

Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This is an archived edition when our program was called Leadership Landscape TV.

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Kirt Jacobs: Welcome to a new partnership between Metro T.V. and Y-Pal The Young Professionals Association of Louisville called leadership landscape where we go inside the minds of local community leaders and allow them a chance to offer some keen insights into how they see themselves but most importantly explore basically what makes them tick. I'm Kirt Jacobs a current wind power board member and today our guest is the distinguished former mayor of the city of Louisville and for those of you who may not know of some of his achievements, allow me a few moments.

He graduated UofL law school in 1969. in 1976 through '83 he became the Jefferson County Commonwealth's attorney. In 1983 he was elected Kentucky attorney general serving until 1988. In 1989 through 1999 he was elected mayor of the former, excuse me, the Jefferson County judge executive. In that same year of '99 he was elected mayor of the former city of Louisville and the last mayor of the city of Louisville prior to the merging of Jefferson County and the city of Louisville, under Mayor Armstrong's leadership. He was instrumental in establishing the VINE network for victims information and notification everyday to notify victims of criminals released from jail. He helped establish the comprehensive land use plan known as cornerstone 2020. And facilitate the creation of more than forty five hundred jobs in Riverport industrial park.

Top all that off many could say he facilitated the current downtown development renaissance with such projects as Fourth Street Live, the Marriott Convention Center, the glassworks building in Extreme Park with that we are honored to have former mayor David Armstrong here today on the leadership landscape. Our first question we want to ask you is, "what drives you?" I mean with that distinguished

career, what drives you to do these things?

David Armstrong: Well you know I think I've got to smile at that. All of that was a labor of love, it wasn't it wasn't work for me. Things that I like to do have always been a labor of love and I don't consider that heavy lifting I don't consider that a laborious sort of endeavor. I look at things when I get up in the morning of what I want to try to accomplish. And for me what drives me I think is a chance to be a participant in my local community, in society in general, with my family you know I want to try to be a lot of things during that day and I've always been that way and I think I owe that to my father who was a workaholic but gave back as much to his job as to his family. So you know there are role models in my life that I have looked at. You know to maximize everything you can do in a day's time. and set goals to do that I think caused me to be very active and to want to be an achiever.

Kirt Jacobs: To follow up on that, who do you credit to be most influential in your life?

David Armstrong: In several stages of my life, my father and mother growing up, clearly were very influential. Strong work ethic from my father, who ran a five and ten cent store, and so you know that's hard work, meeting the public and being sure you were able to stay in business. My mother, because of her dedication to our community in civic endeavors, but also to the family. And to my wife, she's been a great motivator to me. Carol through all of our married life, and helping to raise two children who become very successful in their lives. She's my confidant, she's the person who I unload on or share with at the day's end. So those are the people I credit.

Kirt Jacobs: What would you define as your most defining moment in your life?

David Armstrong: You know, I think it was when I walked up to receive my law degree. It had been a long time goal mind to be a lawyer, and you know there were fits and starts about am I going to be able to achieve this. You know I've got a family to raise, you

know I have got a lot of things have to do at the same time. Can I get there? And having gotten there that day it was just, it was a significant change in my life and from that point on I became very active as a lawyer, but also active in my community and active in politics. So the law has afforded me many opportunities and I think beginning with that with the receipt of my diploma and the admission to the bar. It gave me an opportunity to take advantage of a lot of good things that have come my way.

Kirt Jacobs: If there is one thing, what is your biggest professional regret? In other words, is there one thing you would have done differently looking back? Kind of armchair quarterbacking your life if you will.

David Armstrong: You know there probably are and there probably mistakes I've made and I probably put my foot in my mouth a dozen times in all of these jobs, but in reality I really don't think I have any regrets. You know knock on wood I hope I don't have any in the future. If there are some, I think maybe not have been as kind or as gracious to adversaries that I should have been. I think today I'm far more aware of how people view actions that you take today. So you know I hope that I didn't offend people along the way as a public servant, but there are just certain times when you have to do what you have to do, for the good of the people. So I don't have any regrets. But there may be, you know after I settle down in my life, I might think of a few. Right now, I don't have any.

Kirt Jacobs: On the flipside of that, what do you feel is your biggest professional triumph?

David Armstrong: You know, I won some very close and tough elections that I wasn't predicted to win, but I think getting elected mayor and you know pledging to merge the government the very day I took office. I invited Judge Jackson to be part of inauguration, which was a little unheard of and the other thing was, you know, I made this call to come to the city, and I chose the rebuilding of our city as a cornerstone of my administration. If I would be able the end of four years, be able to merge the governments, been able to have recharged and revitalized our downtown, brought people back here

to live, to work, and to play as well, then that would have been a great accomplishment. I look back now, I was able to help bring all of those things about. So, you know, professionally I think those are among the triumphs that I treasure most.

Kirt Jacobs: What do you find exciting? Maybe about all this or just in life in general, what excites you?

David Armstrong: Well I'm blessed by having left City Hall and teaching for two years at the university of Louisville, where I was recharged by students who asked me wonderful questions and had these wonderful ideas about how to improve our government and how to improve the quality of life that we enjoy here and saying to myself, you know, "can I do something in the private sector to help make that happen?" I've been looking at ways in which to do that, I'm still looking, but I'm also blessed by having a good opportunity at the law firm that I'm in now, Greenebaum Doll & McDonald. I'm on the thirty third floor of the National City Tower and I can look out over west Louisville and South Louisville and I can go across the other side of the aisle and see the rest of the city.

So every morning, I'd get my cup of coffee and I walk around the interior of the building and I see the city that I love, and I write about it and so I'm writing a lot about this revitalization that should not be over with here. And I don't think is over with. I think people are excited about what's happened. The seeds that were planted a few years ago are now. Now that they've taken root and began to blossom people now see the vision of what you can have with a concentrated city core where people will come to work. And where ideas will grow from leisurely play and where, you know, the idea of living here is a reality, and the idea of having institutions to work where you're using your mind more than you used to your brawn all these things are beginning to take place in Louisville, Kentucky, my town.

So, you know, I can sit and just imagine the next ten years and what they're going to be like Louisville is going to be the most exciting place in the world live for those who are listening and trying to decide, you know, "do I stay here longer?" or "is the opportunity

is going to be here?" I think yes. Because of young professionals and because of political leadership. Most importantly because of the people who are here who want change and they want change not to hurt the quality of life, but want change to improve the quality of life.

They want change for their family, their children the most important for themselves. You want to live where you enjoy yourself. And we've got wonderful arts, a wonderful place to as I said all the time during my administration, "we're the place to live work and play," and it's come true. We are that place.

Kirt Jacobs: If you can divine leadership in one word, in the lexicon of the English language, could you come up with one?

David Armstrong: Sure I think it's motivation. Either you're motivated as a leader to accomplish things or you motivate others to help you lead. And I think leaders do both, so the one word I would choose would be motivation.

Kirt Jacobs: When the great day comes, Mayor David Armstrong, how do you want to be remembered?

David Armstrong: The Great Day?

Kirt Jacobs: The great day. One could argue it's a great day.

David Armstrong: I already had my great day. I got married to a wonderful woman.

Kirt Jacobs: Well there you go.

David Armstrong: I would tell you that, I think I would be pleased if they called me a public servant. I'll be overjoyed if they put in there he loved our city.

Kirt Jacobs: Mayor, I want to thank you for being on Y-PAL's Leadership Landscape, it's quite an honor. Thank you sir, and I want to thank you as Kirt Jacobs, board member of Y-PAL, for joining us

today on Y-PAL leadership landscape.

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Kirt Jacobs: Thank you for listening to MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs. This episode was archival audio from when we were known as Leadership Landscape TV. If you have any feedback, general comments, or a recommendation for a suitable guest feel free to email me at kirt@moxietalk.com or catch us on Facebook under MoxieTalk with Kirt Jacobs, or on Twitter under [@kirtjacobs](https://twitter.com/kirtjacobs) or our extensive website at www.moxietalk.com