



JAMESON S. FRENCH
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, QLF – U.S.
ADDRESSES THE QLF ALUMNI CONGRESS

~ ~ ~

Welcoming Remarks
La Pedrera, Barcelona, Catalonia
Sunday, 13 November 2016

The night of our first gathering of the Congress, the moon was the closest to the earth as it will likely be in our lifetime, and we were able to see it from the rooftop of La Pedrera, I began my comments acknowledging the pull of the moon and the natural world. My hope for the Congress on its first night was inspired, too, by the moon—that its brightness and reflection of the sun’s abiding brightness would shine on the Congress and all who had gathered together to support each other and look for solutions in challenging times.

We start this Congress in a very troubled time where the world is embroiled in outright wars and deeply divided countries. The results of our American election have meant celebration for many—but for others, including many in this room it is a time of deep sadness, shock, and depression. Among the most challenging concepts has been the shocking realization of how divided our own United States is.



Jameson French, Opening Reception, The QLF Alumni Congress, La Pedrera, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain - PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, Montjuïc Hill, Barcelona. The Museum is noted for its collection of Romanesque paintings and Catalan art from the 19th and 20th centuries. PHOTOGRAPH BY FESUS





Ben Ben Ami, Alumni Coordinator, Friends Forever, and Jamey French tour La Pedrera before the Opening Reception of the Congress. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, La Pedrera is the iconic Modernist building designed by Antoni Gaudi. PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

Around the world a variety of election results have shown that our deeply held beliefs about climate/environment/wildlife and community conservation are NOT big priorities for people who are focused on their basic survival, or saving their jobs, or their way of life.

Fear of immigrants—fear of violence. These have become the all basic angsts that trump fear about climate change or support of community conservation projects.

So what is our role as individuals, as leaders of our NGOs, as business people and community leaders, and above all as members of the QLF family?

We can start with the quiet confidence that we all know that even in the bleakest of times, individual action and

leadership combined with our connections and social networks can make a real difference. QLF is as good at this as anyone. We see this every day thanks to the ultimate social network team of Larry and Beth.

Are there new ways to use our protected landscapes as a way to help rebuild the trust and establish the personal relationships needed to heal our fractured human world?

Will there be recognition that clean water, clean air, and building adaptive resilience to the changes that are happening with our climate have real value?

There are a few other challenges that we are facing that I want to acknowledge here.

Our global conservation community is aging and our members and leaders (especially in North America and Europe) are older white people—those of us who grew up in the idealistic 60s and 70s. How are we going to attract people of color? A younger generation? More women?

During the next few days of this Congress I encourage us all to explore how can we confront and openly discuss these challenges?

How can we rebuild and strengthen the traditional QLF network and relationships?

How can we find new ways to communicate with and perhaps engage that large part of humankind who do not see relevance in our work?

How can we find new ways to communicate and connect with a younger generation and with people of color in ways that are sincere, real, and relevant?

Perhaps these are overwhelming tasks, but I am convinced that the spirit of QLF and its history will aid our discussions and that in the days ahead many new ideas, new friendships, and new partnerships will evolve.

Thank you all—and welcome to the Congress!

Món Sant Benet, site of the Congress Workshops. Located in the region of El Bages, one hour outside of Barcelona, is the Món Sant Benet cultural heritage center with its refurbished Medieval Monastery of Sant Benet del Bages, the former summer residence of Catalan painter, Ramon Casas. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELIZABETH ALLING





Closing Remarks

Mercat del Born, Barcelona, Catalonia

Wednesday, 16 November 2016

Four days later, as we gathered at the end of an extraordinary Congress, this time at the revitalized Mercat del Born (an historic landmark, a former public market) to close the Congress, I again addressed the gathering to share my thoughts on what I saw emerging from our time together and most especially wanted to acknowledge the work of Larry Morris, my friend of more than 40 years. The night before, Beth had arranged for an outstanding cast of characters to speak about Larry, but as Chairman of the Board, I reserved the right to have the last word. I also thought it might be best not to tell some stories, as 42 years of friendship have meant seeing just about everything, and perhaps the wisdom of age comes from knowing which stories don't need retelling, as much as those that do.

Instead, I wanted to speak of Larry's qualities and that each of these can also be words that have defined QLF during his remarkable tenure at the helm.

LOYALTY

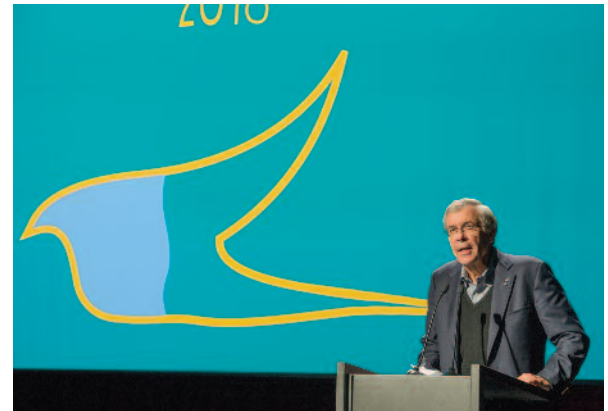
We have all heard about Larry's remarkable sense of loyalty. I need only ask how many people are here, or are connected to QLF because of their sense of Larry's loyalty to them and it becomes clear what an enormous role this has played in the life Larry has led and his impact on all of us.

EMPATHY

Larry also has to be one of the kindest people we all know. Whether it is a family illness, or going to a funeral, or empathizing with a job loss or a bad run of luck, it is Larry who is always there to lend support and also to make sure that others know you need a little extra care. He has always done this so naturally, and we have all been beneficiaries of his empathy at one point or another.

EXUBERANCE

Larry has to be one of the most enthusiastic salesmen in the world. I think I saw him selling the QLF pins to tourists at La Pedrera! How else could we go through 2,000 pins at this event? Maybe that is how he is paying for the tapas tonight. But in all seriousness, Larry's exuberance for QLF has been infectious and encouraging. As he



Jamesy French, Closing Reception, The QLF Alumni Congress, Mercat del Born, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain. An historic landmark and former public market, El Born exemplifies Barcelona's Living Modernisme. PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

always says, 'this should be fun' and his sense of fun, is for many, contagious.

I think these three words also define the QLF network that I have observed during the last three days.

As we go forward under the inspired and skilled leadership of Beth Alling, and we work to create a more diverse and inclusive organization, I urge our extended community to join us on this quest.



On a Cultural Site Visit, Jamey French and brave Congress participants reach the top of the mountain Montserrat with the Benedictine Monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat at its base. Catalonia, Spain - PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY MORRIS



I know we will all continue to be **EXURBERANT** about our ideals and our goals.

We will remain deeply **LOYAL** to all QLF Alumni and our broader community.

And above all, **EMPATHETIC** to those from different or even conflicting political, cultural, and religious backgrounds as we find ways to work together in this world.

We thank Larry for his work over the last 42 years, and we applaud Beth on her new position as President.

Thank you all for a fabulous *Congress*.



Congress participants at the conclusion of the Workshop Plenary Session, Món Sant Benet, El Bages region, Catalonia - PHOTOGRAPH BY GREIG CRANNA

