

Obituary for Carl Hughes Leonard*



Carl H. Leonard, of Falls Church, VA, died peacefully of complications from multiple myeloma at INOVA Fairfax Hospital on May 8, 2026. A retired Career Minister in the Senior Foreign Service, he served for 30 years with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Following his retirement from USAID, he joined ACDI/VOCA and led the organization as its President and CEO.

Born in Chicago, IL, on November 4, 1948, to Carl Leonard and Shirley Ann Jones Leonard, Carl spent his early years in Clarendon Hills, IL, and attended high school in Hinsdale, IL. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude, from Vanderbilt University with a BA degree in economics, and at Vanderbilt, fell in love with his future spouse, Glynne Clair Borden. After completing an MA degree at the University of Wisconsin in Ibero-American Studies, he began his USAID career in 1971. Early assignments included Washington, DC (1971-73 and 1979-1983), Bolivia (1973-1975), and Peru (1975-1979). During the 1983-1984 academic year, he was a Princeton University Mid-Career Fellow in Public Affairs, followed by an assignment as the USAID Deputy Director in Honduras (1984-1988).

Over the next 10 years, Carl led large missions as the USAID Mission Director in Costa Rica (1988-1990), Bolivia (1990-1995), and El Salvador (1995-1997). He returned to Washington, DC, in 1997 to serve as the Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, and in 2000, as Acting Assistant Administrator. He retired from USAID in 2001 after a distinguished career and numerous awards, including two Presidential awards and a Distinguished Career Achievement Award. The latter award noted:

In recognition of an extraordinary and illustrious 30-year career with USAID in which Mr. Leonard demonstrated exceptional vision, leadership, direction, and management of the Agency's programs and staff including the current [2001] Plan Colombia Program, El Salvador Peace, and Bolivia Alternative Development. His lasting contributions, tremendous achievements and significant impact upon U.S. foreign policy objectives in the LAC region have been carried out with rare diplomatic distinction.

Carl joined ACDI/VOCA in 2001, and was selected as President and CEO in 2005, a position he held until his full retirement in January 2014. Under his leadership, the organization achieved a sound financial foundation; grew sustainably; and brought expanded economic opportunities for farmers, rural communities, enterprises, and small businesses around the world. In retirement, Carl actively pursued his keen interests of travel, fly fishing, genealogy research, writing family history, and spending time with

family and friends. He is remembered fondly for his kindness, integrity, resolve, humanitarianism, leadership skills, and sense of humor.

Carl is survived by his wife of 53 years, Glynne Borden Leonard; son Curtis Owen Leonard and daughter-in-law Michelle Melara Leonard; granddaughters Maggie Carolina Leonard and Ruby Raquel Leonard; daughter Emily Leonard Ayubi and son-in-law Suliman Ayubi; sister Sharon Leonard Eisenstat and brother-in-law Theodore Eisenstat; brother Charles Curtis Leonard and sister-in-law Susan Smith Leonard; brother-in-law Stephen Borden; and numerous nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation in Carl's memory to the International Myeloma Foundation (<https://www.myeloma.org/>) or ProMujer (<https://promujer.org/>).