

In Thanksgiving

First, I must apologize for last month's letter which was outdated almost immediately after I wrote it-no more trying to elaborate on the shifting sands of health care legislation!

This issue of *Round-up* celebrates the service of Anthony D. Mitten, J.D. Mr. Mitten announced his retirement from the Maricopa County Medical Society this month after serving the Society for 50 years, 36 of those years as CEO. Mr. Mitten has worked in various roles throughout his tenure, from editor of *Round-up*, administrator, attorney, diplomat and physician advocate. In 1969, the Medical Society incorporated a fee-for-service healthcare delivery system to employees in Maricopa County. This delivery system evolved into the present day Arizona Foundation for Medical Care, the largest PPO network in Arizona. Mr. Mitten was instrumental in the inception and implementation of the Arizona Foundation and continues to manage it.

In the early 70's, Mr. Mitten received his law degree from ASU College of Law, using his legal skills to assist physicians and medicine in Arizona for over 38 years! He has helped countless physicians with free legal advice which has been invaluable, especially to physicians beginning new practices. No one knows the business of medicine and wants to help physicians succeed more than Mr. Mitten. How many attorneys want us to do well?

Among other accolades, Mr. Mitten has received three prestigious President's Awards for his leadership and guidance of the Medical Society. The Society has progressed from a small town group to a progressive, successful and remarkable group to advocate for physicians and their patients.

On April 12, 2010, I presented Mr. Mitten with the final remaining Fred Mitten Medal. This medal is given to those whose works have distinguished them in the area of medicine. This award is a beautiful gold-plated dye medal named after Mr. Mitten's father, Fred Mitten. Its inscription reads:

"For his 50 years of selfless devotion, distinguished leadership and contributions to all of the organizations of the Maricopa County Medical Society, Arizona Foundation for Medical Care, organized medicine and the entire medical arena of Arizona."

I am honored to be able to work with Mr. Mitten in the Society and the Arizona Foundation over the last six years. He has served to guide my predecessors and has helped me in my role as President. I would like to thank him personally and on behalf of the entire medical community of Arizona.

Thank you. Tony!

Another "Mitten in leadership" must be mentioned - Daniel Mitten, Tony's son. Dan has served both in the Arizona Foundation and the Medical Society for over 22 years (yes, he is older than he looks!). He was unanimously elected the new CEO of the Society by the Executive Committee and is exceptionally well qualified to assume this mantle of leadership. Dan has also served many roles, including Associate Executive Director of the Society. Both Dan and Tony are responsible for the

newest Society offering; Medabytes, a computer consulting service. Dan is also the managing editor of *Round-up*, and has done an amazing job of editing and producing this fine magazine.

Thank you, Dan and congratulations!

The word “mentor” is defined as a “trusted guide or teacher.” Tony and Dan have both mentored me in my medical journey. There have been other important mentors or teachers along my path. Some of my great teachers were academic, but many mentors have taught me life lessons outside the classroom. For most of us, our first teachers or guides were our parents or family. As a sick child, I was exposed early in life to a team of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, aides, and social workers. I have been blessed with many guides along my path for whom I am forever grateful.

In medical school, I struggled for the first time in my life with an examination—Part One of the National Boards. Many of you will remember the older tests with the insane number of choices for each multiple choice question: A, B, C, or ACE, or ADF on a full moon, B and E on a Wednesday. I felt as if all my peers “got it” except for me. An academic counselor, a young physician, took me under his wing. He didn't teach me anything specifically, but he helped me believe I could become a physician and I could pass the test. Future Board examinations were a lot easier although even now I don't enjoy them. Every 5 years at my medical school reunion I would write this physician a thank you note and update him on my activities. Last summer I celebrated my 15 year medical school anniversary and left the note, but unbeknownst to me, he had died unexpectedly prior to the reunion. I am still regretful that I didn't pick up the phone to tell him how much he helped me.

So pick up the phone, write a note, or say thank you to your mentors and teachers. Many people have pushed us and kept us on this arduous path of medicine. Thank these people while you still can. Even if you are not directly involved in education, you are mentoring and guiding your patients with your listening, your compassion, and your care. I thank all of you for your exceptional efforts to help others.

In thanksgiving,

Susan M Whitely, MD
President