

## *Learning to Lead Globally through Critical Thought: Shawano County*

Thank you, Shawano County, for Daniel Leaf, whose service, leadership, and commitment to building a more secure world are important to us all.

**August 07, 2017**

Years later, the date still sticks with Dan “Fig” Leaf ’74: April 12, 1999.

It was on that day that Leaf, piloting a U.S. Air Force F-16, attacked a Serbian convoy that was burning houses in Kosovo and preparing to move on to another village. The fourth vehicle in the convoy was a gasoline tanker.

“I’d dropped bombs before, but the impact had never been that stark,” he recalls. “I had made a decision. It was the right thing to do. I regret people had to die. But in the cockpit, I had the conscious thought that I was grateful for my experience at UW–Madison.”

It was during the throes of anti–Vietnam War sentiment during the early 1970s that the Shawano native learned to formulate and stand up for his worldview. “I was in Air Force ROTC, and my views were challenged at every turn. I had to learn to defend them to my classmates and myself.”





In those days, cadets did not wear their uniforms publicly and weren't held to air force regulation on appearance. When Leaf, who graduated from the UW with a bachelor's degree in 1974, became a senior cadet, he required junior cadets to wear uniforms on campus. "We weren't going to be apologetic," he says.

His decorated, 33-year military career took him to the rank of lieutenant general, serving as deputy and acting commander of the U.S. Pacific Command. A fighter pilot with more than 3,600 flight hours, Leaf also served as vice commander of the Air Force Space Command and director of operational requirements.

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After retiring in 2008, he worked as a vice president at Northrop Grumman and later as director of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. Along with physician Alaa Murabit, Leaf recently formed Phase Minus 1, which consults on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, sustainable development, national security, security cooperation, and defense technology.

"My leadership record is due to the complexity of thought I learned at UW–Madison and dealing with diverse people with diverse viewpoints," Leaf says. "That environment gave me the tools to lead."

