MEMORANDUM

TO: Conference Members
FROM: Executive Director
DATE: September 8, 2010
RE: Question regarding wording of Tradition Twelve

The WSO was asked at the 2006 WSC to send a copy of questions it receives from Conference members and our responses to all Conference members so that they can share leadership by responding to recurring questions in their Areas. The WSO believes that the following question and our response might be one of those topics.

Question: Why is the wording of the Al-Anon version of Tradition Twelve, which states "principles above personalities," different from the A.A. version, which states "principles before personalities"?

Answer:
The following quote by our cofounder, Lois W., from pages 177-178 of *Lois Remembers,* describes how the Al-Anon Traditions were developed:

> Among other activities, I had been working on an adaptation of AA's Twelve Traditions. Bill helped me a lot with this. The Al-Anon Traditions, which the groups accepted in September 1952, are the same in spirit and are in the same order as AA's. In other words they are as much like AA's as possible.

From the earliest drafts of the Al-Anon Traditions, the wording "principles above personalities" was always used. In an effort to discover why this is different than A.A.'s wording, our search took us to a gift from Bill W. to the Al-Anon Headquarters in 1956. He gave the WSO a 1955 copy of the second edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. (The first printing of this book did not include A.A. Traditions, as they were not developed until the late 1940s, and were not approved until 1950.) The second printing includes "short" and "long" versions of the A.A. Traditions. "Principles above personalities" was used in the short version and "principles before personalities" was used in the long version.

Al-Anon's use of "principles above personalities" is consistent with A.A.'s original short version, and has remained unchanged since 1952. We do not know why A.A. decided otherwise. Regardless of the reason, this is an outside issue for Al-Anon.