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# Northwest Indiana Business Quarterly

*Serving Greater Northwest Indiana  
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minds and their ideas*

**OLGA PETRYSZYN**  
Developer of hybrid hostas



# The Region's Best Leaders

*Readers pick the top CEOs and community leaders.*

BY RICK A. RICHARDS

The best leadership is that done by example. That's what the five people selected as Northwest Indiana's top CEOs and Community Leaders have in common, according to the people with whom they work most closely.

These five provide a quiet example of doing things in such a way that they teach and inspire others to follow the example.

## TOP CEOs

### **DARYL POMRANKE** **Citizens Financial Bank,** **Munster**

Daryl Pomranke joined Citizens in April 2007 with more than 16 years of banking experience, but it was his involvement in the community and the way he worked to build a team at the bank that led Dana Talaga, vice president of marketing, to nominate him.

She says he's a true community leader, having been involved as chairman of the Marquette High School Board of Trustees, serving on the board of Catholic Charities and Calumet College of St. Joseph.

Talaga says Pomranke also is a visionary. "He understands the art of communicating his vision to others to create and execute a strategy to implement the vision throughout the entire organization," she says. "He is very motivating. He develops people he works with. All 260 people at the bank know their role in the strategic plan because of him."

Talaga says Pomranke wants employees to understand the big picture at the bank. "But he wants us to have fun, too. He always is a couple

of steps ahead of us, but he wants us to go with him."

Talaga says she's impressed with Pomranke's open door policy, where he makes himself available to clients, shareholders and employees. "His actions speak louder than words. He motivates by example."

### **GEORGE CRESSY** **Grubb & Ellis/Cressy &** **Everett, South Bend**

George Cressy Jr. has led one of the region's largest real estate companies for a quarter of a century, but it's his ability to connect with others that led Leah Cooper to nominate him as a top CEO.

Cooper, director of marketing for Grubb & Ellis/Cressy & Everett, says, "He's not aloof to business or people. He'll stop in the hall and ask about your family. He cares about people."

Cooper has worked with Cressy for just 18 months, but her observations were echoed by Diane Kazmierczak, his executive assistant for 25 years. "The industry has gone through a very tough period and he has kept people happy. He has guided us through difficult times. He works hard to let people know they work with him and not for him."

After graduating from Notre Dame, he founded Cressy & Everett Management Corp., became a principal of Grubb & Ellis/Cressy & Everett and a partner of Cressy Land Planning Associates.

Cooper says that as a leader, Cressy has helped his employees understand and anticipate the market's peaks and valleys. Away from the business, he donates his time to organizations such as the Community Foundation of St. Joseph County, the

Women's Care Center Inc., and St. Joseph Regional Medical Center.

"He's very intelligent and good at what he does," says Kazmierczak. "He does a lot himself, but he has confidence in his people to trust them to get the job done."

Cooper describes Cressy as detailed with an ability to keep up on all the different projects going on among the company's different employees.

"He does this all so quietly. He's so humble. He's an inspiration," says Cooper.

"I'm proud to work for him," says Kazmierczak.

## COMMUNITY LEADERS

### **JAMES B. DWORKIN,** **CHANCELLOR** **Purdue University North** **Central, Westville**

Purdue University North Central Chancellor James B. Dworkin seems to be involved in everything. He isn't, of course, but such is his dedication to the campus and its outreach that he has become a fixture in LaPorte, Chesterton, Portage, Valparaiso and Michigan City.

Steve Turner, the vice chancellor for administration, noticed that, which is why he nominated Dworkin as one of the region's top community leaders.

"What's not so evident is the way he's advanced the discourse between parties who wouldn't previously talk to each other," says Turner. He says Dworkin's background as a mediator is responsible for that.

"He serves on the boards of the United Way and other non-profits