

CLEM EISCHEN

The 1985 Robert G. Dicus Award Recipient

Friends, Colleagues—Thank you for coming tonight to share this evening with me. I want to briefly share a few thoughts with you—thoughts about some of my memorable experiences working for and with the Private Practice Section.

I became involved in the activities of the Private Practice Section in 1966. The chairman at the time was Royce Noland and he granted me time to talk at the Annual Meeting about a new concept—political activity and the need to form a political action committee. Although political activity is widely practiced by our Section now, the concept was new then. I had already involved myself with the American Medical/Political Action Committee, a forerunner in health care political activity and still one of the largest of its kind.

After meeting with Royce, he appointed a new committee for government relations, naming me chairman. The committee had two purposes: to affect legislation that would include the private practitioner in the Medicare law and to fund those efforts. I am convinced that had they been aware of how little I knew about the job, they would not have appointed me, and if I had known what the job was to entail, I probably would not have accepted it. At times, I believe it may be better not knowing what lies ahead, what boulders we may have to go around and what obstacles we must conquer. I have never been known to back away from a tough job; I love competition and the commitment to an important and necessary goal.



The results of our committee's efforts were the implementation of Part B Medicare coverage and coverage for the private office. Implementing the Part B amendment cost us about twenty thousand dollars, but if a better bargain than that exists, I would like to know about it.

Our Section has always been blessed with dynamic individuals who have not been afraid to contribute both their time and money, and this support is vital to our ongoing activities. It is important to care about your Section, and this means getting involved, not

only with your Section, but with Chapter and APTA activities as well. I am gratified to find that many of our members take part in the House of Delegates because this is where policy is made that guides and determines the future of our profession.

Many people have said to me, "You never change your tune. When we first heard you, you were talking about government involvement in our profession, and you are still talking about it." I was talking about what was needed to overcome the effects of government planning, and my words are relevant today. Government health planners are continuing to interfere with our profession. Diagnosis Related Groups have become a hindrance to those with hospital connections and Preferred Provider Organizations are also posing some interesting challenges. I believe that the PPOs formed by hospital consortiums are a threat to the private office. To compete with them, we may have to alter our system of fees per service, and instead charge a monthly per capita fee. Adaptation is necessary for survival. If we are alert, I feel confident that we can survive and prosper. Our group has shown both resolve and tenacity. We have grown in numbers and despite government planners, we will reach our goals.

In their book, *In Search of Excellence*, Peters and Waterman discuss some interesting concepts in industry and large corporations that I believe apply to the way this Section will need to function. Bureaucracies and corporations often become bogged down in the

quagmire of operational procedures and policy, stifling the creative energy of individuals who do not fit into standard organizational structure. Some industrial giants, recognizing the potential value of these people, allow them the time and space in which to operate, calling them "skunk works." They later reap benefits in the form of new products and ensuing profits. The initial brainstorming process at Apple Computers humbly took place in the innovator's garage, but that company now produces products that others lie in wait of, proving that

when free and creative thinking is allowed to take place, the results can be impressive.

I look upon our Section as a "skunk works" of sorts. The early legislative activities undertaken by myself, Noland and others to effect the Medicare amendments resembles a skunk-works operation. Our activities did not fit into the framework of the parent organization, but it was a productive way to work and we obtained results.

I want us to continue to be leaders. With the leadership the Section has now, it will be hard not to

produce results. After World War II, one Boeing official stated, when bidding on a contract for the new swept wing aircraft, "Damn the bureaucracy and maneuver our projects through the system." We must also maneuver our projects through to success.

In conclusion, I hope you have the opportunity to enjoy our interesting profession and Section as much as I have. The pleasure of working with so many dynamic people has been and continues to be a great inspiration to me. For that I can only say humbly, thank you.



Clem Eischen (2nd from l.) with former Dicus Award winners. From left: Jim McKillip, Eischen, Jay Goodfarb, Ben Johnston, Charles Magistro.



Enjoying the Dicus Award banquet, from left, Carole Lewis, Irv Miller, Mrs. Ernie Burch.



Jim McKenna uses audio-visuals to illustrate practice management techniques.



Board members at PPS Business meeting. From left: Blair Packard, Jerry Connolly, Kent Allsop, John Polk, Liz Dunleavy (PPS administrator), Cheryl Hill (parliamentarian) and Jay Goodfarb.