

GRACIOUS PROFESSIONALISM

A FIRST CREDO

Dr. Woodie Flowers, *FIRST* National Advisor and Pappalardo Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, coined the term "Gracious Professionalism."

Gracious Professionalism is part of the ethos of FIRST. It's a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

With Gracious Professionalism, fierce competition and mutual gain are not separate notions. Gracious professionals learn and compete like crazy, but treat one another with respect and kindness in the process. They avoid treating anyone like losers. No chest thumping tough talk, but no sticky-sweet platitudes either. Knowledge, competition, and empathy are comfortably blended.

In the long run, gracious professionalism is part of pursuing a meaningful life. If one becomes a professional, and uses knowledge in a gracious manner, everyone wins. One can add to society and enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that you have acted with integrity and sensitivity. That's good stuff!

As a *FIRST* volunteer, it is important to understand that Gracious Professionalism is a *FIRST* wide credo. It is simply a best practice for participants and volunteers alike. It is a *FIRST* Community initiative that benefits us all. As a *FIRST* volunteer you have been given the opportunity to take the lead in demonstrating the essence of this most important *FIRST* tenet.