



Honeycutt Communications



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Honeycutt releases new book: *The Clarke Williams Story*
*HOW A HUMBLE MAN BUILT AN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY COMPANY ON A WING
AND A PRAYER*

(Monroe, LA) Nov 11, 2014 – From humble roots in the 1930s as the Oak Ridge Telephone Company, Clarke McRae Williams set the foundation for the company known today as CenturyLink.

In a new book, *Nice Guy Finishes First: The Clarke Williams Story*, biographer Leo Honeycutt recreates the difficult world that fashioned a humble leader who truly abided by the Golden Rule, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” He put others first as he skirted for years along bankruptcy. Others scoffed that his business model would never work. But it did and he credited faith in God and the power of prayer.

“Clarke Williams proved nice guys can finish first and that following the Golden Rule is the *only* way to succeed in business and in life,” says

nationally respected former U. S. House Majority leader and two-time presidential candidate, Richard Gephardt, now a CenturyLink board member. Gephardt credits Williams' vision as "guided" since Williams could not have known while acquiring mom-and-pop exchanges from 1947 into the 1970s that CenturyLink's value would skyrocket with the advent of cellular telephones. Today, CenturyLink employs 47,000 globally, is Louisiana's only Fortune 200 company, is the state's largest private employer, and is still based in Monroe.

It is a far cry from the 75-customer Oak Ridge (La.) Telephone Company for which the parents of 8-year-old Clarke McRae Williams paid \$500 in 1930. After three years in World War II, Clarke McRae's parents "gave" him the fledgling business which he diligently grew in order to provide improved service to his customers.

Using prayer as a business tool throughout his life, Williams found the Bible enabled him to predict human nature and that, since most never actually read the Bible, he gained an inadvertent competitive advantage. "My problem was trying to balance enough business to take care of the people it took to run it," explained Mr. Williams, who died in 2002. "I had to engage people who knew what to do. If it had been all my figuring on it, we probably wouldn't have gotten anywhere."

"Daddy never raised his voice, never got mad, and always made time for everyone, no matter how busy he was," daughter Carolyn Williams Perry says.

CenturyLink CEO and President Glen Post adds, "Mr. Williams' life still teaches me to be kind and true in all dealings, and that *anyone* can learn to succeed."

Former vice-chair of President Clinton's Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Bill Owens, sums up, "Clarke Williams' life is one of the finest roadmaps I have ever seen for true happiness and genuine success."

Leo Honeycutt is the winner of both the Louisiana Literary Award and the Louisiana Historic Preservation Award for his biography of former governor Edwin Edwards. Honeycutt spent two years researching and writing the Clarke Williams book, finding that, "Business schools all leave out the basic element of leadership –faith– because it's the kind of moral issue this culture shies away from more each day. Clarke Williams embraced it, quietly, humbly, and with class."

After headlining this year's Louisiana Book Festival, a full rollout of ***Nice Guy Finishes First*** commences in Monroe for employees and families at CenturyLink headquarters on Tuesday, November 11, 2014; for the general public at University of Louisiana at Monroe on November 12; Mon-

roe Rotary on November 13; at the West Monroe Convention Center on November 18; Winnsboro Rotary and Every Occasion Bookstore & Gifts in Winnsboro on November 21; A Christmas Boutique in Oak Ridge December 5, Blessings Bookstore December 6; the Chennault Museum on December 9; and the Marion State Bank open house in Farmerville December 19. Books go on sale in November in Barnes & Noble, Books-A-Million, Haneline's, The Toggery, Her Toggery, Ron Alexander, Gingerbread House, Walsworth & Co., Blessings Bookstore, Louisiana Purchases, Muffin Tin, Something Special and Trenton House, or online at www.clarkewilliamscenturylink.com and www.leohoneycutt.tv .

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