

Twenty-First Mary McMillan Lecture

DOROTHY PINKSTON



Although I must stand somewhat alone at this moment, I accept this honor knowing that it is shared with so many individuals—individuals who have led, who have stood by and offered support and encouragement, and those who gave a push now and then; individual members of my family; and other individuals who are the most loyal of friends. Recognizing both the singularity and the source of this particular honor, I present some bouquets: to Brown, one of my brothers, who offers the strength and comfort of brotherly support by his presence here on this occasion and who represents others in our family; to that very special group of alumni of the Graduate Physical Therapy Curriculum, Case Western Reserve University, and the faculty members, classroom and clinical, with whom I worked at that institution; to fellow members of the Army Medical Specialist Corps; to members of the American Physical Therapy Association and staff of the Association's headquarters with whom I have served; and to the alumni, students, faculty, and staff of the Division of Physical Therapy, School of Community and Allied Health, The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The Twenty-First Mary McMillan Lecture is a look toward the twenty-first century for certain elements in and of the APTA and for physical therapy education. Throughout this look toward the twenty-first century, something of a historical perspective is offered as reminiscences for reconsideration for some and to serve, perhaps, as initiation or edification for

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others. Key among the topics related to the Association is the cost of growth. As part of this theme, questions are posed about the price, tangible and intangible, that the members of the 1980s and 1990s will be willing to pay for an association that is a viable organization in and of the twenty-first century. "Cost" is being used not only in the sense of the expenditure of dollars but also in the sense of the expenditure of time and effort. In addition, cost is being used in some instances to

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—Mildred O. Elson

refer to trade-offs and some things that we have given up along the way. "Growth" is being used in the sense of growing up—of having reached the age of 65 years—and growth in the sense of increases. Selected aspects of physical therapy education are examined with both anticipation and apprehension. Certain features are discussed with attention to relationships to the Association and with comments and questions about the price that has been paid and the costs that might be encountered on the road toward the twenty-first century.

PRESERVING OUR LEGACY

Each fall, a portion of my teaching responsibilities provides a very special time for sharing with one of my valued and respected teaching associates certain memories that each of us has about our previous years in physical therapy. This sharing between colleagues is in preparation for sharing some of these memories with students—physical therapist assistant and physical therapy students who are beginning their respective programs of study. Certain materials have become a must for inclusion in these times for sharing. Among these materials is the closing paragraph from the "First Mary McMillan Lecture: The Legacy of Mary McMillan" presented by Mildred Elson in 1964.¹ In that closing paragraph, she quoted John F. Kennedy:

It is our task in our time and in our generation to hand down undiminished to those who come after us what was handed down to us by those who went before. . . . To do this requires constant attention and vigilance, sustained vigor and imagination.

And our first Mary McMillan lecturer followed with this challenge:

May we who have received the precious legacy of Mary McMillan, our profession and our Association, cherish and nurture it, that we in turn may hand it down, as glowing and vital as the spirit of our beloved founder, the immortal Molly McMillan.

What price has been paid for growth? What price are we willing to pay for continued growth? Monetary outlay has been a part of the tangibles in the cost of growing—of maturing—and, without question, monetary outlay will be among the tangibles of the price that we will be asked to pay. Simply to maintain an organization requires income minimally equal to those year-to-year expenses of maintaining. It takes but a cursory review of the increase in the number of programs and the increase in the number of activities related to each of the programs for me to be able to emphasize that seldom during the past 10 years have the members of this organization been content simply to maintain.

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What will be the cost of handing down “undiminished to those who come after us what was handed down to us by those who went before”? Have we truly accepted the challenge that Mildred Elson gave us in 1964? Have we cherished and nurtured? There is substantial evidence that members of the APTA have supported the Association. Such growth as has been experienced virtually would have been impossible without the loyal support, through both personal efforts and monetary outlay, of individuals who make up the membership. But I believe, and I think that there are others who believe similarly, that nurturing and supporting are disparate behaviors. Furthermore, I believe that the disparity has been magnified progressively during the past 20 years, and continued magnification could place us in a position of paying dearly to sense once again the “glowing and vital” spirit of our Association. Perhaps the recent feature items in two of the periodicals published by the Association, *PHYSICAL THERAPY* and *Progress Report*, noting the 65th anniversary year for the Journal and for the Association, are clear steps toward revitalization. I extend a heartfelt and sincere thank-you to those responsible.

Purposes of the Official Journal

The Journal, under several names and wearing a variety of jackets, has served us well as a medium through which we might keep in touch with the past. At least, this was so up to

a certain point not many years ago. There was a period of time when such was the expressed purpose of the journal of this Association.

The purposes of the Journal are to publish reports of research in or related to physical therapy, foster the continuing education of physical therapists, inform members of trends and events in physical therapy and related areas, document the transactions of the Association, and serve as the archives of the growth and development of physical therapy.^{2,3}

The REVIEW had served these purposes in earlier years and, from July 1973 through March 1978, the purposes stated above were published in the Journal. In April 1978, that statement of purpose was discontinued, and an abbreviated statement began appearing where the purposes had been published previously.⁴ Subsequently, in 1984, additional language was added, apparently for the purpose of describing the product and without the intent of stating a purpose(s).

PHYSICAL THERAPY is the official journal of the American Physical Therapy Association and represents the science and practice of the profession. This journal is the peer-reviewed (refereed) publication of the Association and, as such, documents the state-of-the-art of physical therapy for the Association and becomes the archives of our professional knowledge.⁵

One of the resources for history of the Association, written by Ida May Hazenhyer and published in the 25th anniversary year, 1946, includes the following comments about *THE PHYSIOTHERAPY REVIEW*, the Journal of earlier years: “It is fitting that with this section [“The Physiotherapy Review”] the anniversary history of the Association should end, for the REVIEW is, as always, a mirror in which the Association is reflected. Its format and its materials have been a barometer to register the rise of the Association.”⁶ *THE PHYSIOTHERAPY REVIEW*, Volume 26, 1946, exemplifies that author’s words—“a mirror in which the Association is reflected”—and goes

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beyond. The volume reflects not only the Association but also the society in which the Association was existing.

The Editor-in-Chief had this to say in the January-February issue of that volume:

As we review with pride the accomplishments of the past twenty-five years, we look to the future as a significant period in our development which brings a challenge to further expansion and achievement.⁷

Many challenges have been met, expansion clearly is evident, and achievements can be identified. The contemporary readers of Volume 26, however, would be hard-pressed today to find the one source of reference that provides a “mirror in which the Association is reflected.”

The past 20 years have included two extremes in the manner in which the official journal of this Association records for posterity the activities of the Association. In both 1966 and 1967, the November issue of *PHYSICAL THERAPY*,

Journal of the American Physical Therapy Association, was published in two parts. In each year, the format of Part 1 was the same as that of the other 11 issues of the volume. Part 2 included the annual reports from the Association headquarters; the auditor's report; reports from Association officers and committees; a summary of actions taken at preconference and postconference meetings of the Board of Directors; a listing of officers, directors, and committees; and a detailed summary of minutes of the annual session of the House of Delegates, even to the tallied results of roll call votes. In 1985, with the heading "Actions on Business," the following paragraph was published in the official journal of the Association:

A full report of business is found in the 1985 Minutes of the House of Delegates. Highlights of the House actions can be found in the 1985 July/August issue of *Progress Report*.⁸

The argument can be presented that writer's bias can render a summary of House actions less than desirable and, perhaps, that is reason enough not to have a summary published. When reading about Association business, however, I lean preferentially toward a summary signed by, or over the name of, the elected secretary of the Association rather than a news item prepared by a staff reporter. The previous comment is intended as neither accolades for a secretary nor accusations for a staff reporter. The issue is where and how the Association business is recorded for use of the general membership and where and how the Association business is reported for whatever use the public wishes to make of it.

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The most recent year that a fairly extensive summary of motions passed by the House appeared in the official journal of the Association was 1980. Even with the extensiveness of the summary, the reader is directed to the Minutes of the 36th Annual Session of the House of Delegates and to the July-August 1980 issue of *Progress Report*.⁹ Sketchy paragraphs are published in *PHYSICAL THERAPY*, although the "By-laws" clearly state the following as a duty of the secretary:

The secretary shall be responsible for . . . preparing a summary of the proceedings of the House of Delegates for publication in the official journal of the Association as soon as practicable after the session.¹⁰

The changes in the purposes served by our Journal perhaps are related to a specific area of growth. A part of maturing as a profession has been the efforts toward developing the foundations of the occupation on a sound scientific basis—the efforts to support and increase the involvement of physical therapists in research. We have made great strides toward this goal and evidence of this is quite clear. Poster sessions were a part of the Annual Conference for the first time in 1979, only seven years ago. The changes in this one indicator alone provide an abundance of evidence that we, the members of this Association and the profession, are initiating, carrying out, and reporting studies about the elements of physical therapy. Growth in this arena is unprecedented in the life of

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our Association. This growth is not without costs to date, and the increase in research and publication of research carries with it another cost factor. This additional cost factor is that of assuming responsibility for a journal dedicated to physical therapy research. I suggest this, as an expenditure related to cost of growth, not so much as a champion for a research journal but as a champion for having the official journal of the Association once again serve to

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Preparation for Participating

Nurturing and growing at times seem to be at opposite poles. Along with growth has come expending tremendous amounts of effort toward greasing the wheels of efficiency for the operations of the organization, and rightfully so must we be concerned with efficiency of operation. Each one of us likes to think that our membership dollars are being used as effectively as possible. Amidst the efficiency and in the face of growth, however, are we giving the required

Constant attention and vigilance, sustained vigor and imagination. . .to hand down undiminished to those who come after us what was handed down to us?

What is the price that has been paid for taking actions to ensure that the House remained a manageable size? What will be the cost related to scheduling the major portion of the meeting of the House of Delegates before the opening session of the Annual Conference? Each year, additional numbers of members attend the Annual Conference for the first time and are not exposed to any part of the operations of the elective and legislative body of the Association—the House of Delegates. As we move farther away from 1979, which was the last year that the House of Delegates sessions were programmed to a great extent with the Annual Conference sessions, the likelihood of a younger member accidentally becoming interested in, or perhaps intrigued with, the activities of the House of Delegates is diminishing. What will be the cost of providing opportunities for members, particularly the younger members, to know how the House of Delegates functions? And what will be the cost of providing members with opportunities to become *knowledgeable participants* in the business of the Association? For the Association to be a viable organization in and of the twenty-first century, physical therapists and physical therapist assistants must be prepared to participate in the affairs of physical therapy, and the affairs of physical therapy extend beyond patient care and services to other clients.

Perhaps the time has come when the sessions of the House must be recorded on videotape. Equitable arrangements might be worked out between chapters and educational institutions to share the expense of purchasing or renting and, of course, sharing the tapes. Apart from the instructional potential lies the potential for grass-roots members to observe the behavior of the elected Board of Directors. Needless to say, procedural changes might be necessary to try to ensure that all members of the Board of Directors, indeed, are responsible for reporting about an assigned committee, program, or activity of the Board.

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An additional benefit from such an investment would be that of having a mechanism whereby more members might have the opportunity to see and hear potential candidates, potential leaders of this Association, "in action." Most likely, some mental wheels are whirring with thoughts, by candidates of tomorrow, about the potential such a mechanism might hold as a campaign tool. Any concerns I might have about a member abusing the process are dispelled rather quickly. I have yet to witness a Speaker of the House who could not handle theatrics, with skill!

Passing the Torch

The Association has reached that very special age of 65 years and now is moving toward the centennial celebration. One area of growth, or increase, during the 65 years is that of size of membership. From 1965 to 1985, the overall membership statistics changed from 11,654 to 41,226.^{11,12} This change has increased our capabilities and has brought with it some liabilities. One specific area of activity that has been affected has been mentioned previously: the House of Delegates. But, as this Association moves toward and into the twenty-first century, in the fortunate circumstances of continued growth in membership, there is a clear element of cost that is related to ensuring that the innermost meanings of the Association are preserved and carried forward with as much vigor as possible.

If we keep in mind the fact that the founding year was 1921, most of us do not need even a hand-held calculator to arrive at the following conclusion: The 20 years between 1965 and 1985 include the peak retirement years for two prominent groups of members of the Association. One group is that of the founding members; the other group is that of those persons who entered the field of physical therapy and the APTA

during or immediately after World War II. This is a part of the growing, the maturing, and certainly these circumstances are not uniquely characteristic of the APTA.

The cost of preserving our heritage increases in light of these particular "waves-of-retirement" years. Retirement often brings with it diminished participation in Association activities. When such is the case, we are without not only the spirit that those founding members would radiate but also the spirit of individuals who were closest, in study and in practice, to the founding members. We must seize every opportunity to capture the sparks, and we must power the bellows with diligence, with the hope that in so doing we might rejuvenate and fuel the glowing spirit. In some instances, the opportunity must be made, and to make opportunities often carries a price.

The price might be related to a number of activities, or programs, of the Association. Among these is the Annual Conference of the Association and plans that would make it more appealing to retired and semiretired members to participate in at least a portion of the Annual Conference. Another is in the area of the Association's archives and the methods used for recording certain events. The technology of today offers multiple choices of media along with the printed page. Videotaping key portions of the Annual Conference could provide a wealth of stimulating resource materials to be used in educational programs and, at the same time, preserve the spirit of the recorded event. We have let certain opportunities pass us by, but this need not continue if we are willing to pay the price.

"The price that we must pay 'to hand down undiminished to those who come after us what was handed down to us by those who went before' becomes higher as we move farther from the potential for the torch to be passed by those who had a hand in the lighting and in the kindling of the flame."

Clearly, the price that we must pay becomes higher as we move farther away from the potential for the torch to be passed by those who had a hand in lighting and in kindling the flame.

ENDEAVORS FOR PHYSICAL THERAPY EDUCATION

In moving to the second major theme, a look toward the twenty-first century for physical therapy education, I can set aside neither the Association nor the cost of growth. Expressed priorities for the Association for 65 years have been related, either directly or indirectly, to the preparation of individuals to enter the field of physical therapy and, for the most part, the focus has been on the physical therapist clinician. In more recent years, preparation of the physical therapist assistant has shared attention in those expressed priorities.

Before I comment further on physical therapy education, I must make somewhat of an aside. Any ripples that are created, or waves that are stirred, are created or stirred with the full realization that I too am treading those murky waters and with clear acknowledgment that some of my own deeds, acts of omission or acts of commission, have contributed to the state of the reflection pool of physical therapy education.

When I thought about moving toward and into the twenty-first century for physical therapy education, focusing on the remaining part of the decade of the eighties and then the decade of the nineties, certain applicable and frequently quoted lines repeatedly surfaced about how these next 10 to 15 years might be described someday. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."¹³ I offer the following sampling of characteristics that exemplify the best of times in education for the physical therapist:

- An applicant pool that includes candidates who are academically qualified through undergraduate study, eager in their pursuits of a career that includes features they have seen in physical therapy, and in many instances seasoned by years in a field other than physical therapy.
- Young and eager academicians who demonstrate remarkable potential for greatness in physical therapy education.
- The technology to support creativity in instruction and to offer rewarding challenges in learning.
- A marketplace that offers graduates employment with surty and with choices in abundance.

And what of some of the characteristics that exemplify the worst of times? Mainly, two:

- Continued and seemingly unending efforts toward compiling and revising an exhaustive listing of the supportive tools and enabling procedures that are used in the practice of physical therapy.
- Educational programs for the physical therapist located in institutional environments where the quest for parity-for-all often overshadows the quest for quality-for-any.

I mention only two characteristics that exemplify the worst of times, but the hold that each seems to have on physical therapy education is tenacious. The cost that the future holds seems bound intricately to the two characteristics that exemplify the worst of times. The price that we are willing to pay to modify those two characteristics, it seems, will determine the longevity of those characteristics that in part exemplify the best of times.

Throughout the 65 years of our history, inordinate amounts of time and effort have been expended toward defining two words that have very clear meaning—*physical therapy*. Perhaps the growth of those 65 years has brought us to the point of being *users* of physical therapy in such a variety of roles that the term "physical therapist" now denotes only one practitioner among several.

Repeatedly, the plea has been made that we focus our attention on human motion or movement dysfunction, or both, or on the fundamentals of exercise used for therapeutic purposes. I join the list of others who have made the plea previously. Investigations focused on how human motion or movement can be and is modified by disease and trauma, and on how human motion or movement can be affected by and effected through therapeutic intervention, are being pursued by many. Studies are under way also to determine how physical therapists can participate effectively in such intervention. Physical therapists are among those participating in

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research in each of these areas. Perhaps the outcomes of these activities will be even greater than could be hoped for, and we will know not only ways in which the physical therapist as known today can participate effectively in the intervention but also a meaningful and appropriate title for that practitioner who, indeed, is focusing on movement dysfunction.

The cost to modify the second of the characteristics mentioned as exemplifying the worst of times can be met best when financial resources are bolstered by individual vision, commitment and dedication, persistence, and unending patience. Circumstances unique to each institution prevail and are known most clearly by the faculty of the respective program. Each set of circumstances must be examined and particular attention given to the probabilities of sustained support for the continued development of physical therapy education. A variety of questions must be asked when analyzing the individual sets of circumstances, and among the questions are some related to characteristics that exemplify the best of times. Can the applicant pool be tapped effectively? Can persons who have potential for greatness in physical therapy education be attracted to faculty positions and retained? What level of quality might be achieved in the curriculum? What will be the reputation that the graduates carry with them when seeking employment? Once conclusions have been drawn, personal and individual professional decisions must be made about whether modifications are needed and, if needed, the ways in which the modifications might be accomplished.

Extravagance and Meagerness

In education, as in other functions of the Association, the cost of growth is high. The price that has been paid to this point is at once both extravagant and meager: extravagant in the sense of repetitious efforts and a multitude of fascinating, but perhaps not so effective, modifications for the wheel; meager when viewed in comparison to dollars from external funding sources; and alarmingly extravagant when lack of follow-up spending is examined. I call attention to two particular areas of extravagance and meagerness. Perhaps by recalling these events of the past we might avoid similar expenditures as we move through the next 15 years and into the twenty-first century.

Teachers and academicians. We are confronted with trying to overcome "a critical shortage of faculty in absolute numbers" and in the numbers truly qualified to hold academic appointment and assume the professorial role.¹⁴ Shortage in

the former dimension, absolute numbers, has persisted in varying degrees since the midforties and the years of poliomyelitis epidemics and the years during and immediately after WW II. The shortage in the latter dimension first caught our attention in the late fifties to early sixties, the years when the number of programs in the college and university settings began increasing. The investments made toward modifying either or both dimensions have fluctuated and appear as meagerness with respect to follow-up on funding from external sources.

The decade of the sixties found us coming out of the years of the financial support that was made available from the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (NFIP) for teaching fellowships. External funding for similar activities, however, was available through grants and contracts to the Association from the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration (VRA), and this particular source of funding for physical therapists who wished to pursue graduate study continued to be available during the early part of the seventies. Thousands of dollars had been made available from both the NFIP and agencies of the federal government for support of graduate study and the preparation of physical therapists as teachers, and Association dollars were expended to administer the funds that were made available. In addition, for a number of years, support of the activities of the Committee on Graduate Education was a budget item for the Association. Although

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the years of the seventies did bring diminished external funding for graduate education, several matters other than the shortage of teachers and graduate study for physical therapists had come into sharp focus for physical therapy education—namely, the accreditation process and the level of the professional program. Clearly, the shortage had not disappeared; the shortage was becoming greater, but the momentum had been lost. Extravagance and meagerness? Yes, and the loss of momentum was costly, particularly in light of the needs today.

Curriculum planning and faculty development. Another area of extravagance and meagerness that warrants review is that of curriculum planning and the continued development of classroom and clinical teachers. Similar costly extravagance is found in ventures related to these endeavors for education.

Beginning in 1955 and extending through 1967 “annual, five-day institutes through which participants—physical therapist faculty members of all accredited and developing programs of physical therapy education—might strengthen their abilities and skills”¹⁵ were sponsored jointly by the APTA and the VRA. In the foreword to the Proceedings of the 1967 APTA-VRA Institute, Sarah S. Rogers, Consultant, Division of Education, APTA, reported that 671 teachers had attended the five Institutes offered in the time period from 1963 to 1967, both classroom and clinical faculty in the approximate ratio of 1:2.¹⁵ Reportedly, a total of 1,215 academic and

clinical instructors participated in the 13 Institutes conducted between 1955 and 1967.¹⁶ The Section for Education kept the momentum in flow for a number of years, sponsoring or cosponsoring a number of regional and national institutes focused on curriculum planning and evaluation and on instructional methods. Once again, the momentum rolled virtually to a standstill, and the topics rested quietly and seemingly unnoticed until the fall of 1985, when

over 250 educators concerned with clinical education met in Rock Eagle, Georgia to consider pressing issues and potential strategies in the clinical education segments of physical therapy education.¹⁷

Physical therapy educators in a variety of roles from all parts of the country participated in the conference. I say with sincerity, and some sadness, that I have not witnessed the likes of such camaraderie since the days of the final APTA-VRA Institute in 1967 at Issaquah College, Faroult University, located in Wayin, Nebraska.¹⁵ Surely the enthusiasm and interest *can be* and *will be* rejuvenated, but the extravagance of such a necessity seems unthinkable. Surely the enthusiasm and interest felt and held by the participants in the APTA-VRA Institutes can be kindled for those who since have joined the faculty ranks, classroom and clinical. Perhaps, then, the expenditures will be toward sustaining rather than recreating.

Organized Focus and Strength

The need for teachers, both classroom and clinical, is inevitable. The extent to which a shortage will continue to exist into the twenty-first century clearly will be related to outcomes of several programs of the APTA. An additional factor that will influence the shortage is the price that we are willing to pay to have an organized entity, with strength in numbers and in financial resources, that exists solely in the interest of the quality of physical therapy education. I am not proposing that such an organization must be separate from the Association. On the contrary: To be totally separate would be a step toward immediate diminution of potential and necessary resources. I am proposing that the need, as we move toward the twenty-first century, is for a structure quite different from the section structure that exists currently. The education of physical therapists and of physical therapist assistants for the twenty-first century is a matter that deserves more than a voice without a vote. Physical therapists and others

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who hold faculty appointments in physical therapy in approximately 175 institutions, universities and four- and two-year colleges, are in a situation that is different somewhat than having a *common interest* in a *special area* of physical therapy.

Education is not simply a special area of physical therapy. Education provides the foundation for those special areas of interest in patient care and client service.

Routinely, at the Annual Conference, at the Combined Sections Meeting, and throughout the months between, the organized strength of the Section for Education is diminished by the very thing that strengthens physical therapy education: involvement and participation of educational administrators, classroom faculty, and clinical faculty in other sections. To choose membership in a section that focuses on an area of patient care that corresponds to an area of teaching rather than electing membership in the Section for Education is readily understandable and defensible.

There is no lack of interest in the matters of physical therapy education. Interest is demonstrated regularly by attendance and participation in the open forums at the Annual Conference and at Combined Sections Meeting, and the level of interest was emphasized by the individually financed registration and attendance at the conference entitled "Leadership for Change in Physical Therapy Clinical Education."¹⁷ Perhaps an element of cost that faces us is a conference that focuses on education, held on a biennial basis, if not annually.

Clarity and Accuracy

Another part of the cost of growth in physical therapy education is similar to costs we must face for the Association as a whole as we renew our efforts to preserve the history of change. Every aspect of the history of our Association deserves—in fact, demands—our most careful attention and dedicated efforts toward leaving the records clear and undistorted insofar as such a goal can be achieved. We can best serve physical therapy by demanding clarity and accuracy in the spoken words and the printed words when addressing endeavors toward the education of physical therapists and physical therapist assistants for the twenty-first century. The following quotation from a very recent publication of the Association leads me to suggest that a worthwhile expenditure would be the support of a staff position that is dedicated to achieving and maintaining accuracy in the numerous documents of the Association.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The roles, responsibilities, clinical practice, and academic preparation of physical therapists have undergone many changes during the last 20 years. Sensing the emergence of these changes more than 10 years ago, the APTA House of Delegates adopted the policy to change the entry-level education for physical therapists to that which results in the award of a postbaccalaureate degree.¹⁷

This statement could be construed as a matter of the emergence of these changes being sensed more than 10 years ago, but then one is left not knowing when the action was taken. The statement implies that the House of Delegates action was taken before 1976—perhaps a dream for some, but not an accurate historical perspective on a critical point in the history of education for the physical therapist. At a time in our history when the Association, actions related to education, and the very nature of education for the physical therapist have gained the attention of persons in institutions and agencies of higher education, as well as institutions and agencies in health care, *accuracy* and *clarity* are of utmost importance.

The action taken in 1979 and 1980 by the House of Delegates related to the education specific to the physical

therapist has become victim to "acronymia." We are of today's world, and attempts to shorten a long and cumbersome phrase are not surprising and even in some respects are quite desirable. Particular caution must be exercised when developing acronyms, however, so that the resulting language will not distort the original language.

"There is a clear and present danger that, while legitimate routes are being used, the general or liberal education of the physical therapists of tomorrow is being short-circuited."

The acronym, PBEL, being used for the term *postbaccalaureate entry level* not only misrepresents the focus of action, but also furthers the cloudiness with which the action is thought about and dealt. One of the key elements has been omitted in the acronym and, small though the word "degree" might be, any time that we omit this word, particularly in formal written and spoken communications, the point has been lost. In such circumstances, the argument that is being put forth or the explanation that is being offered often simply does not have meaning. Expediency in language does not serve us well when dealing with something so important as the position we hold on education of the physical therapist.

Policies into Practice

As we move toward the twenty-first century in the enterprise of preparing individuals to enter the practice of physical therapy, monetary costs could well be overshadowed by expenditure of individual and collective efforts to clarify our intentions, expectations, and aspirations. Two topics in particular must be addressed: 1) the use of the terms "graduate study" and "graduate program" and 2) how we operationalize the beliefs about the general or liberal education of the physical therapist as expressed in the WHEREAS component of RC 14-79.¹⁸

Graduate study or program versus professional study or program. In both spoken and written communications, graduate program has been used synonymously with entry-level program, and graduate degree has been used synonymously with postbaccalaureate degree when describing education for the physical therapist. Graduate degree and postbaccalaureate degree do hold true as synonymous terms for certain programs today, and this as such has led to confusion. As pointed out by MacKinnon in an article published in *PHYSICAL THERAPY* two years ago, several factors must be considered in making a decision about the degree designation for the first professional degree in physical therapy.¹⁹ Perhaps the overriding factor in too many instances has been, and likely will continue to be, the degree-granting structure within the respective university or college, or both, where the program is located. Degree-granting schools or colleges of physical therapy do not abound in the United States, and for the most part the schools or colleges where entry-level programs for the physical therapist are housed administratively do not hold the authority to grant degrees. In this situation, a proposal for the physical

therapy program to terminate with a postbaccalaureate degree is flagged immediately as a matter for the graduate studies unit within the university. Proponents of the proposal then are faced with justifying semester or quarter credit-hour loads that far exceed the maximum load for graduate study and lead to total earned credit hours in excess of what is required for any other master's degree program in the system. We are dealing with a professional program and when we come to grips with that fact, we will find, I believe, that we are trying to sell an entirely different product. Perhaps as we work through, in our thinking and in our behavior, some of the real and distinct differences between graduate study and a professional program, we will arrive at widespread use of a first professional degree designation that identifies the field of work that the holder of the degree is qualified to enter.

Graduate study does have certain very specific connotations in academia and, once we impose those connotations, and the accompanying rules and regulations, on the entry-level curriculum for the physical therapist, we have created an environment that is misleading for all who are involved—faculty, applicants, students, administrators, and both the professional and lay public. Nowhere in the resolution adopted by the House of Delegates of the APTA in 1979 and amended in 1980—the policy of this Association on entry-level education for the physical therapist—are the terms graduate study or graduate degree to be found. The word graduate did make its way into subsequent House of Delegates action in 1983, when action was taken to affirm, or reaffirm, the position, but the facts of the original action are unaltered.

General or liberal education of the physical therapist. A portion of the foundations for our efforts in education of the physical therapist, clearly expressed in the following WHEREAS components of the 1979 Resolutions adopted by the House, seems to be fading:

WHEREAS, The rapidly extending boundaries of physical therapy practice and the exponential expansion of relevant knowledge evoke demands to expand the content of physical therapy education and to broaden the general or liberal education of the physical therapist;

WHEREAS, Baccalaureate entry level education of the physical therapist imposes constraints on the further development of professional education and on broadening the general or liberal education of the physical therapists¹⁸

In a number of institutions across the country, physical therapy faculties are in the final stages of planning for transition of respective entry-level programs for the physical therapist to programs that lead to postbaccalaureate degrees. At least 40% of those planning for transition have reported that less than four years of study will be required for admission to the professional program.²⁰ In some instances, the requirement is for three years; in others, two years. I will not debate the matter of institutional prerogative regarding requirements for a degree, but I must question the extent to which we have expressed clearly our intentions and the extent to which the policy adopted by the House of Delegates is being heeded. Does the WHEREAS component of RC 14–79 serve to state the rationale for the RESOLVED component or are those statements merely embellishments? There are a number of legitimate ways for obtaining a postbaccalaureate degree, but there is a clear and present danger that, while legitimate routes are being used, the general or liberal education of the physical therapists of tomorrow is being short-circuited. We cannot

ask that the physical therapists of the future pay such a price, and we should not ask that the clients of the twenty-first century be served by physical therapists who have less than a solid undergraduate education.

CONCLUSION

The areas of growth and the potential cost—tangible and intangible—far exceed those mentioned ever so briefly, and I have only scratched the surface of the topics that must be addressed in physical therapy education—topics that must be addressed for the sake of two very important client groups: students and patients. Nevertheless, my purposes will have been served in large part if the substance of this paper stimulates review of some of the materials, or rethinking of some of the events, that have been mentioned and if subsequent actions reflect something of the tenor of this paper.

In closing the Twenty-First Mary McMillan Lecture, in tribute to Mary McMillan and in recognition of persons who have presented the Mary McMillan Lecture in previous years, I must reiterate statements made earlier. The Association is 65 years old and the price that we must pay “to hand down undiminished to those who come after us what was handed down to us by those who went before” becomes higher as we move farther from the potential for the torch to be passed by those who had a hand in the lighting and in the kindling of the flame. As individual members and as an association, the question of willingness to pay the price must be answered.

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