

NEWS

From the Desk of a Past President...

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Reflections on Service

We just completed another successful ACCP Annual Meeting. Of course, this year's meeting was very different, like most things in 2020. It was virtual, and we were unable to join together in person to reconnect with friends and colleagues or form new relationships. However, although many aspects of our lives this year are strikingly different and the ways in which we interact have changed, the College's business and work continue to move forward, as do we.

When I transitioned off the ACCP Board of Regents as past president at the end of this year's Annual Meeting, I was asked to reflect on my two terms, first as regent and then as president-elect, president, and past president. I would like to share these reflections with you.

First, I want to express my gratitude to the College and its members for the honor and privilege of serving as a regent (2012–2015) and presidential officer (2018–2020). These experiences mark the pinnacle of my career. They have made me a better member of the College, a better member of my department and organization, and, most importantly, a better pharmacist.

Second, I want to note that I welcome my continued involvement with ACCP. The College remains my professional home. Now, I also feel a sense of responsibility – a duty to look for the next member with untapped leadership potential. But it is important to understand that leadership is not a right but a privilege – a privilege that is earned. Leaders who understand this recognize that leadership, first and foremost, involves service – for us in pharmacy, service to our profession, our community, and our patients.

Finally, I want to share with you my recent reflections on service as “Self Above Others.” Over the past year, I have become acquainted with Rotary International, whose mission is to “provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through [its] fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.”¹ One of Rotary's official mottoes, **Service Above Self**, encourages and fosters service as the basis of a worthy enterprise.² Hence, the ideal of service is worth devoting our time and energy to. Let's examine some of the principles that guide Rotarians in light of our own endeavors.

1. “The development of acquaintance as an opportunity for service.”

Service is best cultivated by developing relationships. As professionals, we develop relationships with other pharmacists, colleagues from other disciplines, and the patients who receive our care. The more our network grows, the more our opportunities for service expand. Let's be open and embrace these opportunities. We never know what other relationships and opportunities will be forged in the process.

As pharmacists, our most important responsibility is the service we provide to our patients. This service requires us to have empathy and understanding and to build their trust. Through these relationships, we improve the lives of those under our care.

2. “High ethical standards in business and professions; the recognition of the worthiness of all useful occupations; and the dignifying of each Rotarian’s occupation as an opportunity to serve society.”

Consider the many ways in which we as pharmacy professionals serve the profession of pharmacy and, in turn, society – including engaging as members of ACCP and seeking leadership roles in the College and other organizations, both locally and nationally. Our level of service and engagement may vary at different times in our lives, but our commitment to the profession and its high ethical standards should never waiver.

3. “The application of the ideal of service in each Rotarian’s personal, business, and community life.”

The ideal of service to others applies to our communities as well. Serving others fosters mutual respect and is essential in creating and maintaining strong communities, allowing them to thrive. In his 2017 University of Kansas Harold N. Godwin Leadership Legacy address, Daniel M. Ashby, who recently retired from The Johns Hopkins Health System, commented on service and community as follows:

If you participate in or are part of a community, you have responsibilities to others as well as rights. The reciprocity, or “bank of favors,” pays dividends to a wider community as service begets more service. The premise is that if individuals have faith in each other, we know they will find help, empathy, and the bonds of fellowship within those communities.³

I believe “service above self” is the true path to leadership – serving our profession, community, and patients through practicing and promoting empathy, trust, understanding, integrity, and respect ... ultimately making the world a better place. In closing, I would like to share a quotation from Woodrow Wilson, 28th president of the United States, who led the country during the 1918 influenza pandemic:

You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand.

References:

1. Rotary. Who We Are. Available at <https://www.rotary.org/en/about-rotary>. Accessed November 9, 2020.
2. Rotary. Guiding Principles. Available at <https://my.rotary.org/en/guiding-principles>. Accessed November 8, 2020.
3. Ashby DM. The Harold N. Godwin Leadership Legacy: Cultivating pharmacy leaders. Am J Health Syst Pharm 2018;75:1457-9.