a fellow in an association of experienced classical and Christian school heads of schools for the purpose of mentoring younger leaders.

- **Member, Society for Classical Learning Member, 2005 – (present)**

- **Founder, President and Headmaster, Coram Deo Academy, Dallas/Fort Worth, TX, 1999-2010**

Designed, founded and grew program from zero to 1,100 students in eleven years. Articulated school vision through public speech and in writing. Scoped and sequenced PreK-12 classical Christian curriculum plan. Established non-profit organization, developed administrative model, recruited faculty and staff, retained facilities, attracted student body, administered day-to-day program. Lectured on history, geography, political science and theology. Passed the baton to a protégé to assure continuing success.

- **Ordained as Ruling Elder, Presbyterian Church in America, Flower Mound, TX, 1999**

Exercised spiritual oversight with other elders over a local congregation. Provided pastoral care to a segment of the congregation.

- **Director of Global Development and Youth Programs, School of Tomorrow, Lewisville, TX, 1995-1997**

Led twelve field stations and international educational businesses providing products and services for Christian schools and home schools in one hundred twenty four nations on six continents. Managed fourteen home office staff to support fieldwork. Responsible for \$ multi-million in annual wholesale sales. Implemented international market development and service plan. Traveled worldwide on six continents consulting educational businesses, speaking at conventions and meeting with government officials. Oversaw and consulted multiple ESL schools in non-English speaking nations. Developed youth ministry programs, wrote and edited newsletters and educational products and provided on screen talent.

- **Director and President, Bill of Rights Legal Foundation, Olympia, WA, 1980 – 1990**

Educated Washington State residents on principles of good citizenship. Provided a lobbying presence in the state capital.

- **Associate Pastor, Church Administrator, and School Principal Non-Denominational Church/School Pullman, WA 1979 – 1995**

Recruited, trained and led twenty staff and hundreds of volunteers. Managed multi-million dollar budget. Launched and administrated Christian school, radio station, Bible College, mission church, and other ministries. Preached and taught biblical worldview regularly in church services, Bible College, and school. Provided biblical counseling to college students and families. Wrote newsletters and bible college courses. Negotiated acquisition of property, obtained permits and planned, financed and oversaw design and construction of 100,000 SF of building space.

- **Credit Manager, Washington State University, Pullman, WA, 1978 – 1979**

- **Officer and Branch Manager, Bank of Pullman, Pullman, WA 1976 – 1978**



## **I Believe in the One Triune God – A Brief Testimony of Faith in Jesus Christ**

The Apostles Creed summarizes the faith received by generations of fathers and applied to my life by the power of the Holy Spirit. Born to Christian parents, I was baptized as a covenant child. The first awareness of the reality of God came to me at the age eight years in a Sunday school class at First Presbyterian Church of Wappingers Falls, NY. The teacher asked each of us write a proverb. Although it may seem cliché in the 60's to have children rewrite the Bible, I wrote and still possess in a scrapbook these words that I have never forgotten, "Listen to God, and remember." Truly the Word of God became alive and powerful to me that day, as I knew from that moment that God is and that He has spoken to humankind through the Old and New Testaments. At age twelve, I was catechized, although somewhat reluctantly, in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. I seriously revisited these standards while preparing for ordination as a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church in America, and to this day adhere to that system of theology found in the Westminster Standards. After a few years of ambivalence, late in my teens and by His grace, a fire was stirred in my spirit renewing my faith, directing my life, and leading me to pursue ministerial training immediately upon graduation from college. This led to ordination into the gospel ministry in the early nineteen eighties. For fifty years belief in the One True and Triune God has informed, and influenced and at times fully formed my life, family and career.

I believe in God the Father Almighty maker of heaven and earth. This is an established fact, revealed to me and to all God's covenant people by the witness of Holy Spirit. It informs all of life in that the knowledge of God as omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent affects all of life. I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord. Born a sinner, He died for my sins and for all the sins of all those whom He has chosen. Truly "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." The Holy Spirit actively witnesses of these truths to my heart, convicting and comforting me as a son of the living God.

Over time the fundamental belief in the received faith became a comprehensive and self-consciously held biblical world and life view. Beginning with Francis Schaefer around 1980, many authors have powerfully shaped the perspective that every arena of life and thought must be captive to Christ as the Lord of all. This comprehensive faith has animated every possible facet of my life as a husband, father, minister and head of school. It has made the Christian faith so much more exciting because it is not limited to a devotional compartment, but rather applies to everyone and everything all of the time. That is the reason for a life of direct influence through Christian education. By its nature it deals with every aspect of life as a totality. And, that is quite simply the reason for continuing in this career.

So much more could be written affirming the Christian faith as a way to think, to live and of course as the basis of truth for every aspect of the education of children for God. "Faith of our fathers, holy faith! We will be true to thee till death."

## **A Brief Philosophy of Education - How Faith Informs my Approach to K-12 Education**

I believe the education of children for God is the most important business that is done on earth. To succeed in the formation of young lives this education must be epistemologically well rooted. It must value the classical traditions that cultivated Western civilization and it must include a vibrant teaching and learning culture. Students thus educated have received foundational preparation for lives of service to God and humankind.

The education of children for God must be epistemologically well rooted in a historic Christian world and life view to give it meaningful context and perspective. Every thought has a history and for the Christian student every good thought must eventually find its roots in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. "Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: 'Mine!'" (Kuyper, Abraham). Such a statement seems lofty when one considers a young child learning to read but as that child reads to learn his or her thoughts should be consciously informed by a scriptural meta-narrative. This contextualization sets apart a Christian liberal arts education from the rest. The Christian educator prays and teaches to this end.

This education must value the broad liberal arts tradition descending to us as the legacy of Western civilization both in form and content. The engagement of great ideas in every arena from communication in the classical tradition of rhetoric supported by grammar and logic (trivium), to exploration of the created order in mathematics and the sciences (quadrivium), and the skill and soulfulness of the arts (muses) will form thoughts and lives over time. This kind of active idea engagement is elevating, broadening and stimulating to students. And in these ideas we seek to find the truth with students, for all truth comes from God. This broad classical education in the liberal arts will cultivate a student that thinks and lives flexibly and creatively based on a long tradition of great ideas.

A vibrant teaching and learning culture wherein faculty, students, and all constituents participate correlates with the best student learning. This culture should be at once vigorous and joyful. There is a reason schools were once called gymnasiums. And there is an equally good reason "the wise teacher makes learning a joy" (Proverbs 15:2). Students will learn best in the context of grace, and we all pray they will become adults that enjoy learning for a lifetime. Thus the Christian educator and especially the institutional leader should make the development of this vibrant teaching and learning culture a primary aim.

This brief philosophy of education advocates for the importance of educating children by means of a broad classical liberal arts curriculum in the context of a Christian world and life view, and a vibrant learning culture. This work is advantageous for the child's preparation for a life of service to God and humankind. And, it is beneficial for the world in which generations of children will continue to live and grow.

## **A Philosophy of Leadership in the School Setting The Head of School as Visionary – Head Teacher – CEO**

Leadership in the school setting involves the exercise of principled influence to attain institutional ends. To reach these ends, the Head of School will provide thought, and organizational leadership in three primary arenas, each of equal importance: as visionary leader, as head teacher, and as chief executive officer. As visionary because the organizational leader needs to perceive where the academy is going to lead toward achievement of its highest ends. As head teacher because he (or she can be assumed throughout) leads an academy where teaching and learning great ideas is the paramount purpose and he needs to inspire all constituencies to develop a vibrant learning culture. As chief executive officer, because the Head of School is the sole report of the board of trustees responsible to fulfill academy ends while assuring organizational integrity. The leadership opportunity is a broad and exciting one because the Head of School is leading an organization that changes the lives that will influence the future, and everything rises and falls on leadership.

The Head of School as visionary acts as the ardent proponent of the Academy's unchanging mission and deftly leads it through changing times. He thinks and leads strategically. While managers care for the day to day activities of the school operation, a visionary leader prays, reads, and thinks years into the future in order to set organizational trajectory today. The leader thinks strategically about what could be, or what the academy should become, and how it should influence people. The visionary leader can also sense the obstacles to success that need to be overcome prior to impact, and find a way through the rubble while building on the experience. While the manager thinks about damage control, the leader looks for opportunity in a changing environment, and persuasively communicates this to key people and eventually to all constituencies. The manager surveys others in order to satisfy them, while the visionary thinks, and leads from the front.

The Head of School leads as head teacher and thought leader because he leads an academy where teaching and learning great ideas is the paramount purpose. The title headmaster, sometimes used for school heads, means head teacher (*caput magister*), or the leader of the college of faculty. The head's learning audience includes every constituency related to the organization. He teaches directly, and indirectly, by word and by example the board, the administrative team, the college of faculty, the student body, the parents, the alumni, the donors, the broader community, and those who will join any one of these constituencies in the future. He therefore needs to be an idea leader engaged in the great conversation about the world of the past, the present, and the future, and about all the marvelous subject matter that make up a school curriculum in academics, arts and athletics. As head teacher he is energetically engaged with transmitting and discussing these ideas to and with all constituents because he loves it and he is really good at it.

As Chief Executive Officer, and the only direct report of the board of trustees, the Head of School is comprehensively responsible for leadership toward achievement of organizational ends while maintaining organizational integrity. The CEO leads a management team that works to achieve organizational ends while operating every aspect of the institution's business functions, advancement goals, and educational programs with excellence. While leadership style is not most important, most schools are not best run autocratically or via a laissez faire approach. Rather most school management teams work with the head to reach consensus on significant decisions while the head still retains responsibility for final choices. The Head of School will regularly report back to and work with the board on the achievement of Academy ends with integrity. As chief executive officer the Head of School leads the entire institution forward with excellence.

The effective Head of School will provide leadership as a visionary, head teacher, and chief executive officer. The job description is a broad and exciting one because the Headmaster is leading an organization that changes the lives that will influence the future, and everything rises and falls on leadership.



**References:**

Greg Vigil  
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Patch Blakey  
Executive Director  
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Ryan Brown, Ph.D.  
Founding Chairman of the Board  
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Served as consultant to start up board and  
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Craig Bloodworth  
Board Chair, First Baptist Academy  
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713-214-1293  
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David Self, PhD  
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Spiritual mentor  
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**Reference Statements:**

Patch Blakey, Executive Director, Association of Classical and Christian Schools. "Rodney is an experienced, dedicated leader in classical Christian education who has founded and developed one of the largest classical Christian schools in ACCS. He is a competent and reliable source of wisdom and advice in starting and operating a successful classical Christian school."

Chris Baumann, General Counsel, Responsive Educational Solutions.

"Rodney Marshall is equal parts visionary, administrator, and communicator. He is the rare leader who possesses the ability to envision innovative solutions to complex problems, the management skills to make that vision a reality, and the communication skills to persuasively articulate that vision to others. Having had the privilege to work for Rodney for two years as he led the expansion of a multi-denominational ministry serving 1,700 Christian schools on six continents, I have no reservations recommending Rodney to you as an invaluable resource in your quest to start, grow, or improve your classical Christian school."

Steve Farrar, Men's Leadership Ministries, Author of *Point Man*.

“I owe a great debt to my friend, Rodney Marshall. Rodney is a remarkable classical educator and visionary. He has started some of the best schools in the United States. He knows how to take an educational vision and how to implement the necessary steps to bring the vision to a reality. If you are thinking of starting a school or need wise counsel for your existing school, Rodney would be your man. He has built schools from the ground up and impacted thousands of young men and women. And my son, Josh, who is now a teacher himself, is one of them. But he wouldn't be where he is today without sitting under the tutelage of Rodney Marshall.”

Lieutenant Hunter Grunden, USAF, Alumni, Coram Deo Academy “Unlike anyone else I have ever met, Rodney Marshall knows how to instill a love for learning in young men and women. As the headmaster of Coram Deo, Rodney challenged his students to think critically and to defend viewpoints ardently but gracefully. Capitalizing on his extensive experience in the field of education, Rodney was well versed in the practicalities of ensuring that students were competitive for admission to top tier universities. As a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy and later as a graduate student at Georgetown University, I was well prepared and continually grateful for the investment that Rodney Marshall made in my life as a high school student.”



HOUSTON'S FIRST  
BAPTIST CHURCH

July 16, 2013

To Whom It May Concern,

It has been my privilege to work alongside Rodney J Marshall in his role as Interim Head of School at First Baptist Academy from October 2012 until June of 2013. During this period we met weekly for one-on-one consultations. As a result of these meetings, I feel I have some insight into his spiritual character.

I consider Rodney a true brother in Christ and yokefellow in His service. Although we came from different parts of the country and different Christian denominations, we soon found common theological language, priorities and interests. I found times of refreshment in praying with him and exploring big ideas.

He has demonstrated to me a passion for sound Christian education. One cannot spend an hour with Rodney without catching his enthusiasm for the Bible, the classics and the potential for spiritual transformation. He loves God's Word and measures all education philosophy alongside its canon.

I also discovered a reverence in Rodney, a true sense of wonder, concerning the ministry to which he is so obviously called. Christian education is not just a job; to Rodney, it is God's calling upon his life and worthy of his utmost respect and energy.

Finally, I found that Rodney has a delightful blend of focus for both projects and people. He is winsome and relational. Teachers, staff, parents and students liked to be around him. Yet, at the same time, he maintained a laser-like focus on the tasks that needed to be accomplished.

Obviously, I am a fan of Rodney Marshall and will miss him around the halls of First Baptist. He has my recommendation without qualification.

David Self

Executive Pastor

Houston's First Baptist Church





**First Baptist Academy**  
**Houston, Texas**

May 9, 2013

To Whom it May Concern,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees at First Baptist Academy, please accept this letter of reference for Mr. Rodney Marshall in the capacity of Interim Head of School (IHOS). It is with great pleasure and unanimous opinion that Rodney Marshall is highly recommended for an Interim Head of School position.

Rodney captured our attention during the IHOS selection process which included phone, Skype, and in person interviews with his strong communication skills. Rodney communicates with just the right balance of information sharing with a personal touch. Each conversation with Rodney is appropriate, value-added, and enriching.

In addition to Rodney's strong verbal communication skills, Rodney effortlessly engages people to create and strengthen his relationships with the FBA community. Rodney is always seen in the mix of students, parents and teachers before and after the bell rings; either engaging in conversation, extending a hand, or providing a brief bit of encouragement. Just one example that was noted of Rodney's charismatic style came just weeks after his arrival at FBA during the Primary School's Thanksgiving Feast for both parents and students. Rodney was seen fluently moving from table to table, genuinely greeting each family with a brief conversation of welcome and encouragement. Rodney has a charisma about himself that attracts and draws people into conversation.

Rodney has been mentoring the two principals at FBA. Both of these principals are in their second year at FBA. Rodney has supported these principals in certain dealings involving parent issues, and he has provided guidance at other times. Additionally, Rodney has addressed the faculty to ensure a smooth transition to interim Head of School with emphasis on the final transition to permanent Head of School. Under Rodney's leadership, the faculty culture is starting to settle in and regain focus on true priorities such as admissions and curriculum.

Rodney's years of experience has facilitated his ability to step right into the Head role and immediately assess the current environment. Rodney has pleasantly addressed the Board on his observations within the first month of his onboarding FBA. Rodney has shown tremendous maturity by tempering his speed of change for the sake of the FBA community.

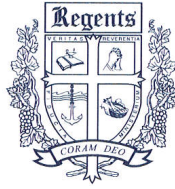
Rodney's compassion was showcased during the national crisis on December 14, 2012 with the incident in Newtown, CT. By the end of the school day, Rodney had composed a well written communication to the FBA community sharing in the national grief of the day's event while confidently providing assurance of the safety measures currently in place on the FBA property.

In summary, FBA has been placed in a much stronger position to achieve our long term goals due to the leadership of Rodney. It is only with an enthusiastic vote of confidence that the FBA Board of Trustees recommends Rodney Marshall for an Interim Head of School position. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at 281-235-6125.

Sincerely,



Craig Bloodworth  
Board Chair, First Baptist Academy



July 25, 2013

Recommendation Letter: Mr. Rodney Marshall

Mr. Marshall led Coram Deo Academy in the Dallas area for many years and educators like me admired the school and in particular his leadership style. In my private school education networks, Rodney is deemed as an admirable leader who enjoys the respect of teachers and administrators.

I have known Rodney for a decade. As he lead and built Coram Deo, I was on a team of people leading and building Regents School of Austin whereby both schools started small and now both are at or more than 1,000 students. Many of the situations that we encountered through the growth years were nearly identical to his trajectory as well. So, as our two schools grew in prominence in our respective cities, I leaned on Rodney regularly for advice and friendship.

When we connect by phone or at regional and national conferences, I recognize that Rodney has a new idea or a new way of considering Christian education in order to improve our enterprises. His creativity causes people to draw to him. And, when they hear his ideas they learn even more.

They learn that he cares about people. He cares about their journey, and he takes the time to hear their situations, and then he extends warm encouragement. From my perspective, that is what I admire about Rodney the most. By his words, actions, and style he demonstrates genuine affirmation to others. Because of his sincerity, I have been strengthened as a Head of School.

I can most easily be reached by email at [rgilbert@regents-austin.com](mailto:rgilbert@regents-austin.com) if you have any further questions. Without reservation, I gladly affirm Rodney as a candidate for leadership in a Christian school.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rod Gilbert". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Rod Gilbert  
Head of School

REGENTS SCHOOL OF AUSTIN

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July 24, 2013

Colleague Reference Letter for Rodney Marshall

To Whom It May Concern:

It is an honor and with great respect that I recommend Rodney Marshall as Head of School. Rodney not only served as the Interim HOS and participated closely with the search committee that eventually found and chose me to be HOS of First Baptist Academy, but developed a transition plan and onboarding program that was non-existent for the school. Rodney and I had several weeks of transition time to discuss our educational philosophies and ideals, and he helped to create an almost seamless transition for the school and me.

I could say without reservation, Rodney would be a wonderful Head of School. His dedication and commitment to providing the highest quality of education available to our students; accompanied by his ability to unite and excite the faculty on providing the most important legacy we can leave students—an excellent Christian education; are by far what best describe him as a person and as an educator.

Rodney has a calm spirit about him that allows him to diffuse even the most tense of situations. However, he is also a man of courage and integrity that will not bend to the winds of political or inappropriate parental pressures. I have observed very positive interactions between he and the school board, parents, faculty members, and even students.

Rodney is extremely organized and has better follow-up skills than most administrative assistants I know. His belief in first, our Creator God, and secondly, in a Christ-centered, Biblically based western education, is one of inspiration and aspiration. Rodney is very comfortable working with financial documentation and budgeting, faculty issues, scheduling, and communication of the school's message to current and potential families.

If you would like to discuss further with me over the phone, please feel free to call me at the number below. I am confident that the next school Rodney Marshall takes the lead of, will be truly blessed.

Sincerely,

Brig A. Thompson  
Head of School  
First Baptist Academy  
[Brig.thompson@hfba.org](mailto:Brig.thompson@hfba.org)  
713.290.2510



July 20, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I had the pleasure of working with Rodney Marshall for three years at Coram Deo Academy. He had a vision for what could be and set things in motion to make that happen. I was a part of the team that raised more than \$825,000; and more was raised after I left.

As a certified fund raising executive, I knew that some of the thinking was slightly outside the norm – fundraising rules say you should not start a capital campaign without first having a successful annual campaign. However, the need was there and the vision was enticing – and it worked. Rodney Marshall was courageous.

I found Rodney Marshall to be a visionary who works to bring the dream to fruition, providing leadership, identifying team members with influence, providing support and ultimately making it happen.

Please give me a call if I can provide further background and information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Louise L. Henry".

Louise Henry, APR  
Principal

Public Relations and Innovative Strategic Marketing and Advancement  
PRISM Advantage operates as a dba name under L&R Henry, Inc.

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