

## Comments by R. Gary Rozier, DDS, MPH, Editor, *Journal of Public Health Dentistry*

When Myron called to ask if I would be here, I indicated that I would welcome the opportunity to comment on the contributions of the Doherty Team. Then he said that I would have to be entertaining. After some self-acknowledgment of my ineptitude as an entertainer, and definite incompetence as an after-dinner speaker, both characteristics that Myron agreed to without any hesitation at all, he said why don't you talk about the time you were behind on meeting an editorial deadline and Joe went ahead and wrote the editorial for you and put your name on it—or the time you forgot to give the correct instructions to the *JPHD* publisher and dozens of extremely heavy boxes of journals showed up on the Doherty's doorstep rather than being shipped to Geneva, or ... "Myron, enough, I got the point."

The professional accomplishments of Joe and Helen are well known—the impact of the dental public health programs Joe has administered; his professional contributions to this association, the ABDPH, and many others; and his contributions to dental education; and Helen's work with the association and the positive image that she has created for dental public health through the contact people have with the association through her. But when I think of the Dohertys, the word that always comes to mind is "commitment." They both have lived a life of commitment to dentistry, dental public health, and public health.

Think for a moment of those who have made a difference in your life. We all have someone in both our personal and professional lives who have influenced us in various ways. Professionally, we can think of those who took us under their wing, who guided us, sometimes quietly, sometimes not so quietly, who provided the foundation for our interest in and later growth in dental public health—family members, teachers, friends, or others. This type of mentoring is probably more true for this group than others because of the circuitous pathways by which most of us probably came to be in pub-

lic health.

Joe and Helen have served as role models for me personally more than most of you could ever imagine. You see, Joe was my school dentist and Helen was his assistant while she was pregnant with their first child. Joe started his career in dental public health in North Carolina as a state public health dentist assigned to Robeson County, a very rural and poor county in southeastern North Carolina where I lived. Dentists who worked for the state at that time used portable equipment to deliver dental services on site. Joe and Helen came to my school in St. Pauls.

While I can't prove it, they must have had some sort of subliminal influence on my career choices. Soon after they left I probably began asking my teachers questions like: why is our town's water not fluoridated? Why do some of my friends and classmates have large black holes in their front teeth? And why can't they see a dentist to get them fixed? And my teacher changed from saying: "I bet you will be a math teacher when you grow up" to "I bet you will be a public health dentist when you grow up."

On a more serious note, our paths did not cross again until more than 20 years later when I became involved with the AAPHD, and Joe and Helen were already establishing themselves as the backbone of this association. I have often heard Joe say that you never know when and where you might have an influence on someone, so you should always take the time to talk with anyone about dental health. I believe that his influence has been as pervasive nationally as it must have been on children in Robeson County more than 30 years ago.

The most fortuitous day for the association was the day that Joe called Helen at lunch asking if she would consider the position as administrative secretary for the association. I can imagine him saying, "I have a good job for you. The AAPHD, a small but influential organization, is looking for an administrative secretary. The job

requires a lot of work, the organization has no money—in fact, it is literally broke—and a guy name Myron Alukian is president."

Fortunately for us, she took the position with the association anyway, and provided the administrative leadership for it to blossom into a full-service professional organization. My first AAPHD meeting was a one-day event, with a scientific program in the morning, an awards luncheon, and a business meeting in the afternoon. Look at us now!

My wife, Jeanette, and I probably have considered more than most the responsibilities of Helen's job. It seemed that Joe continued to cultivate interest in several husband-and-wife teams to replace them when the day finally came for them to step down. On occasion, they would talk to Jeanette to see if she was interested in replacing Helen. One time after some discussion of the job and its responsibilities, Jeanette asked me how much time it involved and how much money it paid. My answer came quick and to the point—a lot and not much!

On another occasion, Jeanette traveled with me to a mid-year meeting of the Executive Council here in Washington. As usual, Helen had worked hard and effectively to make the arrangements for the meeting at this very quaint hotel. The night everyone was arriving for the next day's meeting, the hotel air conditioner went out, and I believe the fire water sprinkler system went off, forcing the hotel to cancel our reservations. Helen scrambled to find another hotel and to let us know where the meeting had been moved; but most of us were already en route and could not be reached. Jeanette and I arrived at the original hotel, lugged our baggage in, only to have to turn around and head for the other hotel. As soon as we sat down in the car, Jeanette commented: "No thanks!" I asked what she was talking about, and of course she had made the decision at that very moment that Helen's job was not one that she wanted, simply because of the tremen-

dous responsibility and never-ending challenges.

So, it is Helen's diligence and devotion behind the scenes that have made this association work so well.

We had all hoped that Helen's and Joe's retirement from association activity would be a Michael Jordan-type retirement—that they would miss us so much, they would decide not to retire. But apparently that is not going to happen. However, I for one was not willing to let go of Joe's talents completely. I asked Joe to assume the role of editor of the Archives for the *JPHD*, and I am pleased to announce that he has agreed to continue his work for the

association in this capacity. Preparation of this feature requires a deep understanding and appreciation of the history of public health and the significance of current events, so that appropriate ones can be logged for the record. I can think of no better person to fill this role for the association.

I'm working on some role for Helen as well, but I'll warn you now, Helen, it will be one of those "a-lot-and-not-much" type of jobs!

I consider the Dohertys close personal and professional friends. Their e-mail address was the first one that I put in my address book way back when. I join everyone in wishing them

both the best with this next phase of their lives.

Because Joe was born and raised in Detroit, I thought it would be appropriate to close with the slogan used by Berry Gordy, who went from shining shoes in the streets of Detroit to heading one of the most successful record companies in the world, Motown Records. His slogan was: "It's what's in the grooves that counts."

In the case of Helen and Joe, what's in the groove is solid gold! They have done so much for dental public health and the association. We will forever be in their debt!