

THE BACK OF THE ROOM

[Delivered from the back of the room]

Tonight we lifted up 15 exceptional leaders. Each of them has exemplified the ideals of Scouting and each has led by example. Tonight they will stand before you at the front of the room. But most of their time in Scouting has been spent at the back of the room. I'd like to spend a few moments reflecting with you on the importance of being at the back of the room.

It's counter-intuitive, right? How many of you have seen or listened to the smash hit musical "Hamilton?" In 1780, Alexander Hamilton just "want[ed] to be in the room where it happens," right? Interesting, because for as long as I can remember, from grade school on, being in the room has never been enough – we, and now our children, all are taught to be at the front of the room at all times, whether in school or out. Why? So that we will pay attention, thereby learn more, and so ultimately have the most opportunities in life, every one of us. We are all in the room – no one is left out; we are all in the room working together to make Scouting better for all of our youth, each and every one of them.

In Scouting, we teach adults to stand at the back of the room. Why? Because Scouting units are to be youth led – youth led, yes, but adult facilitated. The back of the room provides the best vantage point for adult mentors and leaders to determine whether our Scouts have learned what we do our best to teach them, about participatory citizenship, making ethical decisions, leadership and personal fitness.

Our Silver Beavers, Distinguished Commissioner and Council Alumnus are the masters of the back of the room; they are some of our most important silent partners. From the back of the room, and many times from outside the room, they provide opportunities for youth. Put another way, these adult leaders don't give fish to Scouts, they teach Scouts how to fish.

To our honorees I say, the Pathway to Adventure Council - your peers - chose you for this honor. Other adults, and the parents of the Scouts you have served so selflessly, wanted you to know how much you have meant to their children and their communities.

This is an important recognition, yes, but it comes with a challenge – a challenge to continue what you have been doing, and to invite others to join you - at the back of the room. After all, it's only “one hour per week,” right? One hour per week per Scout!

And so I close by saying *thank you*, Silver Beavers, Distinguished Commissioner and Council Alumnus for all that you have done, but more importantly for all that you will do, for Scouting.