

We Shall Not Acquiesce

Winter solstice is approaching. We can see the signs here in Phoenix. Mornings are darker as the sun rises later each day and darkness is with us as we leave our office each evening. In June we recalled the derivation of the word solstice - 'to stand still'. In December the tilt of the earth's axis is oriented away from the sun, which results in the apparent path of the sun at its southernmost point in the sky. Walk outside in the hours before dawn on December 21-22. Look in the southern sky at an angle of 45 degrees, locate the brightest shining object. This is Sirius, the Dog Star. To the right, you will see three stars in a row. This is the 'belt' of my favorite constellation, Orion. Draw an imaginary line from the belt to Sirius - this line will point to the spot on the Southeastern horizon where the sun will rise on solstice, December 22nd.

The arrival of solstice heralds the end of my term as president of our Maricopa County Medical Society. This has been a great year! The time has passed so quickly. I am grateful for the opportunity to have served all of you, our members, during the past year. I have heard so many encouraging words. Our membership has increased. I believe we have begun to reach out and offer a more relevant Medical Society to our heirs-apparent.

I want to express my gratitude to all of you for your support, suggestions and encouragement during my term as your President. I also wish to acknowledge the fantastic contributions of Mr. Tony Mitten, who has served as CEO of the Medical Society since 1974, and Mr. Dan Mitten who acts as the associate executive director. Their tireless efforts contribute to the continued success of our organization every day.

The Board of Directors that you elect contributes countless hours of service as representatives of our Society. All of your board members are volunteers. We devote our time because we believe in the importance of our Society as representatives of all physicians in Maricopa County.

The challenges that face us as practicing physicians every day have not changed in the past year. History has taught us that new challenges will arise in the months and years ahead. If we stand still, as the sun at solstice, and continue doing things the way we always have, we shall not survive. We must learn, we must accommodate and we must change.

Many will respond "easy to say, but what do we do?"

We must acknowledge that we are not alone. We must learn to work together and speak with a constant theme that addresses all of our concerns. We must not divide ourselves into self serving coalitions that create gains for one group at the expense of another. Tremendous challenges await us. We shall not acquiesce; we shall choose to make the practice of medicine and surgery better for everyone especially for our colleagues who will follow, and hopefully take care of us in the years to come.

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We have the knowledge, we have the experience and we have the know how to survive. The question remains, will we be equal to the task? I believe so! Yes, the times they are a changin' and we shall change, we shall adapt and we shall make this a better place to practice.

I pass the gavel to our next president, Dr. Brian Riveland and to our President-elect, Dr. Susan Whitely, knowing that our Society is in 'good hands.'

My most sincere wishes to my colleagues for a blessed Christmas, Happy Holidays and a healthy New Year.

God bless us all!

Warmest regards,

Edward J. Donahue, M.D.
President