Leadership Series
Roger Nelson: Leadership as a Journey

Thursday, February 11, Roger Nelson, chairman of private equity firm WMG Capital and retired Deputy Chairman of Ernst & Young LLP, spoke to students at The Citadel as part of the Leadership Series. Each speaker of the Leadership Series approaches the topic of leadership differently. Roger Nelson presented Leadership as a Journey.

For Nelson, the journey began by taking risks. In order to illustrate exactly what he meant, Nelson told the crowd how he took a huge risk to become CFO of a publicly traded company. He wanted to be a partner at his firm; however, after being displeased with his employers estimated timeline for such action, Nelson decided to leave the job without another job lined up.

Now he would search for a job but without a resume. Once told, “your resume is your obituary,” Nelson chose to personally contact the CEO of his future employer. Nelson offered the CEO his insight into some of the company’s problems and ways to fix the problems, among other things. He still declined to include a resume. Instead, Nelson requested a meeting and would shortly achieve his goal of becoming the CFO of a publicly traded company, at the age of 27. According to Roger Nelson, an important characteristic of a leader is the ability and willingness to take risks.

Next, Roger Nelson walked the students through his journey in corporate leadership. The philosophy included focusing on the company’s employees and customers, teamwork, creating customer value, knowledge and learning, and profitability.