



Global
Business Leadership

SHAKING THE GLOBE NEWSLETTER

Courageous
Decision-making in
a Changing World



To Be, or Not to Be, Dumb

Volume 1, issue 5

I have been traveling a great deal lately. When I travel, I have the opportunity not only to observe and experience different cultures and ways of doing business, but also to think about those observations and experiences in the context of globalization and America's current economic woes. In particular, I am struck by a theme that arose during the last U.S. presidential election—that of anti-intellectualism.

Anti-intellectualism, as presented and defined in the media, addressed the proclivity among many voters to eschew sophisticated arguments, theoretical analyses, and even proper grammatical expression from their candidates in preference for simple conclusions focused on the voters' personal needs. This approach came naturally to the Republican candidate for vice president, and each of the other three general election candidates seemed, from time-to-time, to "dummy down" his rhetoric to appeal to the voting public.

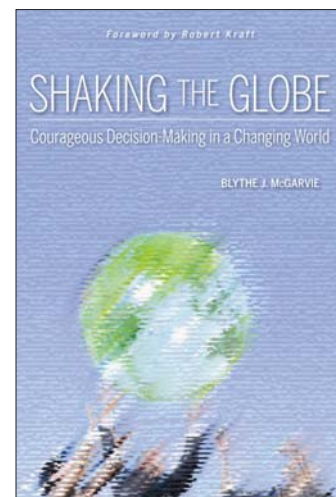
But, anti-intellectualism is perhaps even a broader issue that limits American business opportunities and successes. Americans today seem to prefer "dime-store novels" to good fiction, avoid in-depth news programming, and denigrate philosophy and sophisticated religious discussions as threatening—even un-American. According to a report from the National Endowment for the Arts, more than 40 percent of Americans younger than 44 did not read a single book—fiction or nonfiction—during the course of a year. The proportion of 17-year-olds who read nothing, unless required to do so for school, more than doubled between 1984 and 2004.

*Anti-intellectualism has long been
the anti-Semitism of the businessman.*

— Arthur Schlesinger Jr.



McGarvie with former Northwestern University President **Arnie Weber**, who exemplifies the ideal of a broad-minded public intellectual.



Blythe McGarvie's *Shaking the Globe*, with a foreword by Robert Kraft, was published by John Wiley & Sons in February 2009. Purchase it at these or other fine book sellers:



Europeans and Asians evince no similar aversions to thinking. Every three years, the Program for International Student Assessment ranks the education levels of 15-year-olds around

the world. According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, the latest test in 2006 revealed that of the 30 industrialized nations surveyed, “American students’ science scores lagged behind those of their counterparts in 20 countries, including Finland, Japan, Germany and Belgium....The numbers from the math test were even worse: The U.S. came in 25th.”

*History is the interpretation of the significance
that the past has for us.*

—Johan Huizinga

I present to you today an essay written by my husband, **Dr. Mark McGarvie**, that tackles the roots of America’s anti-intellectualism—and he does not find them in laziness. Admittedly, I am biased; but, when Mark presented his paper at Harvard University this spring, his peers begrudgingly accorded him respect for his scholarship and thinking. As I offer it to you, I wonder how many of my regular readers will take even one-half hour of their days to read a double-spaced sixteen-page scholarly essay. I look forward to your comments and reactions. If few of you bother to read this, what does that say about American anti-intellectualism?

[Click here to read the essay....](#)

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Queen Noor of Jordan, American-born and a globe-shaker, with McGarvie.

Global Perspective: Items of Note

Watch Blythe McGarvie discuss global business on PBS’s ***What Matters*** television, hosted by Cathy Lewis (video feed: [streaming](#) | [download](#)).

Blythe McGarvie’s first book, ***Fit In Stand Out: Mastering the FISO Factor***, has just been translated into Russian. It is also available in Spanish and Hindi editions.

LIF Affiliate Update:

Laura Martin of **Capital Knowledge** releases reports on **Disrupting the TV Ecosystem**, **Investment Implications of 1Q 2009 Ad Spending**, and **Yahoo**.

LIF affiliate **Cathy Higgins** releases volume 6, issue 2 of the ***Straight Talk Coach : Becoming Relevant Today: What Really Matters***.

The *Shaking the Globe Newsletter* is written for decision-makers who recognize the critical importance of our interconnected world for financial stability and growth. Blythe has been called the “antidote to Lou Dobbs” because she shows how to strengthen, rather than weaken, our global community. (URLs: www.BlytheMcGarvie.com and www.LIFgroup.com)