

## Remarks on Receiving the Distinguished Service Award

**Helen K. Doherty, Administrative Secretary, AAPHD**

Before I begin my "speech," I want to thank our exhibitors who so kindly agreed to have their exhibits moved out of this room so that we could have this luncheon here—they are really the best.

Thank you for this great honor. Thank you to those who planned this event, especially Myron, Dushanka, Denise, Skip, and Rhys. Thank you to those who spoke: Marsha, Gary, Steve, and Hermine. Thank you to all who

are here, especially our daughters, Maureen and Mary Jo.

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to work with all of you for the past 14 years. You are my heroes—for the important work you do and for the grace and generosity with which you treat each other. Of course my greatest hero is my husband, who started these 14 years by calling me from the 1983 meeting in California saying that AAPHD needed my help. He then be-

gan 14 years of answering my dumb questions. I think the first was "What is an AAPHD?"

He has encouraged me and cared for me for 40 years and I know how lucky I am.

I've learned a lot from this job. The most important? How to spell Albuquerque!

Thank you again for this great honor.

## Remarks on Receiving the Distinguished Service Award

**Joseph M. Doherty, DDS, MPH**

I would like to thank everybody for the kind words spoken here on behalf of Helen and myself. To receive any award is a high honor, but to be given the Distinguished Service Award by an association whose members are your peers and whom you admire and respect makes it doubly appreciated.

Those slides that Myron just showed of our marriage and family reminded me of how just 41 years ago I saw Helen walk across the clinic floor at dental school. My heart skipped a beat then and still does every time I see her.

Helen and I have been blessed over the years. We have had wonderful parents, who I wish could have shared this award luncheon with us—they would have been proud. I remember how pleased I was a couple years ago to see Rhys' parents in the audience when he gave his presidential address. I know they were proud, as we were, of him. We need to do more of that. My father was an Irish immigrant who came over to this country at the age of 18, found work, married a wonderful person, and raised four children, all of whom graduated from college—a re-

markable success story that has been repeated by so many people in this country and probably in this room over the years.

Helen and I have four wonderful children, two of whom, Maureen, our oldest, and Mary Jo, our youngest, are with us today, and Michael and Margaret who could not be present, but are in our thoughts. They have been the "light of our life!" Never have the four of them given their mother or father the least bit of worry and we love them dearly. Our marriage has been a true partnership.

I would like to thank Myron Alukian, who originated the idea of this special luncheon and Skip Collins, Duskanka Kleinman, and Denise Fedele, who endorsed it and handled many of the details. A personal thanks also goes to Myron for his introduction and to Hermine McLeran, Marsha Cunningham, Gary Rozier, Steve Corbin, Skip Collins, and Rhys Jones for their comments and award presentation. They are people with whom Helen and I have worked very closely during the past 14 years and whom we have come to admire and respect. I

cannot let this opportunity pass without letting the association know of some of the contributions these people have made to the betterment of the association.

Myron, one of the true greats of this association, who is never too busy, however, to do the nice little things that mean so much. It was Myron, along with Tom Fields, who provided the leadership to get the association back on its "financial feet" during their presidencies. It was he who took over the leadership of the process to assure our continuation as one of the recognized specialties of dental public health by the American Dental Association. Myron, Helen and I will never forget the "high" of the moment we all felt when, as its last business of the day, the ADA House of Delegates voted to continue our specialty. Helen and I always will remember the many long but fun-filled strategy sessions of those years and the many "nice little things" that Myron has done for us and others over the years.

Hermine, because of unforeseen events, organized not one but three of our annual meetings. She also was

very instrumental in putting together our association's manual under the direction of Gary Rozier, made sure we were an active part of the Coalition on Oral Health, and helped me put together the CERP application for the American Dental Association. Helen and I will always remember the wonderful dinners with Hermine and Jim at each annual meeting.

Marsha, who became editor of *Communique* with its second issue and has remained, through thick and thin, with it ever since. The association will always be in her debt. What started out as a "cut and paste" paper on my kitchen table has become a highly computerized publication with all the information needed by its members. Never during the 14 years that Helen and I have worked with Marsha did we ever have to worry about it being published. Marsha, Helen, and I always managed to sneak in a dinner together at the annual meeting to catch up on the news. Dinners that Helen and I won't forget, Marsha.

Gary, who is the editor of our journal, one of the most respected and widely read publications in the dental field. Truly, the association thanks you for all of the hard work you put in to see that it is the best professional publication in dentistry. It has been my privilege these past 14 years to work with three of the editors: Dave Striffler, Dennis Leverett, and Gary Rozier. I know of no one who has worked harder for the association than these three. The editorship is a back-breaking job that takes hours and hours of work to assure the product of which we all have become so proud.

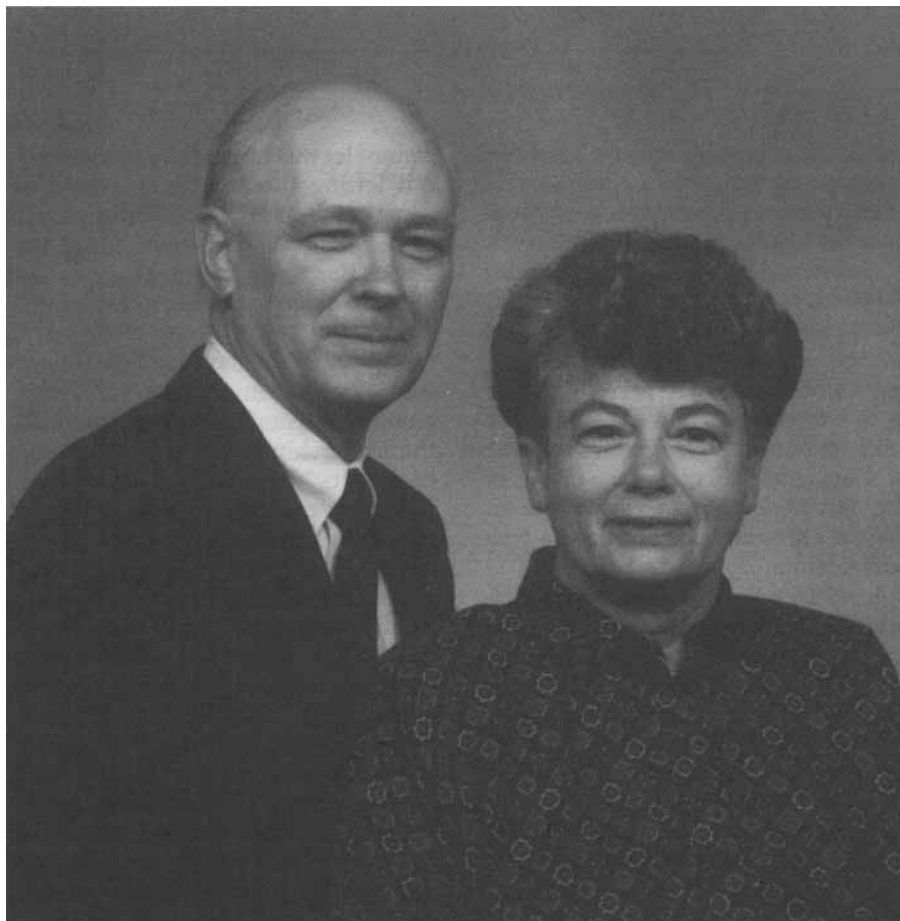
Steve is one of the true leaders and thinkers in dental public health. I always considered Steve to be my guardian angel on the national level. He was never too busy to offer suggestions and comments on matters affecting dental public health and the association. It was Steve along with Bob Mecklenburg who authored the "Future of Public Health" report, which is often quoted today. It was Steve, too,

when he was at CDC, who provided the funds during my AAPHD presidency in 1987, that made possible the revisions of the competency objectives in dental public health, an effort that was directed and so ably completed by Gary Rozier in 1990. These, of course, have just been revised again under the leadership of Jane Weintraub. It was Steve, along with his many capable federal colleagues over the years, that made it possible for me to carry out many of our state programs under my "feds propose and we dispose" quote that I use so often at meetings as a way of thanking them for often providing the legal words or the money that kept many of our state dental programs viable over the years.

It has been my privilege these last four years to work very closely with Skip Collins, first as program chair in Las Vegas and then these past two as president of the association. As you know, with the unfortunate illness and death of Dennis Leverett, Skip had to do double duty, a duty Skip did with his usual skillful direction. Skip always kept the lines of communication open between him and the National Office. I know of no one who worked harder for the association than Skip. It has been Helen's and my privilege to work with him—a job we have always found most enjoyable.

Rhys also had double duty serving as immediate past president two years in a row. Helen and I always have enjoyed our relationship with Rhys—after all, he followed me into one of the great jobs in this country as dental director in Wisconsin. Rhys has assisted the association in so many ways. Two of them that immediately come to mind are the development of the very ambitious Strategic Plan for Dental Public Health and raising the art of collecting funds to new heights in attracting sponsors for the association's annual meeting. It's an art that the other program chairs have continued. He provided the leadership here that has allowed us to expand the program offerings each year.

Rhys in his presentation and Steve in his comments covered so many of the factual details of my career that I would like to take the short time remaining to thank those who made it possible and to reminisce about some of the high spots that I particularly remember. I have had a most enjoyable career and, if permitted, would



Helen and Joe Doherty.

start it all over again. It allowed me the privilege of meeting and working with so many wonderful people whom I admire and respect. It allowed me to do so much for people in the states where I worked, particularly Wisconsin and Virginia. I shall be forever grateful for the privilege of being able to serve. Never in private practice, as wonderful as that might be, could I have improved the oral health of so many people as I have been able to do in public health.

I have lived through an age that saw young children with just about every tooth decayed, to today when our surveys reveal very little decay and hardly an extracted permanent first molar or decay in the anterior teeth. I have lived through an age where dental care was seldom available to one where Medicaid or community and local health department clinics, if used, will provide children with, in many cases, almost comprehensive care. I do not mean to imply that there is not much to be done; but I do mean to imply that much has been done and I am proud to have been able to play a role in those achievements.

It is a career that has allowed me the time and ability to work with so many state and national agencies and organizations, all striving to improve the oral health of the citizens of this country, and to be a part of their deliberations. I was privileged to work with people in the Association of State and Territorial Dental Directors, the American Public Health Association, the Indian Health Service, the office of the Chief Dental Officer, the National Institutes of Dental Research, Maternal and Child Health, and Head Start, to name but a few. I am particularly proud of the privilege I have been given to work with this association. Yes, I have contributed, but I have received so much more in return. I have enjoyed working with each of the officers and Executive Council members over the past 14 years. Each of the presidents in his or her own way has contributed so much to the vitality and stability of the association.

I would like to thank those who have been so influential in my career and those who worked with me over the years. Thanks to the three state dental directors I served with, from Alex Pearson of North Carolina who first employed me and gave me so much encouragement to continue in

dental public health; to Peter Triani, who employed me in Virginia and gave me the opportunity to obtain my master's degree in public health; and especially to Michael Arra of Wisconsin, who shared with me all of his knowledge and skills and who encouraged me at every phase of my career.

From Wisconsin I would also like to thank Betty Krippene, a past president of the American Dental Hygienists' Association, and Helen Ellerby and Belle Fiedler, who served as dental health consultants on our staff and who were always so helpful to me in all my endeavors in Wisconsin. Also to Dr. Robert Davies, Tom Schuler, and Nancy Dupont, who in various ways helped me carry out my duties in Wisconsin.

In Virginia my thanks to Dr. Mac McGrane, my assistant for 17 years; to Dr. Elmore and Bill Wright who kept the dental clinics supplied and repaired for so many years; to Jack Russell and Sharon Logue, who did so much toward educating the public about oral health; to Dr. Elizabeth Bernhard, who managed the fluoridation block grant so effectively that we were able to fluoridate approximately 54 communities; to Carolyn Anderson, who served as our secretary; and, finally, to all of the public health dentists, dental hygienists, and assistants in the local health departments who provided the care so needed by the children in Virginia. I am particularly proud of Drs. Raymond Flanders, who became the state dental director in Illinois, and Tommy Ivey, who is the dental director in Vermont. They are both from Virginia. I was plotting to have a former Virginian in every dental director position in the country, but time ran out on me.

I would like to share with you just some of those events that I remember so well in my career:

—In Wisconsin, the Antigo Study, which showed the effects of the discontinuation of fluoridation in a community. The idea originated with Mr. Chuck Lemke, a statistical analyst with the health department, and Dr. Arra. I assisted with the examinations, did the literature research, and wrote the final document that appeared in the *Journal of the American Dental Association*.

—The writing, with Dr. Arra, of the dental portion of the Medicaid program for Wisconsin. The program pro-

vided almost comprehensive dental care for both children and adults. I think it was a model program when it was established. We wrote the original program on one sheet of paper and when I left there 10 years later we had a 100-page manual.

—Being present when the City Council in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, reinstituted fluoridation. Stevens Point, if you remember, was the first city in the United States to hold a referendum on the fluoridation issue. I was pleased to have been asked to give a presentation that evening.

—Initiating, through a grant from CDC, 27 school fluoridation programs in Wisconsin.

—Defeating a legislative initiative that would have stopped fluoridation in Virginia. I led the effort, along with the executive director of the Virginia Dental Association, to defeat the bill, which we did by a unanimous vote of the state legislative committee.

—The governor of Virginia, L. Douglas Wilder, refused to eliminate dental care from the budget during this state's budget crisis. The governor stated that it was the fundamental duty of the state to provide care for the children and elderly of our state.

—Hosting the National Oral Health Conference along with Steve Corbin of CDC and Robert Mecklenburg, the chief dental officer of the United States Public Health Service, in Williamsburg, Virginia. Dr. Mecklenburg was able to get Dr. C. Everett Koop as our keynote speaker and we had over 300 people in attendance.

—Hosting, as president, the 50th year celebration of our association's founding. I was particularly pleased to have so many of our past presidents and one of our founding members there and to be able to honor them with a token of our appreciation.

—The World Health Day Award for the Virginia program and for the definition of oral health I had written for the Virginia Health Congress. I have so often heard that "oral health matters," but I had never seen a reason why—hence, my definition. Thank you, Steve, for the wonderfully framed copy.

—Serving on the Board of Dental Public Health and being given the opportunity to examine some of the finest people in dental public health. I know it is never easy to be examined by your peers and I admire all those

who did during my time on the board.

Perhaps the thing that has provided me with the greatest pleasure, though, is the assurance from someone that I made a difference in their career. It has been so nice over the years at these and other meetings to have someone approach me and thank me for taking the time to listen or offer advice.

Walter Cronkite in his recent book, "A Reporter's Life," stated that "a career can be called a success if one can look back and say: 'I made a difference.'" I think I have done that, and as I mentioned earlier, I would do it all over again. I have had the opportunity to do what I always wanted to do and been paid to do it. What more can one ask? It's been fun!

Many of you may remember that in my president's farewell address to the Board of Dental Public Health, I recommended the formation of a "foundation" to assist the board in carrying out its functions, to do studies, and to assist persons interested in dental public health with some financial aid to achieve their goals. While it was endorsed by future presidents of the board, it never got off the ground be-

cause of tax and administrative difficulties. When I proposed the idea to Alice Horowitz, then president of our association, she readily endorsed the project, as has every president since. Money was allotted by the Executive Council to explore the feasibility of establishing such a foundation. After a thorough study it was recommended that the association itself seek a 501(c)(3) tax-free status. The Executive Council agreed and I developed the application, which resulted in the tax-free status being given by the IRS this past year. It was hoped that this would allow us, among other things, to raise or set aside funds to provide support for a proposal suggested by Dennis Leverett and advanced by Skip Collins to financially support graduate students or residents to attend national meetings important during their year of training. I had one dentist at this meeting tell me that she has debts of \$80,000 and another dentist told me earlier of incurring \$100,000 in debts to finance her dental education that must be paid back. With financial burdens like that, it is going to be difficult for us to attract and keep the best and brightest in dental public health.

Helen and I have always wanted at our parting to leave the association something. The more we thought about it, the more we thought it would be wonderful if we could get the "foundation" off the ground. As you know, the Distinguished Service Award carries with it a \$1,000 stipend. Helen and I would like to return that to the association with an additional \$1,000 of our own and challenge each one of our members to pledge \$1,000 over their public health careers to the "foundation." With this money we can truly make a difference and become masters of our own destiny.

In closing, I would like to quote from a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, which I think so exemplifies individuals in the dental public health profession:

I slept  
and dreamed that life was joy.  
I woke  
and saw that life was but service.  
I served  
and understood that service was  
joy.

Thank you!