

Minnesota City Councilman Hopes to Encourage Dialogue About the Issues Facing America

By Rachel M. Anderson, Contributing writer

(Bloomington, Minn.) - How do things get done in this country? Jon Oleson of Bloomington, Minn., says projects are completed and goals accomplished when people work together towards a common goal rather than bickering.

Oleson has been a member of the Bloomington, Minn., City Council since 2014, and in that role promotes collaborative problem solving and future planning. "I feel good about helping to figure out how we solve the shortage of decent, affordable housing problem," he said. He is also proud of his efforts to support block captains as they build friendly and supportive neighborhoods.

Oleson says the key to his success, not just on City Council, but in life in general, is his willingness to participate in open dialogue and avoid falling into the trap of partisanship. In his recently released new book, *What Legacy Are We Giving Our Kids?*, Oleson uses stories from his life experiences to discuss human relationship dynamics as well as to take an in depth look at current issues affecting Americans. He hopes his book's approach will encourage productive conversation that makes how we create legacies more thoughtful.

Oleson lays out his goal for his book in its introduction: "I write as a fellow American interested in improving the quality and outcomes of dialogue about the state of the country. My goal, in essence, is to promote good conversation."

"When I started the manuscript in 2010, I was physically stressed out about how partisan and polarized our nation had become," Oleson states. "That's not the way to run a country. It's not a good environment in which to raise kids. I wanted to offer my ideas about the importance of getting back to the basics of building productive relationships, of using skills that produce collaboration instead of division. I wanted to encourage people to go through the process of understanding what is going on and thinking more about what we want the future to look like."

Throughout the years of writing, the 14 kids who call the author "Grandpa" were on his mind. Oleson has dedicated his book to his grandchildren and to all grandchildren. Two dollars from each book sold is being donated to efficient and effective non-profits that support healthy child development and those that work for a sustainable future for their planet.

Every chapter in *What Legacy Are We Giving Our Kids?* features a story the author uses to illustrate a dynamic that affects the quality of American life. Of the more than 100 anecdotes he has written about over the years, 40 made it into the book.

His stories draw readers into an examination of many facets of daily experiences. How much do we shape who we are and how much do others shape us? What does true patriotism look and sound like? Do we consider that people we interact with may be having a bad day? Is America's dominant health care system doing what we



What Legacy

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need it to do? How do we best nurture young people to be successful, create new ideas and businesses, and wisely shape their futures? How do we get political parties to be less combative and more responsive to the need to balance individual and national needs?

Americans have a lot to think about, Oleson notes, but we have what it takes to produce a good legacy for our kids. Oleson hopes readers will gain from his book a realization that each of us needs to problem solve and strategize the future thoughtfully, be open to seeing issues from different perspectives and better understand how what we think, say and do affects the legacy we pass on to our kids.

Here are a few reader reviews of the book. "Each chapter, in its own way, will facilitate discussion relevant to building positive community within our own families, our cities, and beyond," said Mary Rice, a lawyer and single mom.

Darlene Clauson, a casual genealogist, historian and great grandma said, "The stories and examples in Oleson's book trigger the mind to ponder subtle and not so subtle changes in our lives and how they affect our society and our personal lives."

"This book is upbeat and positive (I chuckled in a few places) even though the subjects are important, necessary, and serious. Oleson encouraged me to think about many things I haven't thought about in years," said Mary Peterson, who has been a preschool teacher for 16 years.

Copies of *What Legacy Are We Giving Our Kids?* are available online at www.legacytokids.com. Books can also be purchased direct from the distributor, Itasca Books, as well as from a number of other online retailers.

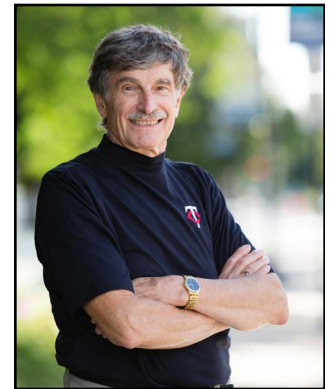
About the Author

The open, personal stories in *What Legacy Are We Giving Our Kids?* illustrate the experience-rich life Jon Oleson has lived. He has taken some hits that have helped him grow, and gotten some lucky breaks that have given him advantages.

Jon's work life has been diverse: summer farm laborer, camp counselor, railroad grunt worker; second jobs as milk man, handyman, pizza maker; and careers that include church youth work, public school teacher and principal, and small business owner.

Now retired, Jon served the City of Bloomington, Minn., as an appointed planning commissioner before being elected in 2013 to serve as a City Councilmember.

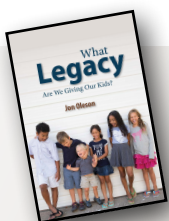
Motivation to help America succeed is no problem! Jon is the proud father of three and is "Grandpa" to 14 kids.



Oleson moved to Bloomington in 2003, shortly after retiring from a 33-year career as a public school teacher and principal. He currently serves as an elected member of the Bloomington City Council.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article and its accompanying photography are available for your use cost-free and copyright free. If you prefer to arrange your own interview with Councilman Jon Oleson, contact Rachel M. Anderson, Publicist, at 952-240-2513 or rachel@rmapublicity.com. Review copies of *What Legacy is America Giving Our Kids?* are available upon request.*

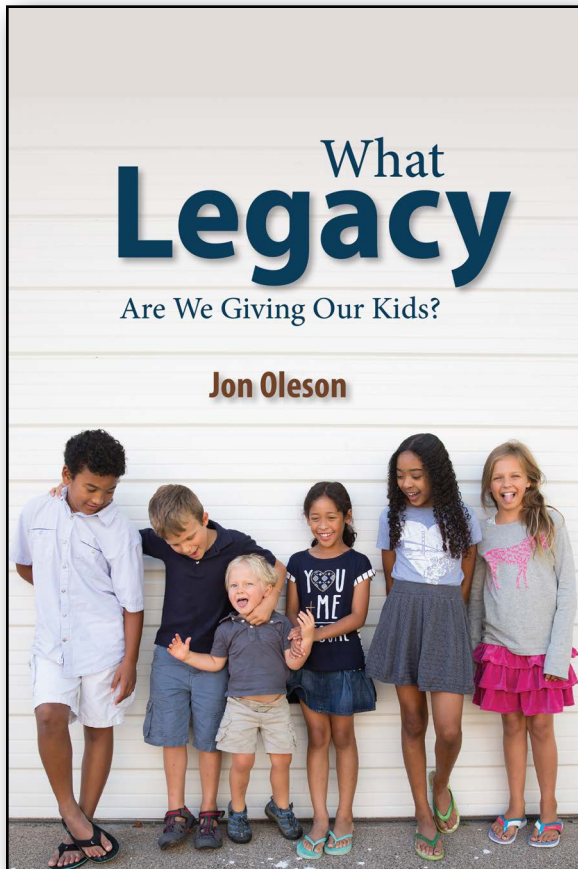
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By **Jon Oleson**

Feature Article
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