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A conversation with Phil Freelon, founder of an award winning architecture firm in North Carolina's Research Triangle Park, will return again and again to the subject of leadership. During his Loeb Fellowship he took a course in leadership from Ron Heifetz at the Kennedy School of Government. Phil started his own design firm after the fellowship to be more able to lead his own work and career, and he seeks to position his firm as a leader in the project areas in which it specializes. And, like many former Loeb, he seeks now to mentor and foster leadership in those around him.

Phil sought out the fellowship after 14 years in private practice. In his mid-thirties his partnership duties in a firm of 150 were mostly managerial with less and less creative challenge. "I needed a sabbatical from the profession," he said, "in the midst of the daily pressures and responsibilities of a career; you don't have the space and time to consider your future." Early into the fellowship he made the decision to leave his partnership and start his own design oriented firm.

Looking back on his fellowship year, Phil recounts how he and his wife, now a Grammy nominated jazz vocalist, were able to manage their complex situation. They moved to a rural county just before he left for Boston so his wife could begin work as a visiting artist. They had three children in elementary school, the youngest entering kindergarten. Phil commuted to keep up with family life and took his older son to Harvard

for short stays. Hurricane Hugo struck the Carolinas while he was away and, not able to contact his family, he returned to find them living in a hotel. "Somehow day by day you just work it all out," he says, noting that the trips to Boston were good for his older son. "The fellowship has expanded it's support for families since then and that's to its credit."

The most valuable and lasting benefits of the fellowship for Phil are the friendships he made among his classmates and the national network of Loeb Fellows. He

greatly enjoyed the weekly dinners the fellows held at the Doebele House to which they invited the most interesting and stimulating guests they could imagine. His Loeb colleagues have opened doors that have helped his career. "After the fellowship year, if you choose to stay involved, the fellowship is a valuable resource," he says, "I haven't left the fellowship behind, it's a continuing blessing for me."



"I'm the same person as before the fellowship but it has shaped my path through life, and it helped enhance and expand the leadership qualities I already had."

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