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My Dream for Aileron:

I've always been a dreamer. I was taught to believe in "the great American dream" by my parents, who were part of the greatest generation in our country's history. In 2005, I wrote a book entitled "Dream No Little Dreams" that depicts my life's story, and my journey pursuing my own vision of the American dream.

Traveling on this long and winding path, I learned that a dream must become a vision before it can become a reality. This conversion requires a plan. I learned that all successful, sustainable organizations bring their vision to life through long-term strategic planning and the fundamentals of professional management.

My first business started with the dream of its founder, Paul Iams. I came along about two decades later, and over a period of years was able to articulate a vision, put a plan together and the rest is history. During that period, I stumbled across the concept of professional management.

The evolution of Aileron started back in 1994 with my dream of using my resources to help entrepreneurs, and paying back the mentors for all the help and guidance they gave me throughout the years. We developed a vision statement and put a strategic plan together, established Aileron as a non-profit organization complete with world-class facilities and organizational plans. My hope is that Aileron will forever meet the needs of future generations of entrepreneurs, practicing what it preaches - using professional management to guide its mission and shape a brighter future for our communities.

Dream no little dreams...for they have no magic to move men's souls.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clay Mathile".

## Purpose of Founders Vision

The primary purpose of this vision is to provide future generations of family, board members, employees and the community we serve a clear understanding behind my original intent and dream for Aileron. It's also meant to be shared with others if it helps further the cause or spirit of Aileron. It should provide "perspective, context, focus, and core beliefs" for future decisions and direction, while not handcuffing the organization to a specific set of rules that might someday be obsolete.

## Core Focus

The focus of this organization is to serve the small business owner and their team who want to take their organization to another level, but also recognizes that this can't happen unless they drive change using a system of professional management. These individuals may have dirt under their fingernails, or they might work in a sterile high-tech environment - but regardless of their industry, product, or service, these individuals are passionate leaders who are willing to be vulnerable, growth minded and driven by purpose.

## Cornerstones

- **Trusted Friend** – I was a business owner and know firsthand that this can be a lonely and stressful job; you can't share your problems with your employees, your friends may not understand the stresses and challenges of owning a business, and you don't necessarily want to always bring your problems, worries, and thoughts home with you. You wear many hats, juggle a lot of responsibility and risk, and can't always afford to bring in all of the resources that you need. Sometimes it's hard to find unbiased thoughts and perspectives. My hope is that Aileron will be one of the trusted friends of a business owner: a friend who listens, is reliable, and helps where they can.

A trusted friend challenges you to think, and gives you honest feedback - even when it's something you don't want to hear. A trusted friend has your best interests at heart, helps you achieve personal and professional growth, and doesn't have a hidden motivation behind their advice and questions. A trusted friend has respect and cares for you as an individual and as a business owner, accepts your uniqueness, and shows genuine concern for your well-being.

To that end, I hope Aileron always provides a confidential environment where business owners can share and discuss all of their thoughts, concerns, and dreams.

I would like to see an ongoing two-way relationship, where both parties contribute and benefit; the business owner grows, and Aileron fulfills its vision and mission. Ultimately, a friend is a guide, a sounding board, and one that can be counted on every time (and for a long time). Aileron should always strive to be one of the business owners' trusted friends.

- **Professional Management** – Professional management is a philosophy and attitude practiced by business owners and leaders that drives toward the optimal performance and sustainability of an enterprise. This human endeavor pays its greatest dividends when people are morally invested and driven by the desire to improve. As with any system, professional management has a series of fundamentals that set direction, enable successful operation, and provide the necessary controls for a business to achieve its desired results. I've seen the fundamentals of planning, decision-making, climate setting, leadership, people development, and establishing controls and structure stand the test of time. These have served as a sturdy foundation for countless successful organizations.

This philosophy of professional management stems from Frederick W. Taylor's theory of *scientific management* in the early 20th century, and has evolved into today's definition of *professional management* from the influence of W. Edwards Deming, Peter Drucker, and many practicing believers. Its focus and definition will continue to evolve and change over time, and requires a continuous learning process to keep abreast of those changes.

- **Sustainability** – In order for Aileron to achieve its vision of raising the quality of life, it must become a sustainable organization that lasts as long as the need is there. It should stand as a beacon of hope that is rock solid, trusted and enduring. To start, I would expect that Aileron always live and model professional management. By professionally managing our enterprise, we will properly serve as responsible stewards of our resources, including people, property, and financial assets.

I also would expect that Aileron develops a business model that allows them to live within in their means, while trying to have the greatest impact they can. I believe our business owners can increase the sustainability of the organization by giving their time, talent, and treasure; together, we can perpetuate the cycle of learning, doing, and giving, so that the organization – and the businesses we serve – will last for generations to come.

- **Growth & Development** – At the end of the day, I will smile if I know we positively impacted individual lives and helped people grow and develop. I will be satisfied if this growth was achieved without compromise, by improving the ability of future generations to grow and prosper. In more concrete terms, our communities will see jobs created or maintained, privately held businesses will be sustained through the years and decades, wealth will be created for the entrepreneur and for others, and perpetual innovation will drive growth and new opportunities.

The business owners will provide healthy cultures for their employees to prosper, money will be invested in helping others grow and develop, and we will all embrace the value of learning, doing, and giving in an ever-changing world. Personally, our business owners will experience less stress, increased happiness with their personal and family lives, and an increase in confidence – all as a result of an increase in control and competency. The desired outcome is personal growth that fuels organizational growth, which in turn fuels community growth.

### To paint a clearer picture, here is what I hope Aileron doesn't become

- **A formula for owning a business** – I hope it doesn't become an institution that tries to formulize owning a business, eliminating the relationship with individuals and taking their specific needs out of the equation. While there are definitely similarities and common trends businesses share, each organization is faced with unique challenges and timing. Meeting these unique needs should be the focus and priority.
- **An Academic or Theoretical Institution** – One of our greatest strengths is the “practitioner perspective” that's provided by the individuals who facilitate our offerings and work with the business owners. These are people who have lived, breathed, and implemented professional management in the real world. My hope is that we will continue to augment the marketplace with an organization that teaches from practical experience and relevant approaches, rather than become an educational institution whose approach is more rooted in theory or academic practices.

- **Internally Focused** – I hope much of the focus and energy is spent on understanding and listening to our customers – especially the established small businesses who doesn't always have the opportunity to be heard.
- **An Environment with Hidden Agendas** – Today the trust built with our clients is a direct result of our pure motives to pay it forward which is why Aileron was established as a non-profit. I want to help business owners because that is what my former mentors asked of me as repayment; it's not with the intent that I will get anything from this relationship. Aileron is not meant to be a political, religious, or advocacy institution, but a place that welcomes, with open arms, business owners of diverse backgrounds who want to grow their company

### In summary, I leave you with this

- I believe that free enterprise is one of the instrumental components of America's free society, and that entrepreneurs perform the noblest acts of anyone in a free society by risking their capital, intellect and time to create new products, jobs, opportunities and wealth for themselves and others. They have been instrumental in the past, and will be needed even more so in the future, as one of the influencing factors to growing and maintaining our country's wealth, freedom, and prosperity.
- I believe professional management can help all organizations - not just privately held businesses. If we can provide this to others, without impacting our primary mission of serving the business owner, I hope it is shared.
- I believe in a philosophy that focuses on Customers, Culture, Products, and People. I believe that the best way to shape a successful culture is to be honest, do your best, and treat others with dignity and respect.
- I believe in dreams, yet I believe even more in visions. A vision is a dream with a plan. You can't just plan, and you can't just dream; it's the combination of the two that opens the world to new heights.
- Aileron will be endowed with an initial gift from Mary and I in the hopes that it can have a solid foundation to build from and does not become dependent on short-term or victim to the varying economic conditions.
- I expect that Aileron will be an ethical and professionally managed organization that must work as part of the community, and should always live as a responsible organization.
- I believe in the perpetual cycle of learning, doing, and giving, so that the organization and businesses we serve, will also serve for generations to come.
- I believe that by being a trusted friend to the business owner, focusing on professional management, and becoming a sustainable organization, we will help to drive growth and development and raise the quality of life for the individual, for the community, for the country, and even the world.