

The sources of inspiration for the founding of Leonardo Academy include a bunch of Midwesterners (by birth or migration):

John Muir (1838-1914)

John Muir arrived in Wisconsin from Scotland as a boy. He invented wooden clockwork machines while at the University of Wisconsin, and two in particular helped him during school. One would wake him up in the morning by physically dumping him out of bed, and another helped him study. This clock-driven desk housed his school books and at designated times would present a book, open it up as well as retrieve it and then open up the next! But he is best known as an American naturalist and advocate for the preservation of the U.S. wilderness. He walked from the Midwest to the Gulf Coast to see what there was to see of the land he loved. Muir explored the Sierra Nevada mountain range and successfully promoted the creation of the Yosemite National Park and founded the Sierra Club.

John Muir quote: “When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

Aldo Leopold (1887-1948)

Aldo Leopold changed how we think of the land with his “land ethic” philosophy and is considered to be the father of sustainable land management.

Aldo Leopold quote: “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

Farrington Daniels (1889-1972)

Farrington Daniels was a pioneer of the modern direct use of solar energy. He authored the book, “The Direct Use of Solar Energy” in 1964 and was the Director of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Solar Energy Laboratory. Daniels explored many applications of solar energy, and in particular believed that solar energy would be very important in the developing areas of world. (As a boy, Leonardo Academy founder Michal Arny observed one of Farrington Daniels cement solar stills on the Lake Michigan beach of Farrington Daniels vacation home in

Door County, WI.)

Ronald Coase (1910 -)

The author of two influential articles: "The Nature of the Firm" (1937), which introduces the concept of transaction costs to explain the nature and limits of firms, and "The Problem of Social Cost" (1960). His work has been an important source of the inspiration for the use of market mechanisms in environmental regulation and improvement.

Wilbur (1867-1912) and Orville Wright (1871-1948)

Wilbur and Orville Wright were two bicycle mechanics who let nothing get in their way, including their determination for manned flight. The lift calculations for wing cross sections available at the time were wrong, so they built a wind tunnel and figured out what would work through trial and error. They could not find a suitable engine for their plane so they went to a foundry and had the necessary pieces cast to make their own engine.

Orville Wright quote: "If we worked on the assumption that what is accepted as true really is true, then there would be little hope for advance."

Wilbur Wright quote: "We could hardly wait to get up in the morning."

Frank Lloyd Wright (1867-1959)

This famous Wisconsin architect is known for his Prairie Houses, open structures that blended with the natural landscape and utilized indigenous materials.

Frank Lloyd Wright quote: "Think simple" as my old master used to say - meaning reduce the whole of its parts into the simplest terms, getting back to first principles."