

Bill Marriott

A lifetime of learning from Scouting, and he's only getting started.

Fulfilling the requirements to be an Eagle Scout isn't easy for anyone, but for J.W. "Bill" Marriott Jr., it was somewhat more difficult than for most. The reason, explains the executive chairman of Marriott International, is that Troop 241 was based in Chevy Chase, Md., within the Beltway of Washington, D.C.

"I was a city boy and didn't have much chance to go camping," Marriott says. "I really had to work hard at it." The Bird Study merit badge was particularly difficult. At the time, Scouts were required to find and identify at least 40 different birds — not easy in the middle of a city. But Marriott kept going on birding walks until he had spotted all 40.

He says the Camping merit badge required him to spend 50 nights outdoors. But wilderness was nonexistent in Marriott's childhood neighborhood, so he spent most of them in his own backyard.

Marriott remembers another prerequisite for the Camping merit badge was to start a fire by rubbing two sticks together, a skill he says was one of the toughest he had to master during his time

in Scouting. But Marriott feels the difficulty of these challenges was an essential part of their benefit.

"It was good to work hard to achieve a goal," says Marriott. And that is one of the reasons why he supports the movement today. Scouting gives boys similar opportunity and encouragement to work to achieve goals, he says.

As an adult, Marriott has long helped the BSA's National Capital Area Council. His support has established the Marriott Scout Service Center in Bethesda, Md., and bolstered the Goshen Scout Reservation near Goshen, Va., which hosts several Scout camps offering camping, hiking and outdoor fun.

More recently, Marriott sparked development for one of the Summit Bechtel Reserve's primary training facilities for leadership — one of his particular interests. "I think that teaching leadership skills is not done very often, especially for young people, and I think this is a great opportunity to teach those skills," he says.

Marriott spent four decades as chief executive of Marriott International, which

has more than 4,200 properties in 80 countries, so his understanding and appreciation of leadership run deep. His own father, J.W. Marriott Sr., started the company as an A&W Root Beer stand in 1927. It has since become one of the most recognizable brands in the hospitality industry.

The J.W. Marriott Jr. Leadership Center at the Summit Bechtel Reserve will offer weeklong courses for youth to help them build core leadership skills. Marriott stresses that these skills should include the ability to teach others as well as the capacity for compassion. "I'm looking for young people to develop leadership skills and to understand the importance of compassion for others," he says. "That's a major portion of leadership. That and to learn to be good teachers, because I think a good leader is a good teacher. And all those can be done here at this learning center."

Compassion is a character trait Marriott saw in his son, Stephen, also an Eagle Scout. Despite Stephen's own struggles with a chronic and debilitating illness that took his life in 2013 at age 54, Marriott says his son always put others first.

"He was a very proud Eagle Scout, and one of the



highlights of his life was the Scouting experience," Marriott says. "We revered him because with all his physical ailments, he never complained or said, 'Why me?' It was always, 'What can I do to help somebody else?'"

Stephen was involved in Scouting as an adult and served the National Capital Area Council like his dad. As his illness progressed, Stephen lost his hearing and vision and experienced other physical debilities. But he had a long and distinguished

career working for Marriott International and was a key part of helping the company develop a global reputation for embracing diversity. In recognition of Stephen's life and his values, the Marriott Leadership Center at the Summit Bechtel Reserve will stress accessibility.

Bill Marriott considers supporting Scouting to be an opportunity to celebrate his son as well as the values that have shaped his own career and the path of the company founded by his father. Scouting, he says, provides

J.W. "Bill" Marriott — an advisor to the BSA's Report to the Nation board and then-CEO of Marriott International Inc. — poses with President George W. Bush and youth representative C.J. Williams in the Oval Office during the 2006 presentation of the Report to the Nation.

invaluable guidance and training to strengthen the character of youth. "It develops a side of a young man's life that he wouldn't get in school or college," Marriott says. "It's a wonderful extra dimension in the development of the life of a young person."



J.W. "Bill" Marriott Jr. developed an early passion for giving during his time in Scouting. He was raised in the family hospitality business, where he helped his brother Richard E. Marriott (above, from left) and father J. Willard Marriott grow Marriott International into a global lodging company with more than 4,200 properties across the globe.

FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF THE MARRIOTT FAMILY; (2) ALAN WONG/GETTY IMAGES

WHY WE GIVE Because Scouting really makes a difference.

FOR BILL MARRIOTT, supporting Scouting is a way to enable and encourage the spread of values that have sustained him personally and professionally. It is a view shared by many in his family, which boasts nine Eagle Scouts, including Marriott himself, his sons, his son-in-law and his grandsons.

"The family rallies around good Scouts

and tries to set an example for Scouts because the Scouts set an example for them," Marriott explains. "The Scout believes in honesty and integrity and a good moral code."

Marriott also enjoys bringing Scouts on as employees at Marriott International. That's because the company's corporate culture values typical Scout qualities such

as leadership, teamwork and caring for others, including other employees as well as guests. "Scouting is a very important factor in the lives of young men," Marriott says.

