



General Colin Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with Father Cunningham and U.S. Senator Donald Reigel

Win-win

While Focus: HOPE has larger contracts with corporations and other government agencies, its work with the NAC is “very big,” noted Petrosky, “because with the successes we’ve established, we want to continue that type of research and development and that type of collaboration and partnership.”

While Focus: HOPE has received government funding for a very long time, the NAC provided the organization with its first research and development contract.

The introduction of R&D into the Focus: HOPE production and education cycle thrusts Focus: HOPE’s Center for Advanced Technologies into a new realm. Graduates of the program command lucrative jobs, having had the benefit of hands-on R&D experience.



Metal Matrix Composite piston project

talking about with agile manufacturing for peacetime purposes. In times of a national crisis, that can be put to use for supplying Defense lines.”

“That’s why General Colin Powell came to visit,” added Josaitis. “He saw us as an institution that would provide people and train engineers if the emergency arose.”

Michigan’s U.S. Senator, Carl Levin, acknowledged, this significant partnership in June 1997. “Together, they can achieve what neither could do alone. They can advance the state-of-the-art in designing and building better technology and better vehicles for the Army. This partnership will result in better, cheaper and faster products that benefit both the Army and the commercial automotive sector.”



Virtual learning at Focus: HOPE

Again, the NAC and Focus: HOPE are moving into new and fertile terrain. “Typically you have two different worlds—R&D and production,” explained Petrosky, who served as General Manager for the Center for Advanced Technologies. “Production guys don’t want anything to do with the researchers because it’s going to mess up their production schedule. And, the researchers don’t want anything to do with the production guys because they come up with all these real-world problems that disprove the theories that look good on paper. Here, we’re bringing those worlds together and we’re saying they’ve got to be together.”

Their joint effort on projects such as a virtual learning center, the mobile parts hospital, and metal matrix composite R&D, is also important because it’s a showcase for what’s possible when government agencies, non-profit organizations, small and big business, and academia apply a broader vision to social and technical challenges. “It’s a national demonstration,” said Josaitis.

So far this partnership between Focus: HOPE and the NAC has shown the nation one thing for sure: great things are possible when two people like Dennis Wend and Bill Cunningham end up sitting next to each other on a plane.

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NAC HISTORY

This document is available at www.tacom.army.mil/tardec/nac.

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Joining Together to Focus on Hope

Sometimes it pays to talk with people on planes.

On a 1995 flight back to Detroit from Michigan’s upper peninsula, Dennis Wend, Director of the NAC, met Father William Cunningham, cofounder (with Eleanor Josaitis) of Focus: HOPE. “Dennis and Father started talking,” Josaitis recalled in a recent interview. “Father was talking about how he wanted to do more with the Defense Department.”

Focus: HOPE and the NAC would soon join forces.

Both organizations are all about creating win-win relationships. On their southbound flight, Wend and Cunningham instantly saw how they could help each other.



Eleanor Josaitis and Father William Cunningham

“We had contracts with Detroit Diesel, Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, the Defense Department,” explained Josaitis. “Dennis and Father began talking about TACOM’s technology, and they immediately hit it off. They said, ‘I think we have a plan here. Let’s go.’”

And, off they went. Unfortunately, Father Cunningham lost a battle with cancer in 1997, but Josaitis and Wend have built a firm foundation under the partnership castle built in the air that day.

All three of them – Josaitis, Cunningham, and Wend – shared immense vision and tenacity, and a commitment to a better America through future-driven research, development, and engineering.



Eleanor Josaitis,
Focus: HOPE Executive Director

Paradigm-busters

Before anything new can be created it has to be inspired by someone's imagination. And sometimes, as in the case of such successful joint ventures as Focus: HOPE and the NAC, a number of visionaries are required.

Josaitis respects the NAC because "they are far thinkers... they're not just looking at today." As Focus: HOPE's Director of Government and Public Affairs, Joseph Petrosky, pointed out in a recent interview, "that's the fun of this partnership. You've got two far-thinking organizations that say, 'these are pretty wild ideas but let's figure them out.'"



Joe Petrosky with two commanding generals

Focus: HOPE's historic vision began after the Detroit riots of 1967. It's a vision of racial harmony that has led to a nonprofit organization that employs more than 750 people, has a budget of \$90 million, provides food to the community, and educates young children and "renaissance manufacturing engineers." Wait – what does futuristic engineering have to do with racial harmony?

"Father didn't know anything about manufacturing," noted Josaitis, "and I certainly don't know anything about manufacturing. But,

we both had a passion to make sure that people had jobs. And, we wanted to break the racial barrier by creating jobs for people that would carry them into the future with all the skills that industry needed."

The leaders of Focus: HOPE came to understand the broad context of inequality, and they have attacked that context with a missionary zeal.

Pragmatic Tenacity

In 1981, Focus: HOPE opened the Machinists Training Institute, offering six-month machinist training to youths in its Detroit location. Several years later, a neighborhood factory designed in the 1930's by famed industrial architect Albert Kahn became vacant.

Josaitis recalled Focus: HOPE's response, "We went down there and said, 'All right, we're going to buy that, and we're going to take men and women even further into the future.' We were training machinists, but now we wanted to train engineers. We wanted to change the way engineers were being trained."

Josaitis is famous for the one quality that can turn imagination into reality: perseverance. She often says that "perseverance is the greatest skill you can have." In her 33 years at Focus: HOPE, she has proven that statement to be more than just words. And, when you have a goal to end racism and change the way engineers are educated, you'd better be a determined individual!

It took four years of constant lobbying to get a Memorandum of Understanding signed so that Focus: HOPE's Center for Advanced Technologies could open in the old Kahn building. In the meantime, Focus: HOPE managed to turn that factory into a state-of-the-art facility.



A renaissance manufacturing engineer-in-training

That's the level of pragmatic tenacity needed by someone who successfully bucks the establishment, who manages to open people's eyes to a new and better way of doing things. Focus: HOPE's Petrosky, speaking about what the NAC and Focus: HOPE have in common, pointed out that "at that visionary level there's a partnership." He added, "Then, there's the tenacity to be working together to make it happen."

Changing the way engineers are trained, changing the way tanks and trucks are designed – neither effort would be possible without strong, visionary, tenacious partnerships.

An Unlikely Partnership

How does a civil rights organization end up working on a "mobile parts hospital" for the U.S. Army?

Focus: HOPE and the NAC are collaborating on a number of ventures, the latest being the concept of a mobile parts hospital. Focus: HOPE's Joseph Petrosky explains the concept as "taking the agile manufacturing infrastructure that's developing, putting those technologies to work to supply defense needs, but being able to put it inside a mobile unit and get it up to just behind the front line. You then can immediately supply parts to

the troops and support their mission."

Petrosky describes the way a tank tread is currently made: "you take a chunk of metal and you remove everything that doesn't look like a tank tread."

Focus: HOPE and the NAC are working toward a future that will allow soldiers – and civilian auto mechanics – to create a needed part at the spot where a vehicle breaks down. "This project uses a developing technology that, with the math data and the geometry, you can build that part up. It wouldn't need any machining. What comes out of the machine is the piece that you can immediately put on the vehicle."

The two organizations work well together. Focus: HOPE's state-of-the-art factory and state-of-the-art students need exciting manufacturing challenges.

The NAC needs to convince the nation's most talented, visionary, and productive people to work on dual-use projects—products that will move the nation ahead militarily and commercially. The mobile parts hospital is just one of an unlimited number of such products.



Machinist student at Focus: HOPE

Eleanor Josaitis

Title

Executive Director of Focus: HOPE. The organization employs more than 750 people and includes 51,000 volunteers. It has a budget of \$90 million from government, for-profit companies, and private contributors.

Personal

Married to Donald Josaitis. They have five grown children, live in Detroit, and like to visit their "little place up north." Eleanor enjoys reading and music.

Education and Affiliations

With honorary degrees from Wayne State University, the University of Michigan and Lawrence Technological University, Josaitis is in the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame. The Michigan Women's Foundation named her their 1998 Woman of Achievement and Courage. She was awarded the National Council of Women of the United States, Inc.'s Women of Conscience Award. She serves on the Board of Directors for Loyola High School and the Covenant House.

Philosophy

"We appreciate creative thinkers, people willing to take a risk, people who understand the broad picture."

Why the Defense Department?

Focus: HOPE originally began working with the Department of Defense (DoD) when researchers at Focus: HOPE couldn't get good information from other federal agencies. In the 1970's, Josaitis and Cunningham wanted to find out where the jobs of the future would be. "One of the places we went to get information on where the future was leading us," recalled Josaitis, "was the Defense Department. We got a lot of statistical information. And, we got a lot of very helpful information about manufacturing and machining and where that was going."

These connections between Defense and Focus: HOPE would become critical once Focus: HOPE's renaissance manufacturing engineers effort got underway.



Why Focus: HOPE?

DoD and Focus: HOPE would soon find a mutual need to collaborate. As machining and manufacturing became a larger part of Focus: HOPE's mission, the Cold War ended and DoD was closing down manufacturing facilities across the nation.

"The Defense Department was saying, 'How do we set up our supply lines so that we can still have a strong manufacturing base here and supply our needs in a time of crisis?'" explained Petrosky. "That was very complimentary with what we were