

NEWS

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For interviews or to request a review copy of *What Matters*

Contact: Al Martin
Impact Communications
913/649-5009
almartin@impactcommunications.org

What Matters?

*New Novel Illustrates the Importance of Passing on Life Stories
and Values to Loved Ones*

Portland, Ore. (February 7, 2011) – Americans routinely focus on the importance of financial planning, retirement planning and estate planning. Each is important for the well being of one's financial life, and for providing for the loved ones left behind after death. But according to authors Cam Thornton and Rod Zeeb, traditional planning only deals with the money we accumulate, not the meaning of our lives. "Most people are concerned throughout their life with money," says Thornton. "How much do they have now, how much will they have in retirement, how much will be left to their heirs? Those are important questions. But we should be equally concerned with the legacy we leave that can have far more impact on our families than the money: our stories, experiences, life-lessons, values and traditions." For Thornton and Zeeb, the distinction is that financial planning passes what one owns, while heritage planning passes who one is.

Their new novel, *What Matters?* (January 2012, \$25.00, Heritage Institute Press, ISBN 1-933694-20-3), springs from the principals of The Heritage Process™ which aims to bridge the gap between the 'products' of traditional planning (like wills and trusts) and the hopes and dreams that parents and grandparents have for their family to be unified, productive and healthy for many generations.

In *What Matters?* Readers meet Martin Forrestal in the last weeks of his life, soon after makes the decision to share his real legacy with his family. Martin wants to ensure that his children, grandchildren and the generations who follow will know who he was, what he believed in, what he fought for, and about the values that guided his life. *What Matters* will help readers to appreciate one of the most important ways that they can help to ensure that their own families can remain unified, productive and healthy for many generations to come.

During a long night of reflection, eighty-two year old Martin identifies the values that matter most to him. His list begins with the value of Love. By the time the sun is rising outside his hospital window, he has identified fourteen values, from Responsibility to Family Unity.

As family and friends come to say their good-byes, Martin records his stories. The action of the novel flows back and forth across more than a century, from an icy mountain cave where he was trapped by an avalanche with his Scout Troop, to a tiny coral island in the Pacific that saw some of WW II's bloodiest combat. From a pioneer cabin in old Montana on Christmas morning, to the sweeping plains of the Argentine pampas, Martin recounts how each of the values on his list were forged into his character. He is not financially wealthy. But he knows that by sharing *What Matters* with generations of his family, he is passing a far more important and enduring legacy than material wealth.

What Matters brims with original stories, heartfelt emotions, and the eloquence of simple truths. Many of the chapters can be enjoyed as stand-alone stories.

About the Authors

Cameron M. Thornton - In his professional career, Cam has asked hundreds of people what personal legacy they want to leave behind. Most say that the long-term unity and health of their family, and the success of organizations they support are what matters most to them. It is a perspective that imbues the work that Cam does on behalf of his clients and their families. Cam earned a BA in Psychology from the University of Southern California, served as an officer in the United States Navy, and earned an MBA from the University of LaVerne, and the CFPTM designation. He lives with his wife, Jane, in Burbank, CA. They have three adult children.

Rodney Zeeb, JD - Rod is the nation's pre-eminent advocate for reforming traditional financial and estate planning to include a true multi-generational perspective. He is the cofounder and CEO of The Heritage Institute and co-developer of The Heritage Process™. He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Willamette College of Law, where he was Editor-in-Chief of the Law Review. He is active in many church, charitable, and community organizations. Rod lives in Oregon, where he enjoys golf, skiing, and spending time with his children and grandchildren.
